

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
POST RECOGNITION REVIEW
FEEDBACK REPORT**

Ewloe Green Primary School

Prepared by

Michele Spratley
Investors in People Assessor
On behalf of the Wales Investors in People Quality Centre

November 2007

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Objectives of the Post Recognition Review
3. Summary of Findings against the Investors in People National Standard
4. Summary of Strengths and/or Good Practice
5. Summary of Continuous Improvement Recommendations
6. Feedback on Identified Objectives for Post Recognition Review
7. Conclusion

Annex 1 – Interview Evidence

1. Introduction

This report has been produced following the Investors in People Review of Ewloe Green Primary School carried out on behalf of the Wales Investors in People Quality Centre. The report reflects on the findings of the Review and highlights areas of good practice identified, in addition to those areas recommended for further development.

I would like to thank Ruth Dyas, for her help in arranging the interviews, and all Ewloe Green Primary School employees who took part in interviews, for their openness and co-operation during the Review process. I would also like to thank the school for allowing me to be shadowed by a colleague during the post recognition review, for professional development purposes.

Background Information on Organisation

Ewloe Green Primary School is located in the village of Ewloe, near Queensferry. It is an attractive, well-maintained school, with a large open-plan atrium leading off from the school's main entrance, which serves as a multi-purpose resource area for pupils. This creates an immediate impression, for visitors to the school, of a well-organised, stimulating and industrious learning environment, which is confirmed, by spending time on-site.

The school currently provides educational care and support to 435 pupils, with a total staff of 55, including all Governors, management, teaching staff, teaching support staff and other support staff (eg: administration, caretaking and lunchtime supervision).

Since Ewloe Green's last Investors in People post recognition review, the school has appointed a new Head Teacher, a new Deputy Head Teacher, has made two new TLR management appointments, and has recruited 14 new members of staff to teaching and support roles. The change in Head Teacher has seen a change in management style, with more emphasis being placed on planning, assessment, and sharing of leadership and management responsibilities at all levels within the school.

Ewloe Green was originally recognised as an Investor in People in July 1999. The school was successfully reviewed against the Standard in March 2002 and against Profile in March 2005. This was the School's first review against the 'management capabilities' version of the Standard.

2. Objectives of the Post Recognition Review

The agreed objectives for the Post Recognition Review were:

- To establish the school's current status against the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard.
- To suggest continuous improvement/development areas within the context of the Standard, to help the school to improve its performance.
- To identify particular strengths and/or good practice, demonstrated by the school.
- To review progress made against development recommendations following the school's last Post Recognition Review.

3. Findings against the Investors in People National Standard

PLAN: Developing Strategies to Improve the Performance of the Organisation

1. A Strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood

Ewloe Green Primary School has a clearly stated mission '*Always Aiming High*', which has been updated since the current Head Teacher joined the school, and which all staff had an opportunity to contribute towards. The school's purpose is articulated within its aims, which include '*striving to achieve the highest possible standards*'; '*ensuring we provide a broad and balanced curriculum*'; '*ensuring...children...feel safe, secure and confident*'.

The school's strategy for improving its performance, in line with these ideals, is formed around:

- Keeping itself informed about developments within the wider education environment
- Setting clear targets for improvement within its School Improvement Plan
- Identifying clear expectations of staff, in job descriptions, at staff meetings and within individual Performance Management reviews
- Encouraging staff to lead improvement planning and activity in subject and projects areas
- Self-evaluating progress, in order to identify further development areas
- Using the feedback from external assessments (eg: Estyn Inspection; Investors in People review), to further develop areas of continuous improvement

The school's Improvement Plan sets out clear targets and objectives for all curriculum areas and for wider school development, such as '*buildings and environment*'; '*continuing professional development*'; and '*Eco schools*'.

Managers, in the form of the Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leaders, consult with other staff on the agreement of targets and objectives, which appear within the School Improvement Plan, through staff meetings and during discussion about feedback received from Estyn and the LEA advisory team. People also play a key part in agreeing their own individual targets, at Performance Management review, which contribute to achievement of whole-school objectives.

Staff interviewed during the post recognition review, were very clear about their team and individual objectives and about their role in developing and achieving them, eg:

'The school is trying to build links between classes, to get us to work together more'

'When we were developing the mission and aims we looked at other schools, which helped us to decide our vision for the school'

'I attend planning meetings with the classes I work in, we discuss and decide how to implement things'

'I know the school's looking at behaviour, we're having a meeting about it next week'

'We're all given a copy of the School Improvement Plan and it's on the computer'

'I contributed to X in the School Improvement Plan, and everyone has access to it'

There is scope to raise the awareness of wider school aims and objectives amongst staff who only spend a short time at school each day (eg: Dinner ladies), and the school may wish to do this by introducing a termly communication meeting with them – see Continuous Improvement Recommendations in section 5 of this report.

2. Learning & development is planned to achieve the organisation's objectives

Ewloe Green Primary School has identified its learning and development priorities, which focus upon encouraging autonomy of action by staff, particularly Subject Leaders. It is supporting their development through training, and one-to-one advice by LEA advisers; which will lead to improvements in pupil achievement in subject areas; and which will be measured by monitoring pupils' work and tracking attainment levels, through whole-school assessment.

Identified team development needs include training of teaching and teaching support staff in French, through staff INSET sessions and one-to-one support, with the aim of teaching responsibilities being passed from the school's specialist French teacher to other teaching staff, and which will be evaluated through the success of this transition, and staff confidence in being able to take on this teaching responsibility.

Staff within the school confirmed that they play an active part in identifying their own development needs and how to address them, through Performance Management review and during discussions at staff meetings, and people were able to give examples of learning activities that would help them, their teams and the school, eg:

- A member of the Leadership Team, undertaking leadership training, and learning how to work proactively with staff to encourage and support them to develop their own capabilities and confidence
- A teacher visiting the local High School, to see how her subject is taught there, and to bring back ideas to support more effective transition of pupils from Ewloe Green to secondary education
- Nursery and Reception staff, undertaking Foundation Phase training, to enable them to work as an effective team in implementing its principles within the school

3. Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people

Ewloe Green Primary School's Leadership Team is keen to involve all staff in the school improvement process, and encourages people's active contribution by:

- Discussing improvement projects are regular staff meetings
- Delegating responsibility to staff for particular subject or improvement areas
- Sanctioning the visits of staff to other schools, to identify good practice
- Encouraging involvement in consortium activity
- Asking staff to lead INSET sessions, to spread knowledge and to stimulate discussion

The school recognises that its staff have different backgrounds, experience, learning styles and needs, and does what it can to ensure that people have fair access to learning and development opportunities, eg:

- Implementing a common Performance Management process for teaching staff and a similar review process for the majority of support staff
- Making all staff aware of the development opportunities that are open to them through County provision
- Supporting teaching staff applications for GTCW¹ grants, to further their own development
- Providing one-to-one guidance and coaching by Subject Leaders, Mentors and members of the Leadership Team

Staff with management responsibilities support the development of their colleagues, and were able to give examples of ways in which they had tailored their support to help particular individuals, eg:

'One teacher isn't so confident about the subject, so I go through ideas with them about what they can do in class'

'I try to simplify the subject to help people develop their skills'

'If you show people something that makes them go "Wow", it breaks down barriers to learning'

Staff believe that there is equality of opportunity in access to learning opportunities for them at Ewloe Green, and that management colleagues are committed to supporting their development, eg:

'The school arranged PPA cover for me on the day that I attend my Masters course'

'The Subject Leadership courses are available to us all'

'The TLR recruitment process was open to everyone'

'The Head discussed my objectives with me at Performance Management, but has given me the freedom to develop things in the way I want'

People also gave many examples of ways in which they had been encouraged to improve their own performance, or to help colleagues to improve theirs, eg:

'I did an INSET day on reading materials, giving people tips and ideas on materials they could use in class'

'I showed a colleague some of the Makaton signing I had learned on my course, and now she's doing a course on it as well'

'I'm in charge of showing students round, to help their orientation and to introduce them to other staff'

'I've done curriculum update training, which I feed back to colleagues'

The school does not currently involve Dining Room Assistants in a structured form of Performance Management, and it may wish to consider introducing a regular meeting process with this team of staff, to ensure that they receive active encouragement to share any ideas they may have for school improvement.

¹ General Teaching Council for Wales

4. The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood

Ewloe Green Primary School has defined the capabilities required of its managers within individual job descriptions, during staff meetings, and as part of the Performance Management process.

The Head Teacher describes the key knowledge, skills and behaviours required of managers as *'good subject knowledge, the ability to take on responsibility and to work across the curriculum, and to be team workers'*. The school supports the development of these capabilities through on-going review of performance via the Performance Management process, and by providing formal leadership training through the LEA. Ewloe Green is also in the process of working towards the Investors in People Leadership & Management Model, which will further help to clarify its management requirements at all levels within the school.

People with management responsibilities demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the capabilities needed to carry them out, eg:

- The need to carry out observations and to mentor students, providing feedback to them in a way that is motivational to their continuing development
- Conducting Performance Management with other staff, and being able to help them reflect upon their own abilities, to identify how best to use their skills
- Carrying out monitoring, leveling, and leading subject progress, in a way that demonstrates an awareness of other curriculum areas and is complementary to their development and activity

Whilst other staff are able to describe what their manager should be doing to lead and support their development, eg:

'My mentor is supposed to observe my lessons and give me feedback'

'The Head and Deputy should have a good knowledge of developments in education, to keep us informed, and they do'

'Managers should give us advice and support, help us to organise our work, and let us know how we're doing'

'They should help us sort out any problems we have'

'They should mentor us and carry out reviews with us'

DO: Taking Action to Improve the Performance of the Organisation

5. Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people

Managers (eg: the Head Teacher; Leadership Team members; Subject Leaders) gave many good examples of ways in which they support their colleagues and provide appropriate feedback, to help with their development. These included:

- conducting Performance Management review meetings with them
- monitoring pupils' work and providing guidance to colleagues to ensure adequate curriculum coverage
- leading staff and team meetings to review collective performance
- leading staff INSET sessions
- carrying out inductions for new staff
- conducting classroom observations and providing constructive feedback following these
- sourcing, authorising or arranging external training to support the development of particular knowledge or skills
- involving colleagues in the planning of school improvement, subject development, classroom activity and initiatives
- coaching or mentoring people in unfamiliar tasks
- guiding staff in the agreement of personal objectives that support achievement of the School Improvement Plan

People confirmed that managers are very supportive at Ewloe Green, that they are approachable, and proactive in the way that they encourage staff to take on responsibilities, to expand their knowledge, skills and confidence. People also confirmed that they receive constructive feedback on their performance, as a formal part of the Performance Management process, and more informally, in daily comments from colleagues and management team members. In the case of Dining Room Assistants this feedback tends to be quite informal, and could benefit from a more structured approach.

6. People's contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued

Managers within Ewloe Green Primary School recognise the contribution of staff by thanking them for their efforts on a day-to-day basis; by consulting with them on issues and activities that involve or affect them; by encouraging them to take on new or additional responsibilities; and by implementing improvement suggestions and ideas that they raise.

Staff at the school believe that they make a valued and positive contribution to Ewloe Green's success eg:

- By making resources that are used in classes
- By covering the role of a absent colleagues
- By encouraging and rewarding good behaviour amongst pupils
- By supporting Parents Evenings and Out of School activities
- By contributing to the planning and implementation of school improvement initiatives

People also believe that they are appreciated and valued for the contribution they make, by the Governors, by the Head Teacher, by their colleagues and by pupils, eg:

'I was invited to talk to the Governors and to parents about the progress that pupils had made'

'I've had positive feedback from the Chair of Governors and at my review'

'I'm listened to and I'm involved in all staff meetings'

'The school worked round my family commitments'

'We're thanked by the Head and by staff'

'The school backs me all the way'

'Pictures were put on the school website'

'I've had thank you letters from the children'

'Staff are always recognised in the Head Teacher's report'

7. People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making

Staff are involved in decision-making on several levels: *strategically*, by having an input to the whole-school self-evaluation process and subsequent school improvement planning process; and also *operationally* when they are encouraged to find their own solutions to issues that arise, as part of the school's strategy of developing people's leadership capabilities and confidence.

People recognise that they are encouraged to take part in decision-making and also that they are given the freedom to take ownership of decisions, in a way that positively influences their own role, that of their teams and the school as a whole, for example:

- A teacher, wanting to adopt a new Scheme of Work she had seen used in another school, being given permission to purchase parts of the SOW relating to special needs, which she is now evaluating through use of its class-based activities with pupils in her class
- The school's ICT Coordinator, being given the freedom to design the school's ICT suite as he saw fit, and being trusted to make decisions about which learning support software the school should invest in
- The School Cook, being trusted to liaise directly with parents about their children's dietary preferences and requirements, and then adapting the school's menu, in a way that results in greater uptake of healthy school meals
- A teaching support member of staff suggesting a change to the classroom layout, to give children more room for role play activity, encouraged to trial this suggestion and to evaluate its effectiveness

Some staff mentioned that they would welcome the opportunity to be involved in discussions about whole-school celebration events at an earlier stage (eg: Harvest Festival; Christmas Service) and the Leadership Team may wish to consider ways of canvassing people's views on these activities in future, to ensure that all feel actively involved in the decision-making process.

8. People learn and develop effectively

Managers within the school explained that they ensure people's learning and development needs are met by:

- agreeing development activity that will help with particular tasks, responsibilities, or achievement of targets/objectives
- talking to people about training and development after it has taken place, to ensure that it met their needs
- monitoring teaching and learning through the Performance Management process

People described many ways in which their knowledge and skills have been enhanced, and of how they have applied such learning within their job roles, eg:

- A member of the Leadership Team undertaking mentoring training, now responsible for managing and supporting the development of all student teachers, NQT's² and EPD³ staff within the school
- A teacher shadowing the work of the school's ANCo⁴ for a day, increasing her confidence in dealing with children who have special needs, and enabling her to plan separately to ensure suitable differentiation within her teaching
- The school's administrator, learning the computerised registration system and the SIMS⁵ reporting system, now able to cover the responsibilities of the school's Secretary, in her absence

All staff who have recently joined the school, and those who have taken on new roles or responsibilities, confirmed that the induction support they received was effective and that it helped them to settle into the school and their roles quickly. People spoke of their new colleagues being very welcoming and helpful, and of useful information and resources being made readily available to them. People also confirmed that appropriate feedback was given on their own performance, which helped them to assess how effectively they were working within their new role.

Induction for new members of the Governing Body appears to be a little less structured, and the school may wish to consider implementing a number of continuous improvement recommendations, in relation to the induction support provided to Governors, referred to in section 5 of this report.

² Newly Qualified Teachers

³ Extended Professional Development

⁴ Additional Needs Coordinator

⁵ Schools Information Management System

REVIEW: Evaluating the Impact on the Performance of the Organisation

9. Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation

The Governing Body, Head Teacher and Leadership Team members at Ewloe Green have a good understanding of the overall investment that the school makes in the learning and development of its staff, ranging from the funding of attendance at external courses, to the payment of supply cover to release staff for learning and development activity and events. The school capitalises on opportunities to learn from others (eg: using a contact of the Head Teacher's to lead a staff INSET⁶ session on the 'Barnaby Bear' learning materials), and is creative in its approach to obtaining funding for development support (eg: supporting teaching staff in submission of GTCW⁷ grant applications).

Ewloe Green Primary School is able to show that staff learning and development has improved the performance of the school in a number of ways, eg:

- Development of a member of staff as the school's ANCo⁸, has seen wider teacher involvement in the compilation of IEP's⁹ for children, and fewer children on the Special Needs Register but receiving other forms of targeted support, which has resulted in more individualised and appropriate teaching and learning experiences for such children
- Development of Subject Leaders, through training and individualised support from members of the Leadership Team, has seen greater delegation of subject-specific and whole-school development projects (eg: Eco Schools; School Council; Healthy Schools initiatives), which has helped to increase the knowledge and confidence of staff in these roles

Evaluation of staff development activity has also influenced the school's strategy for on-going performance improvement, eg:

- Development of staff planning skills, through visits to other schools, discussion at staff meetings and agreement of a standardised approach in this area, has resulted in all appropriate staff now being able to work together on the thematic planning required, to support successful implementation of the new curriculum orders.
- The development of a consistent and integrated approach to pupil assessment, agreed through staff consultation, coupled with the training of staff in leadership skills, has resulted in pupils being encouraged to play an active part in setting and evaluating their own achievement targets, so developing their ability to take responsibility for their own learning
- Evaluation of the impact of the 'Catch-Up' reading programme, on the progress of pupils taking part in it, has resulted in the school training Teaching Assistants to provide this support to pupils, so extending the number of children who can benefit from the programme

⁶ In-Service Training

⁷ General Teaching Council for Wales

⁸ Additional Needs Coordinator

⁹ Individual Education Plans

Managers were able to cite examples of how learning and development has improved the performance of teams, eg:

- Investment in the development of teaching support staff has seen more responsibilities delegated to them, in support of the Workload Agreement and the school's Workforce Reform Plan, freeing up teaching time to be spent on preparation, planning and assessment
- Development of Subject Leaders, through staff meetings and INSET sessions, has seen portfolios of children's work produced, moderated and leveled in line with the national curriculum, and a programme of Subject Leader activity agreed within Ewloe Green, to ensure a consistent standard of subject management by all post holders in the future

Staff within the school generally have a good understanding of the ways in which their learning and development activity has helped them, their teams and the school as a whole, eg:

- A Nursery Nurse undertaking a Welsh course, learning correct pronunciation and obtaining a resource pack for use within class, able to bring her knowledge and support materials back to school, for the benefit of her team and the school as a whole
- The Chair of Governors, learning about the support available for More Able and Talented children following discussion with the Deputy Head, now able to make more informed decisions about the school's strategy in relation to this group of pupils

10. Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed

Ewloe Green Primary School has improved the ways in which it manages and supports the development of its staff, since its last Investors in People review, eg:

- The majority of support staff now take part in a formal Performance Management process, giving them the opportunity to receive feedback on their performance and to discuss their learning and development needs on an individual basis with a member of the Leadership Team
- The role of Subject Leaders, and the expectations of individuals within those roles, has been collectively reviewed and a common definition of responsibilities agreed by the school's teaching team
- Staff in all roles have been encouraged to consider their long-term career development aspirations, and support for further and higher education qualifications has been actively sought and secured on their behalf

Managers gave examples of how their management and support of staff has improved, including:

- involving support staff more in the review of teaching approaches and agreement of changes to class activities
- facilitating more access to training and development opportunities for support staff
- taking more of a whole-school perspective in planning, to support cross-curricular working, rather than just focusing upon individual class activities

People also felt that the school, although always good at providing them with support, has improved in this area since its last IIP review, eg:

- by giving them more opportunities to take part in training and development activity
- by taking on board their suggestions, and giving them the freedom to implement new ideas
- by encouraging them to work more closely with their teaching and teaching support colleagues

4. Strengths and/or Areas of Good Practice

The key strengths and/or points of good practice, highlighted by the Post Recognition Review, were:

- The strong leadership of the Head Teacher, who instigated a revisiting of the school's mission and aims following her appointment, encouraging all staff to become involved in the process, and who has clarified the expectations of all staff in contributing to achievement of those aims.
- The clear definition of the role and responsibilities of Subject Leaders within the school, and the provision of training and support to help people develop into these roles.
- The many good examples of people being given freedom to take the lead on projects and the autonomy to make improvement suggestions and decisions (eg: the School Council's school video project).
- The excellent involvement and support of the school cook, which is having a positive impact upon pupils' eating habits and the take-up of school meals.
- The good examples of staff working together to share ideas, and to practice skills (eg: Makaton; School Council).
- The effective way in which the school recognises the existing skills and abilities of staff, and uses them to the benefit of the individual and the organisation (eg: encouraging a new teacher with knowledge and experience of teaching French to initially start an after school club and then to introduce lessons into the timetable; the use of a Nursery Nurse's 'Qualified Teacher Status' experience to cover classes during teachers' Planning, Preparation & Assessment time).

5. Continuous Improvement Recommendations

The school is encouraged to consider the following as areas for continuous improvement:

- More formal communication processes for support staff, to keep them informed of school improvement plans and progress against them, and to involve them more directly in the celebration of school achievements.
- The introduction of regular meetings between the dinner ladies and a member of the School Leadership Team (eg: at least once per term), to discuss issues of common concern, to encourage their ideas for improvement, and to identify appropriate training needs (eg: Child Protection Training for new starters, and/or those who would benefit from refreshers).

- The formalisation of a school induction process for new Governors, possibly incorporating a Ewloe Green Governor's Handbook (explaining how things are done at the school, from a Governor's perspective, and incorporating a glossary of educational abbreviations and terms), and a 'Buddying system', which pairs experienced Governors with new starters, giving them an identified person to go to with any questions they have.
- Looking at ways of providing additional support to teaching staff who are developing their Subject Leader responsibilities, where such a need is identified, bearing in mind that capacity to adopt new ways of working and to implement new knowledge and skills varies from individual to individual, based upon their individual capability and experience.

6. Feedback on other identified objectives for Post Recognition Review

Ewloe Green Primary School has implemented a number of recommendations following its last post recognition review, namely:

- The introduction of a structured review process for the majority of support staff.
- Incorporating whole-school and team staff development needs within the School Improvement Plan, showing clear links between school aims and objectives, and the training and development activity that will help to achieve them.
- Clarifying the role of Subject Leaders, particularly in the ways that they should be supporting the development of their colleagues.
- Developing DRA's¹⁰ further, by involving them in the pupil merit initiative, by providing them with handbooks' and by canvassing their opinions on matters that relate to their role (eg: review of the school's behaviour policy).
- Arranging staff meetings on a day when all staff are present on site.

¹⁰ Dining Room Assistants

7. Conclusion

Having carried out the review process rigorously, and in accordance with the quality assurance guidelines issued by IIP UK and the Wales Investors in People Quality Centre, I confirm that Ewloe Green Primary School is continuing to meet the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard.

Recognition as an Investor in People is therefore maintained as from the 12 November 2007.

Assessor: Michele Spratley
On behalf of the Wales Investors in People Quality Centre

Date: 16 November 2007

Date of next
Review: November 2010

ANNEX 1

**Review Plan
Ewloe Green Primary School**

INTERVIEW EVIDENCE

Grade or Function of Employee	Number of Employees	Numbers Interviewed
Governors	10	1
Head Teacher	1	1
Senior Staff	2	1
Teachers	15	3
Teaching Support	8	3
Other Support	19	5
TOTALS	55	14
		25%

Category of Employee	Number of Employees	Numbers Interviewed
FULL TIME	26	8
PART TIME	29	6
MALE	8	2
FEMALE	47	12
RECENT STARTERS	9	3
REPRESENTATIVES	0	0
OTHERS (PLEASE DETAIL)		

NUMBERS INTERVIEWED BY EACH METHOD		1 : 1	10
		GROUPS	4
		TELEPHONED	0
TOTAL NUMBER OF SITES	1	NO. OF SITES INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLE	1

Additional Information:

--	--	--	--