

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

19 April 2006

**Ardler Primary School Nursery Class
Turnberry Avenue
Dundee
DD2 3TP**

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

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 and HMIE website: 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 Kenneth Muir, 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. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk.

A copy of the HMIE complaints procedure is available from the HMIE website at www.hmie.gov.uk or by telephoning 01506 600 258.

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Introduction

Ardler Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in January 2006 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. It was registered for 50 children attending any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 85.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was co-located with a family support service. Staff in both services worked together to support children and families. The nursery was located in a large, open-plan playroom divided into two areas within the primary school building. A smaller room, within the support service, was used by the early intervention nursery nurse. The entrance area was bright and welcoming and had a very good range of well-presented information for parents and visitors. Staff displayed a variety of children's work which helped to stimulate their learning. They also made effective use of space to allow for both individual and group play. The accommodation and equipment were clean and well maintained. The nursery teacher had begun the process of formally recording risk assessments for the premises both inside and outdoors. Staff followed good hygiene practices and a policy was in place on infection control.

All accidents were appropriately recorded. However, no member of the nursery team held an up-to-date first aid certificate. Lunch was provided for children in the school dining room. No choice of food was available and children were provided with unsatisfactory plastic cutlery.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Children chose effectively from a wide range of activities. They were motivated and purposeful in their play and were given time to develop their understanding. Staff planned a good balance to the day, giving children appropriate quiet times to relax. A few children were not sufficiently challenged in problem solving through their play. Some staff had positive relationships with children and interacted well with them. Overall, however, staff interaction with children was fair. Not all staff interacted effectively to extend or support children's learning. A few were not always responsive to children's needs. They were not sufficiently positive in their use of praise.

The nursery team met regularly to plan learning activities. They had identified what they wanted children to learn in the long and

medium term. Staff evaluated their planning and recorded children's responses to activities. They also recorded their observations of children in line with recently-introduced formats. However, these recorded observations were not yet of a consistently high standard to help plan the next steps in children's learning.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for children's emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were very happy and confident. They knew their routines and were comfortable with them. Children were developing friendships and were thoughtful of each other. They cooperated very well with each other, for example in playing board games. Most children concentrated well to complete tasks. They were developing very good independence through snack and tidy-time routines and through changing themselves to go out.
- The programme for children's communication and language development was good. Children very effectively listened for a range of purposes. Most talked well to adults and each other at activities, explaining and sharing ideas. Children went to the book corner and used reference books at the display tables. They took story sacks home and staff arranged visits to the library to promote an interest in books. A few children used the writing table. They were making marks or experimenting with early writing activities. Most children recognised their own names in print. Early reading and writing activities, however, were not integrated well enough into children's play.
- The programme for children's knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children were developing very good mathematical skills, such as counting, measuring and sorting which they applied during their play. They were learning about people at work such as ambulance men. Children enjoyed the visit by the urban ranger, who helped them to make bird feeders. Children did not have sufficient opportunities to learn about their environment through outdoor play. Children used the computers effectively. However, they did not have sufficient opportunities to develop skills in the use of a range of information and communications technology.
- The programme for children's expressive and aesthetic development was good. Staff encouraged children to explore the different media they used in art and craft activities. Children expressed their feelings and observations effectively in their craft and model making. They stayed in character and expressed themselves imaginatively in a wide range of role-play settings. Children enjoyed singing and playing instruments at group time. The music corner was not used effectively by children, who had too few opportunities to make music independently.
- The programme for children's physical development and movement was good. Staff planned regular weekly visits to the gym and hall for gym lessons. A few children enjoyed energetic outdoor play, which was offered most days. They were learning about safe practices out-of-doors where they

were riding large toys. However, not all children had access to energetic outdoor play. They were developing good control of hands and fingers using a wide range of resources including the drawing table, play dough, board games and scissors. Children did not have sufficient opportunities for physical play inside.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff had developed a good range of methods for communicating with parents and sharing information with them. Parents completed booklets about children to contribute to children's records. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed satisfaction with most aspects of the service. Some parents wanted more information about their children's progress and a clearer explanation of the work of the nursery. Although key workers knew the children well, they kept very little information about each child's progress and development. This limited their ability to respond appropriately to the needs of individual children.

Staff had established effective links with a range of support agencies such as the speech therapist. The early intervention nursery nurse consulted appropriately with parents of children experiencing difficulties and agreed strategies for children's learning and development. She worked very effectively with children, supporting them in their development of a range of skills. She also liaised well with the family centre and had developed very good links to ensure a smooth transition for children starting nursery. She kept detailed records of children's progress, but these were not used effectively enough by all staff to ensure children's individual needs were met.

Information about children's progress in key aspects of learning and development was shared appropriately with parents and receiving schools.

Management

Standard 14

There were weaknesses in the overall leadership of the nursery. Although the headteacher had overall management responsibility for the nursery, senior staff vacancies within the primary school and the nursery limited the contact she had had with the nursery staff team. Although she stated that she visited the nursery daily, she had informally delegated the day-to-day management of the nursery to the nursery teacher. This responsibility, in addition to her work within the nursery room, added an additional workload for the nursery teacher. The management team was working hard to achieve improvement in the nursery, and had requested and received helpful advice from the local authority.

The nursery teacher was very knowledgeable about early years issues and was working hard to develop effective practice in the nursery. She promoted evaluation by staff through the planning meetings, and used national and local guidelines. She also led by example through working in the playroom. She effectively supported the early intervention nursery nurse. She ensured the smooth running of nursery through a period of changing staff and the temporary housing of the Brackens Nursery Class within Ardler. Recently-introduced initiatives, such as the creation of children's records, had yet to have an impact on practice and

show an improvement in the nursery. The nursery teacher kept the headteacher well informed of developments.

Appropriate policies and procedures were in place which provided guidance for staff. The nursery provided a separate, helpful handbook for parents. Although the nursery team had been issued with guidelines regarding child protection, they had not received recent child protection training. The headteacher and the nursery staff were aware of the role of the Scottish Social Services Council. Staff had been recruited in line with local authority procedures and held appropriate education and childcare qualifications.

The headteacher had not yet reviewed staff's development needs and agreed future training. Although staff were given the opportunity to access training to further their own development, not all staff made best use of these opportunities. The management team recognised the importance of the process of self-evaluation but had not involved all staff or parents in an audit of the nursery.

Key strengths

- Happy, confident, independent children who were fully involved in their learning activities.
- The very good programme for emotional, personal, and social development.
- The high-quality support for children with additional needs provided through the early intervention programme.
- The vision and commitment of the nursery teacher.

Recommendations for improvement

- The nursery should improve observation and assessment to ensure that children's individual learning needs are met.
- Staff should interact with children more effectively to extend and support children's learning.
- The management team should develop better systems for self-evaluation and quality assurance.
- All staff working with children should receive child protection training.
- A member of staff with first aid training should be present in the nursery.
- The nursery should improve arrangements for the lunch time meal, paying particular regard to the location for dining, the choice of food for children and the use of appropriate cutlery.

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.

Patricia Mackay
Care Commission

Gail Simcox
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