

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Arnprior Nursery School
Stirling Council**

22 June 2005

**Arnprior Nursery School
Arnprior
Stirling
FK7 0NF**

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 acting head of establishment, staff and the education authority. Copies are also available on the Care Commission website:
www.carecommission.com and HMIE website: www.hmie.gov.uk.

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Introduction

Arnprior Nursery School was inspected in March 2005 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged two to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 67.

The environment

Standard 2

The accommodation provided a safe, secure and stimulating environment. Children's work was attractively displayed throughout the nursery to highlight their learning and promote their achievements. Staff had organised playrooms well to enable children to play independently or in small groups. The large, well-resourced garden area was used effectively for energetic physical play. Staff also used this area well to stimulate children's interest in nature. The well-organised resources were accessible to children and allowed them to exercise choice in their activities.

The nursery was situated on a busy main road. Staff were aware of the risks to children and ensured that the outdoor area was fully enclosed before children went out to play.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff throughout the nursery had established high-quality relationships with children. They valued children's opinions and encouraged them to express their views. Activities for younger children were stimulating and well chosen to meet their individual needs. Children had a good balance of free play and group activities. They had very good opportunities to express their creativity using a wide range of arts and crafts materials. They enjoyed experiences which encouraged them to use all their senses to explore their environment.

In the playroom used by older children, staff listened to children and used questions and dialogue very effectively to support and extend learning. They organised a well-structured day and provided a good balance between adult-led activities and those children chose for themselves. Children were enthusiastic and highly 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 intervened sensitively to support those children who needed help to focus on activities.

Staff maintained folios of children's work and recorded their achievements. Children discussed their achievements with enthusiasm. Staff were developing procedures for planning, assessment and reporting. They observed children at play and noted their progress. They now needed to make better use of this information to plan the next steps in children's learning more effectively and set out clearly what children were expected to learn.

Features of the programmes for children aged three to five included the following.

- The programme for children's emotional, personal and social development was very good. Staff had created a very warm and positive atmosphere which allowed children to develop their sense of self esteem. Children were confident and happy in the nursery routines. They were independent at changing and snack times. They responded very enthusiastically to staff requests to tidy up after activities. Many were developing friendships and showed caring attitudes towards each other. Children cooperated very well with each other in their play.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Children listened very well and talked confidently to friends and adults. Many children took part well in extended conversations. Children enjoyed stories and chose books independently from the book corner and other play areas. They were developing very good early writing skills within the context of play. Staff developed children's understanding of the link between print and the spoken word effectively. Many children were recognising and writing their own names.
- The programme for children's 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 used the very well-designed outdoor play area happily to explore the natural world. They were learning to experiment and solve problems in water and sand activities. Children used the computer well and discussed the programs with friends. They were making good progress in using the language of mathematics in their play. Children were developing their concept of time through use of clocks and timers.
- The programme for children's expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Children expressed their thoughts and feelings very effectively through a range of media. Staff valued their work and displayed it attractively. Children used a good range of materials to design and make pictures and models. Children's role-play was highly imaginative. They developed their characters effectively through the use of masks, puppets and costumes. Staff provided very good opportunities for children to listen to music. Parents who played instruments visited the nursery to share the experience of music. Children sang with enthusiasm and in tune.
- The programme for children's physical development and movement was very good. Children had very good opportunities to enjoy energetic physical exercise indoors

and outside. They were skilled at riding wheeled toys. Children showed a good understanding of safe practices in energetic play. Staff provided a wide range of activities for children to develop control of hands and fingers including the use of brushes, tools and pens.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff provided very good support for children and families. They knew children very well and were flexible in their response to the needs of parents and carers. Staff provided informative newsletters and good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. They operated a book-lending system to encourage parents to read with children at home. The nursery was developing communications and working with parents further.

Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with most aspects of the work of the nursery. Most parents were confident that their children were receiving effective care and education. Staff effectively supported a number of children with additional needs. They had prepared suitable individualised educational programmes for these children and worked closely with a wide range of agencies including the early years support service and visiting specialists. Children moving to P1 were well supported and information was shared appropriately with parents and receiving schools.

Management

Standard 14

The nursery was well managed by the acting head of establishment and senior early years educator. They provided strong direction and guidance for staff and had clear plans for future development. They enjoyed positive relationships with staff and parents and had created effective teamwork within the nursery. A comprehensive range of policies influenced good practice and staff demonstrated a good awareness of these, including child protection. The acting head of establishment and staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and the implications for staff.

The management team had a high profile in the nursery. This enabled them to monitor both staff practice and children's experiences informally. No staff member, including the acting head of establishment, had participated in a professional review. However, the acting head of establishment held regular individual and team meetings with staff. She encouraged them to attend relevant training and to share the information with colleagues. The range of procedures used to evaluate the quality of the service included staff involvement in monitoring and evaluation, and consultation with parents. These evaluations informed the development plan and appropriate priorities were being undertaken by staff. The acting head of establishment should now act on her recognition of the need to develop and formalise quality assurance and put in place procedures for staff development and review.

Key strengths

- The high quality of staff interaction with children to support and extend their learning.
- The breadth and quality of the curriculum and very good experiences for children.
- The commitment of staff to the welfare of all children.
- The high-quality support for children with additional needs.
- The very effective leadership of the acting head of establishment.
- The very good use of space and resources to support children's learning, especially the outdoor play area.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The service had met one of the two recommendations made in the previous Care Commission inspection report. Action had still to be taken in relation to implementing formal systems for staff review and development.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should develop their planning and assessment procedures further and identify the next steps in children's learning.
- As planned, the acting head of establishment should work closely with staff to formalise and implement a more systematic and rigorous procedure to monitor and evaluate the work of the nursery.
- The education authority should work with the nursery to develop procedures for staff review.

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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