

Validated Self-evaluation Report

Name of Establishment : Boghall Primary School

Validated Self-evaluation (VSE) Core Team Members : Ann Duncan (Head Teacher), Ann Ireland (Principal Teacher); Lynsey O'Neill (class teacher), Karen Heenan (class teacher), Meg Morrison (Education Officer); Ann Durnian (Senior Education Manager), Greg Welsh (Assisting Head Teacher), Alan Hunt (Depute Educational Psychologist), John Lowe (ICT Education Support Officer).

Date : Week beginning 25 November 2013

Purpose: Validation of the accuracy of the school's self evaluation

Context :

Boghall Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the community of Boghall, Bathgate in West Lothian. The school, which was built in 1958, provides spacious accommodation for pupils and staff. For session 2012-2014 the school roll is around 270 and has been steadily increasing in recent years to the current 14 class structure. The Senior management team (SMT) consists of the Head Teacher (HT) and Principal Teacher (PT). Due to the increasing roll, the school is now eligible for a Depute Head Teacher (DHT) post. The HT also manages the authority Literacy Service which is located within the building. (This service was not part of the Validated Self-Evaluation). The school is currently undergoing extensive renovation and improvements to the school building and staff have made several interim changes of accommodation since June 2013. Building work includes the addition of a new Community Wing which offers exciting opportunities for further developing the well established joint working within the Boghall area.

The school staff comprises 14 classes and 17 class teachers, including 3 probationer teachers, 2 job share staff, a music specialist and PE specialist. The school also benefits from a part-time support for learning teacher, 6 pupil support workers, and an administrative assistant. There is a very supportive Parent Council and community links continue to be strong where the school is valued for its open-door culture and integrated working. Free school meals entitlement currently sits in decile 6. Owing to staff changes (maternity leave, retiral, staff taking a career break to travel) the composition of the staff team has been subject to significant change in that seven new teachers have joined the school since August 2013. The strong collegiality of the staff has ensured that the positive climate for learning and high expectations have been maintained. This has sustained a culture of ambition which places the learner at the heart of all that is planned and executed. The school was last inspected in 2004 with an council school review in 2010. In this current session 2012-13 the Education Officer, in consultation with the HT, agreed that a school review should be undertaken to assess the extent to which the school continues to develop and improve its work and to look at how recent strategies for improvement have impacted on the quality of learning, teaching and levels of attainment.

Prior to the VSE the school evaluated its performance as follows.

1.1 Improvements in performance	Very Good
2.1 Learners' experience	Very Good*
5.1 Curriculum	Very Good
5.3 Meeting learning needs	Very Good*
5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation	Very Good*
8.1 Partnership with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers	Very Good*

*These areas have many aspects of excellence.

Findings :

Boghall Primary demonstrates strong commitment to self-evaluation for school improvement and this area of its work is very good. All staff have a very strong capacity for continuous improvement. Despite the significant changes to the staff team, effective collegiality has supported almost all teachers to be skilled in reflection and enquiry and to plan for effective learning and teaching in response to ongoing evaluation of pupil learning. They are active in and recognise the importance of their own career long professional learning. Staff increasingly challenge each other to improve their practice for the benefit of learners. They self-evaluate regularly against the school improvement plan, resulting in a clear agenda for their own continuous development and that of the school. School improvement planning is embedded in the life and work of the school and staff engage well with children, parents and a range of partners to identify and implement appropriate areas for development to address the overarching priority of raising attainment.

The school is very well led and the HT has an exceptionally good understanding of her school and its needs within the local community. She supports and encourages staff to be responsive and innovative and to ensure that activities impact positively on learners. This includes rigorous and robust evaluation of changes to the curriculum as a result of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) developments and on-going work related to learning and teaching. Class sizes are deliberately kept small and pupils have planned opportunities to work in a range of learning groups to suit their needs and capabilities. A full calendar of evaluative activities is well-embedded in the school. Recent changes to track and monitor progress of individual pupils are rigorous and very effective. The HT and PT meet regularly with staff in focussed attainment meetings which involve all staff teams engaging in high quality professional dialogue using adaptive test results, teacher judgement and pupil work. There is an appropriate focus on the performance of each child and the identification of co-ordinated steps required to support them to achieve more. Pupil Support Workers are deployed effectively. This approach to tracking and monitoring learners' progress has had a real impact on supporting those pupils who have difficulty, those who are underachieving and identifying those who are capable of more challenge. The school recognises there is scope to plan, deliver and evaluate more differentiated learning activities even within small learning groups.

The school seeks regular and systematic feedback from children, staff and parents and uses this very effectively to bring about improvement. The school's engagement with the parent body and community partners is outstanding. Parents support the school well in securing improvement and some assist effectively in supporting learners within school. The school's success in achieving productive joined up working with a range of community partners is due to their proactive approach to engaging with others who can help them to address barriers to children's learning and development.

Staff carry out a range of leadership roles and willingly initiate and share practice. Very good practice includes peer observation within Boghall and a partner school, developing learning programmes and guidance materials and undertaking collaborative planning, assessment and moderation using CfE experiences and outcomes. The school's expertise is recognised within the cluster and locality.

Boghall PS is an exemplary *Rights Respecting School* and is working very effectively with children, parents and partners on this agenda. The strong climate of self-evaluation, supported by the embedded practices of *Rights Respecting School* status has a positive impact on attainment and achievement of all pupils. Most pupils have made very good progress from their prior levels of attainment and continue to do so. All pupils continue to achieve in a range of activities which promote personal and wider achievement. Learners' experiences are stimulating and challenging and almost all pupils are motivated and engaged in their learning and understand that they are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and development. They have had scope to lead their learning and the planning of contexts.

Staff ensure that the broad general education and entitlements are delivered with progression in learning supported through relevant contexts. Inter-disciplinary learning is developing well. The collaborative planning and delivery of the curriculum is well understood by staff and is responsive to learners' needs. Appropriate emphasis is placed upon skills development and there is a well developed progressive skills programme. The elective *Masterclass* initiative and the recent implementation of structured play opportunities in the early years should be developed further to ensure clarity of purpose and expected learning outcomes. The school now needs to draw upon their current good practice for the planning and delivery of the curriculum at each stage to produce curriculum overviews for all curricular areas.

Conclusion

VSE involves a partnership between the school and the local authority where collective expertise in evaluation extends, challenges and supports the school's own self-evaluation process and offers independent evaluation and validation of its work.

The validated self-evaluation visit to Boghall enabled the school to reflect on its performance through the benefit of gathering and analysing evidence within a wider team. This process affirmed and strengthened the accuracy of the standards and quality report of June 2013. Senior managers and staff have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have successfully raised standards by increasing children's capacity to learn effectively.

The school's arrangements for self-evaluation are very effective. The school has robust self-evaluation processes and is well-placed to continue to improve. The school made accurate

judgements about its performance in all but 8.1 (Partnership with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers). In view of the range and nature of evidence gathered during the VSE, this cautious judgement was increased to the status of excellent. Other judgements were validated as noted in the table below.

1.1 Improvements in performance	Very Good
2.1 Learners' experience	Very Good*
5.1 Curriculum	Very Good
5.3 Meeting learning needs	Very Good*
5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation	Very Good*
8.1 Partnership with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers	Changed from Very Good to Excellent

*These areas have many aspects of excellence.

Action arising

The school will :

- revise and update the Standards and Quality Report to reflect the outcomes of the VSE;
- continue to develop curriculum and planning as noted above.