

**Integrated Inspection by the  
Care Commission and  
HM Inspectorate of Education of  
Ardgour Primary School Nursery Class  
The Highland Council**

**21 December 2005**

**Ardgour Primary School Nursery Class  
Clovullin  
Ardgour  
Fort William  
PH33 7AB**

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**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher, staff and the education authority. 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).

### **If you wish to comment about integrated pre-school inspections**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of integrated pre-school inspections, you should write in the first instance to Dr Bill Maxwell, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

### **Our complaints procedure**

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to either:

Complaints Coordinator	Hazel Dewart
Headquarters	HM Inspectorate of Education
Care Commission	Denholm House
Compass House	Almondvale Business Park
Riverside Drive	Almondvale Way
Dundee	Livingston
DD1 4NY	EH54 6GA

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You can write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail [enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk).

A copy of the HMIE complaints procedure is available from the HMIE website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01506 600 258.

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# **Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of Ardgour Primary School Nursery Class The Highland Council**

## **Introduction**

Ardgour Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in September 2005 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. HMIE carried out this inspection on behalf of both organisations and consulted the Care Commission about its findings. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. It was registered for 15 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was five.

## **The environment**

### **Standard 2**

The nursery was located in the primary school. The accommodation provided a safe, secure and stimulating environment. Staff organised playroom areas well so that children had space to play independently or in small groups. Children's work was attractively displayed to promote their successes and a notice board provided information for parents about the nursery. Children had daily access to energetic play either in the school hall or outside play area. The attractive outdoor play area shared with the primary school was easily accessible. Repairs to part of the playground had still to be completed.

The toilet facilities were shared with the primary school. Children were accompanied through the primary school class by staff to access toilet facilities. This limited children's independence. Staff carried out and recorded a series of useful and appropriate risk assessments. They needed to include an assessment on access to the internet in the nursery's policy on information and communications technology (ICT).

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

### **Standard 4 & 5**

Staff had very good relationships with children and were very aware of their individual needs. They valued children's opinions and encouraged them to express their views. There was a good balance between activities children could choose for themselves and those directed by adults. Activities were well chosen to suit the needs of all children. Quality interaction between staff and children supported and extended children's learning through play effectively. Staff's use of questioning, however, did not always extend children's learning sufficiently. Staff listened to children, whose views and interests influenced planning. Children were enthusiastic and motivated by tasks which were well matched to their interests and needs. They showed good levels of concentration and persevered well with challenging tasks.

Staff planning was very good and set out clearly what children were expected to learn. Staff made very effective use of their observations of children's progress to identify the next steps in their learning. They shared plans with parents and kept them well informed about their children's progress through helpful reports, which they shared with support agencies and P1 teachers, as appropriate.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Staff had created a positive and caring environment. They supported children well in forming friendships and encouraged them to play cooperatively and share resources. Children were happy and confident and followed the nursery rules. They were gaining independence at changing to go outside and at snack times. Children took a pride in their achievements. Staff arranged visits to other local nurseries to develop children's social skills. Staff made effective use of praise.
- The programme for communication and language development was good. Staff provided a wide range of opportunities for the children to develop their listening skills. Children listened very well to instructions, information, rhymes and at story time. They talked confidently to friends and adults. Many children took part in extended conversations. They had some opportunities to develop early writing skills as part of their role-play activities. Many children drew detailed pictures and were able to recognise and write their own names. Children were able to talk with enjoyment about books at story time. They had access to a book corner but they did not make sufficient use of it.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Staff made very good use of outings and visitors to help children to learn about their local environment. Children observed changes in the weather during an autumn walk. They collected materials from the beach which they used for a range of activities including sorting and grouping activities. Children were making very good progress in using the language of mathematics in their play. They were learning to experiment and solve problems. Staff promoted healthy eating at snack time. They did not yet make enough use of ICT to support children's learning.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Children expressed their thoughts and feelings very effectively through a range of media. Children's role-play was highly imaginative. Opportunities for role-play were well used by some children and they invented good stories about real-life situations in the home corner such as the plumber mending a sink. Children enjoyed singing songs. A few children were keen to sing nursery rhymes to other children. Staff encouraged singing and the nursery children had been part of the school choir that had won first prize in the under tens competition at Ardnamurchan Provincial Mod.

- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Staff ensured that children took part in daily physical exercise. Children had very good opportunities to enjoy energetic play such as riding wheeled toys. They enjoyed kicking and throwing balls. Children understood the need to play safely. Staff provided a wide range of activities for children to develop control of hands and fingers using brushes, tools, finger puppets and construction toys.

## **Support for children and families**

### Standard 6

Staff provided very good support for children and families. They knew children very well and responded to the needs of parents and carers. They provided informative newsletters and met regularly with parents to discuss children's progress. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with the work of the nursery. Most parents were confident that their children were receiving effective care and education.

Staff had established useful links with a range of support agencies. They were involved in a nursery screening pilot and used a range of appropriate strategies to support and monitor children's progress. Staff planned programmes to ensure progression in children's learning. They had effective arrangements in place to support new children and welcome them into the nursery.

## **Management**

### Standard 14

The headteacher provided good leadership. She demonstrated a high level of professional competence and a firm understanding of children's development and learning. She had established very good relationships with staff. The commitment of the headteacher and staff had contributed significantly to the strong teamwork. The headteacher was very well supported by the nursery cluster teacher. A comprehensive set of policies and procedures was in place and appropriate records were maintained for staff and children. Staff had been trained in child protection guidelines and followed these appropriately. The headteacher was aware of the implications of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice.

The headteacher met with nursery staff regularly. She had yet to establish procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery in a systematic and rigorous manner. However, she provided staff with supportive, informal feedback. The nursery assistant was responsible for the smooth day-to-day running of the nursery. She demonstrated a significant commitment and contribution to the continuous development of the nursery. She worked with the nursery team and they supported each other well. They had begun to use national guidelines to evaluate the work of the nursery. The headteacher was not sufficiently involved in this process. Parents were consulted about the developments in the nursery, the most recent being the ICT development.

A staff development and review process was being implemented and good opportunities were available for further training.

## Key strengths

- The overall high quality of children's learning experiences.
- The very good relationships between staff, parents and children within the caring and supportive environment.
- The high-quality support for children's learning and development.
- The hard work and commitment of staff.
- The effective headteacher and the quality of team work.
- The very good use of the outdoor environment to extend children's learning experiences.

## Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

There were no recommendations.

## Recommendations for improvement

- As planned, the headteacher should work closely with staff to formalise and implement a more systematic and rigorous procedure to monitor and evaluate the work of the nursery.

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.

Gail Simcox  
HM Inspectorate of Education