

**Integrated Inspection by the  
Care Commission and  
HM Inspectorate of Education of  
Abbeyhill Primary School  
Nursery Class  
City of Edinburgh Council**

**5 May 2004**

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act, 2001, requires that the Care Commission inspect all care services covered by the Act every year to monitor the quality of care provided. In accordance with the Act, the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education carry out integrated inspections of the quality of care and education. In doing this, inspection teams take account of *National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16*, and *The Child at the Centre*. The following standards and related quality indicators were used in the recent inspection.

<b>National Care Standard</b>	<b>Child at the Centre Quality Indicator</b>
Standard 2 – A Safe Environment	Resources
Standard 4 – Engaging with Children	Development and learning through play
Standard 5 – Quality of Experience	Curriculum Children’s development and learning
Standard 6 – Support and Development	Support for children and families
Standard 14 – Well-managed Service	Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance

Evaluations made using HMIE quality indicators use the following scale, and these words are used in the report to describe the team’s judgements:

- Very good : major strengths
- Good : strengths outweigh weaknesses
- Fair : some important weaknesses
- Unsatisfactory : major weaknesses

Reports contain Recommendations which are intended to support improvements in the quality of service.

Any Requirements refer to actions which must be taken by service providers to ensure that regulations are met and there is compliance with relevant legislation. In these cases the regulation(s) to which requirements refer will be noted clearly and timescales given.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher, staff and the Director of Education. Copies are also available on the Care Commission website: [www.carecommission.com](http://www.carecommission.com) and HMIE website: [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of the inspection or about this report you should write either to the Care Commission or to HM Inspectorate of Education at the address below. If you are still dissatisfied with our services, you can contact your member of the Scottish Parliament (or, if you prefer, any other MSP). You can also contact the Scottish Parliamentary Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and Agencies.

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# **Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of Abbeyhill Primary School Nursery Class City of Edinburgh Council**

## **Introduction**

Abbeyhill Primary Nursery Class was inspected in January 2004 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. An inspection of the primary school was carried out at the same time by HMIE and is the subject of a separate report. The nursery catered for children aged three to five and included space for children with additional special needs. At the time of the inspection the roll was 56.

## **The environment**

Abbeyhill Nursery Class was situated in Abbeyhill Primary School. The nursery class occupied three playrooms with toilet facilities attached. The premises provided a safe, secure environment for children. The playrooms were bright and welcoming and in a good state of repair. The extensive indoor space in the nursery offered good opportunities for individual play but group play was limited as a result of the extensive range of play activities on offer. Play equipment was clean and well maintained. The outdoor play area was safe and attractive.

## **Quality of children's experience**

Staff were caring and pleasant. They had developed very good relationships with children. Overall, staff interacted positively with children but needed to improve the use of space and organisation of the playrooms to extend and develop children's learning. Effective systems were in place to observe, plan and record children's progress. However, some plans lacked detail and did not show clearly the next steps in learning for small groups. Staff needed to review the balance between free play and adult led activities in order to extend some children's learning more fully. Parents and the appropriate primary schools received a written report at the end of the session to inform them of children's progress.

Staff provided a range of experiences in the key aspects of children's learning.

- The programme in emotional, personal and social development was very good. Staff encouraged children to be independent and to show consideration for others. Most children had settled well into the nursery and had an

understanding of the daily routines. They were developing a range of social skills and showed a good awareness of simple rules and hygiene practices.

- The programme for communication and language was good. Some children spoke confidently to staff, other children and visitors. Staff provided regular opportunities for children to talk, listen and enjoy stories in small groups. Children responded positively to storytelling sessions and most listened carefully. Some children were able to recognise their name in print and a few were beginning to write it. Staff needed to provide more opportunities for children to develop early writing skills through play.
- The programme to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children had good opportunities to develop skills in number and to recognise patterns and colours. They were learning about their local environment through a range of planned visits and visitors. Some children were able to use the computer independently. Staff needed to provide more opportunities for children to explore how things work and to solve simple problems.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children enjoyed singing a wide range of songs and rhymes. They used musical instruments to explore sound. They were developing their imaginative skills through role-play in the house corner. Staff provided a range of art and craft activities to develop children's skills in painting, printing and making collages. These, however, were often adult led. Staff needed to provide more opportunities for children to express their individual thoughts and feelings through art and craft.
- The programme in physical development and movement was very good. Children had daily opportunities to take part in energetic play. They had weekly access to the school gym hall. They were developing good skills in jumping, climbing and balancing. Children were learning about healthy eating at snack time. Staff provided good opportunities for children to develop finger and hand control through using a range of toys and play equipment, including the computer.

## **Support for children and families**

Staff knew children well and provided good support for them and their families. They responded appropriately and sensitively to children's individual circumstances using alternative methods of communication where appropriate. There was a planned programme of induction for children starting nursery and their parents. The attractive story bags were popular with children and some parents. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with most aspects of the work of the nursery school. Some, however, wanted more regular information about their children's progress and to be involved more fully in their children's learning.

Staff had been trained in procedures for supporting children with additional learning needs. They provided very good support for individuals including children who had English as an additional language (EAL). They liaised and planned effectively with a range of support agencies.

## Management

The headteacher provided good leadership. She had a clear vision for the development of the nursery and promoted effective teamwork. She was approachable and had developed good relationships with staff, children and parents. The principal teacher of the nursery was responsible for the day-to-day management of the nursery. She provided very good support to the headteacher.

The nursery had adopted local authority policies and procedures to support the care and welfare of children. Staff had shared these with staff, parents and carers. Policies to support staff in implementing the curriculum were being developed. Staff followed the local authority guidelines on child protection. The nursery was well staffed to support the particular needs of the children. Staff were recruited in line with local authority procedures and held relevant qualifications in early education, speech and language and supporting EAL. Staff took part in a range of review and development activities. Appropriate staff-to-child ratios were maintained.

Staff had begun to evaluate some aspects of the service and identify priorities for improvement. A development plan was in place and priorities were being implemented. The headteacher needed to make more effective use of self-evaluation materials. Staff needed to improve the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery.

## Key strengths

- Very good relationships between staff and children.
- Very good programmes in emotional, personal and social development and physical development and movement.
- High quality of support for children with additional learning needs.
- The contribution of the principal teacher of the nursery and the level of support she provided to the headteacher.

## Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should improve the use of space and organisation of the playrooms to extend and develop children's learning.
- Staff should improve the balance between free play and adult led activities.
- Staff should improve planning procedures to identify the next steps in learning for small groups.
- Staff should provide more information for parents on children's progress and on ways of supporting children's learning.
- The headteacher, in consultation with staff, should develop procedures for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the nursery's work.

Care Commission Officers and HM Inspectors have asked the pre-school centre and Education Authority to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report. Where requirements are made, the action plan should include timescales to deal with these. The plan will be available to parents and carers. In liaison with the pre-school centre and Education Authority, Care Commission Officers and HM Inspectors will monitor progress to ensure improvements are in line with the main findings of the report.

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