

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Sacred Heart RC Primary School
Nursery Class
Falkirk Council**

14 January 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.

National Care Standard	Child at the Centre Quality Indicator
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 and HMIE website: 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 Sacred Heart RC Primary School Nursery Class Falkirk Council

Introduction

Sacred Heart RC Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in October 2003 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 from age three until entry to primary school. At the time of the inspection the roll was 34.

The environment

The accommodation, located within the primary school, was very spacious, bright, clean and safe. Displays were attractively presented and helped to create a warm, welcoming environment. The nursery had a secure entry system and the arrival and departure of children was well managed.

Space was well organised, providing opportunities for quiet and more energetic activities within the playroom. Children were able to work independently and participate in group activities. Staff planned further developments to the adjacent well used, enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery was well resourced. Play equipment was clean and well maintained. The headteacher should improve further the management of health and safety procedures, including maintaining regular risk assessments.

Quality of children's experience

Staff had a sound knowledge of children's development and learning. Relationships between staff and children were very good. Staff interacted effectively with children and made very good use of questions to extend and support their learning. In their very good planning procedures, staff set out clearly what they expected children to learn. Arrangements for observing, assessing and recording children's progress were very effective. Staff used assessment information well to plan next steps in children's learning. Parents were kept well informed about their children's progress and received informative profiles.

The nursery provided a stimulating range of experiences which children took part in enthusiastically.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were happy, confident and settled in nursery routines. Staff encouraged them to take some responsibilities and be aware of the needs of others. Children enjoyed helping with snack and tidying the nursery.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Children had many opportunities to talk and listen. Staff encouraged children's interest in books and stories and regularly visited the school library. Children borrowed books to take home each week. Staff provided a wide range of interesting activities to develop children's early skills in reading and writing.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children were learning to sort, count and match numbers. They could recognise colours and simple shapes. Children were learning about their environment and the changing seasons. They enjoyed collecting autumn leaves. Staff should provide children with a wider range of experiences to develop their science skills through investigation and solving simple problems.
- In expressive and aesthetic development, the programme was very good. Children had many opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings through role-play and music. They enjoyed drawing and painting and had access to a variety of art and craft tools.
- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Staff provided regular experiences for children to enjoy energetic physical play in-and-out-of-doors. Children were learning to climb, jump and run. They were developing good hand control using pencils, brushes, scissors and jigsaws.

Support for children and families

Staff knew children well and provided very good support for them and their families. They worked effectively with parents and carers.

Parents were encouraged to become involved in the life of the nursery and had opportunities to help with a variety of activities. They had good opportunities for formal and informal discussions with staff about their children's development and progress. Parents who responded to the questionnaire were very satisfied with all aspects of the nursery.

Strong staff teamwork was a major factor in the quality of support for children. Staff had developed very effective links with a range of support agencies and had a sound understanding of procedures for supporting children with special needs.

Management

The nursery was managed effectively. The headteacher was approachable, open and supportive and had developed positive relationships and good communication with staff and parents. She was supported very well by the nursery teacher, who had

responsibility for the day-to-day management of the nursery class.

Staff were well deployed. However, the headteacher should review the remit and responsibilities of the nursery teacher to provide a more balanced and appropriate workload. The headteacher provided informal feedback to staff on their plans and playroom activities. Working with staff, she should now establish more systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the nursery class to improve further the quality of children's experiences.

The nursery had a range of appropriate records. However, the headteacher should develop further policies and procedures to support nursery practice, especially a formal complaints procedure. Staff had access to a range of training and development opportunities through the local authority programme.

Key strengths

- The bright, stimulating and attractive nursery environment and the very good use of space.
- Children's very good experiences in emotional, personal and social development, communication and language, expressive and aesthetic development and physical development and movement.
- The very positive relationships between staff, children and parents.

Recommendations for improvement

- The headteacher should review the remit and responsibilities of the nursery teacher.
- The headteacher and staff should establish more systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the nursery class.
- The headteacher should improve further the management of health and safety procedures. She should develop further policies and procedures to support nursery practice.
- The nursery should develop a complaints policy which includes the contact details of the Care Commission.

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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