

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

**16 March 2005**

**Auldearn Primary School Nursery Class  
Manse Road  
Auldearn  
Nairn  
IV12 5SX**

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 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).

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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## **Introduction**

Auldearn Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in November 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 pre-school children aged three to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 32.

## **The environment**

### **Standard 2**

The nursery was situated within the primary school but with a separate entrance. Entry systems to the nursery and from the playroom into school were safe and secure. The nursery consisted of an entrance area, toilet and playroom. Children were cared for in a safe, hygienic, pleasant and attractive environment. Staff used space effectively and the layout of the playroom allowed children to play independently or in a group.

The nursery had an outdoor play area leading from the nursery entrance. This area was not fully enclosed and was a direct route for all visitors to the school. The nursery also used the school gym and a large school playground with grassed and tarmac areas. These were some distance away and accessed through the primary school. While staff were vigilant, improvements needed to be made to the outdoor area to enable more secure usage. The headteacher should further develop risk assessments for the nursery.

There was a good range of resources. Play equipment was clean and well maintained. Staff took appropriate measures to control the spread of infection. Staff should continue to develop cleaning and maintenance schedules. Policies and procedures were in place to ensure children did not have access to inappropriate materials, including safe use of the internet.

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

### **Standard 4 & 5**

Staff knew children well and had formed very positive relationships with them. They interacted effectively with children using praise and encouragement to develop their confidence and self esteem. Children were confident, interested, cooperative and concentrated well in the welcoming and caring learning environment. Staff should make more effective use of questioning to challenge and extend children's learning.

Staff planned a broad and balanced range of themed activities to promote children's learning and development. These were sufficiently flexible to take account of children's interests. Staff made regular observations of children at play and compiled individual and group assessment records and folios of children's work. However, they had identified the need to develop planning and had recently introduced new procedures. Staff should ensure the revised approach is manageable, clearly identifies what children are expected to learn and makes effective use of assessment information to plan the next steps in children's learning.

Parents had good formal and informal opportunities to share information about children with staff. Parents received informative annual written reports on children's progress.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme in emotional, personal and social development was good. Staff had high, but realistic, expectations of children's behaviour and encouraged their social skills well. Children were developing friendships and cooperated with staff and each other. They were able to share and take turns. Children knew nursery routines well and were following hygiene and safety rules. Staff needed to increase opportunities for children to take simple responsibilities and further develop independence.
- The programme in communication and language was good. Children took part in a wide range of activities to develop listening and talking skills. Children listened well to group instructions and when using the listening centre. They initiated conversations and contributed appropriately in group discussion. A teddy was used very well to encourage children to talk in the group. Staff should continue to use this technique to help children to describe, predict and explain. Staff effectively promoted children's interest in books using regular story-telling sessions and library visits. They gave children access to a wide range of books including those made at nursery. While name cards were used for coat pegs and snack, staff should make further use of these and, more generally, print on signs, labels, captions and displays, to extend children's early reading skills. Some children used the well-resourced writing area independently.
- The programme in knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children enjoyed useful outings to the local park, shops and library to extend their knowledge of the environment. They had visits from the janitor, ranger and fireman to develop their understanding of people's roles. Staff should continue and extend children's awareness of a range of cultures. They provided good experiences for children to learn about seasons, weather, planting and growing. Children explored a good range of materials using their senses. Staff paid good attention to developing children's awareness of early mathematics in play. They needed to extend children's opportunities to solve problems and learn about technology to provide further challenge.
- The programme in expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children enjoyed songs and rhymes, making and using instruments and taking part in singing games. A music

teacher supplemented children's musical experiences. Children accessed an imaginative bears' house to act out a story. They also used a farm set and railway for role-play. Staff should make further use of these to develop literacy and numeracy. Children took part in a good range of art activities including making clay hedgehogs, painting and drawing. However, most activities were adult led. Children needed more access to materials to develop self-expression and creativity.

- The programme in physical development and movement was good. Staff provided a good range of energetic activities both inside and out. Children had useful outings to the park and regular access to the school playground and gym to develop skills such as running, jumping, balancing, throwing and catching. Improvement to the outdoor nursery area would allow more frequent and independent access to a wider range of equipment such as bicycles and climbing frame. Children were developing good hand control using play dough tools, brushes, construction materials and pencils.

## **Support for children and families**

### Standard 6

The nursery gave good support to children and their families. Staff had established very positive relationships with children and parents. They were responsive and supportive in meeting their differing needs and circumstances. Parents received an informative handbook and regular newsletters, detailing nursery practice and events. The notice board provided information on staff, planning, snack, activities and community resources. Parents were invited to make suggestions about the nursery. Parents supported the nursery through the parents' association, helping on outings and taking part in events. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with the provision made by the nursery. A few wanted further opportunities to work in partnership.

The nursery had good arrangement for transition. Parents and children made prior visits and shared information with staff before children started nursery. P1 staff made several visits to the nursery and children experienced a supported playtime and spent a session in the P1 class. A 'buddy' system, where older pupils took responsibility for new entrants, helped ensure a smooth transition. There was good contact with other early years provision and schools. Staff should refine procedures and compile a transition policy and share it with parents. Information was shared with parents, staff and other agency personnel who were involved with children requiring additional support in their learning, when applicable.

## **Management**

### Standard 14

The headteacher, with overall responsibility, viewed the nursery as an important part of the school. She had formed positive relations with staff and parents and was found by them to be approachable and supportive. Day-to-day management of the nursery had been delegated to the nursery coordinator teacher and two nursery nurses. Staff were motivated and had good cooperative working relationships. They took good account of the changes in staffing and part-time working. However, to ensure clarity, efficiency and effectiveness, the headteacher and staff

should review and document roles and responsibilities. The role of management should be more fully explained to parents. A wide range of appropriate policies and procedures had been developed to ensure the smooth running of the nursery. All staff had been trained in child protection policy and procedures and followed the local authority guidelines. The headteacher had limited knowledge of the Scottish Social Service Council Codes of Practice and should access further information. Staff needed to revise procedures for recording accidents and the management of medication to keep parents fully informed. A staff review and development programme was in place and staff attended training to develop their skills.

Staff showed commitment to the development of the nursery and a development plan was improving aspects of provision. However, the process of self-evaluation in the nursery was at an early stage. The headteacher needed to formalise procedures and ensure more robust systems for monitoring all aspects of the work of the nursery with staff.

## **Key strengths**

- The cooperation, confidence and concentration of children in the welcoming and caring learning environment.
- The very positive relationships among staff, children and parents.
- The overall structure of the curriculum.
- The good support for children and their families and the opportunities for two-way communication.
- The quality of relationships among the headteacher and all staff and their commitment to the further development of the nursery.

## **Other Issues**

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

There had been limited action taken on the previous recommendation on improving the outdoor play area and this now becomes a requirement.

## **Recommendations for improvement**

- Management and staff should compile or adjust policies and procedures in relation to risk assessment, the management of medication, cleaning, maintenance and transition.
- The headteacher and staff should further develop and implement planning procedures.
- Management and staff should review and document roles and responsibilities to aid clarity and effective working.
- The headteacher should develop more rigorous self-evaluation procedures with staff to ensure continuous improvement of the nursery.

## Requirements

- The nursery outdoor play area must be made secure and ideally not be used as part of a walkway into the main school.  
SSI 2002/114 Regulation 10 Fitness of Premises

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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