

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

31 August 2005

Bonar Bridge Primary School Nursery Class
Bonar Bridge
Sutherland
IV24 3AP

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 education authority. 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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Introduction

Bonar Bridge Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in April 2005 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 in two classes. One class, in the morning, provided for education through the medium of English and the other, in the afternoon, used the medium of Gaelic. Evaluations refer jointly to both classes unless stated otherwise. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 16, with nine children attending in the morning and seven in the afternoon.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery class was located in a separate building within the grounds of the primary school. It had a playroom with a kitchen area, staffroom and outside play area. Children also had access to the school gym. The environment was clean and hygienic, well decorated and in a good state of repair.

Very good arrangements were in place with regard to the security and safety of children. There was a key pad security system on the main entrance and the outside area was safe and securely fenced. Appropriate risk assessments had been undertaken in respect of the internal premises, outdoor play area, school gym, and trips out of the nursery.

The nursery was well resourced and provided a very good choice of play, activity and learning opportunities. The layout of the playroom provided space for children to play independently or in groups. A good selection of children's work was displayed throughout the nursery. The outdoor play area had recently been upgraded to a high standard. It provided opportunities for energetic play as well as incorporating a range of interesting and stimulating additions, including balancing beams, garden area, wind chimes and wild bird feeders. Picnic tables and seats also allowed children opportunity to work and eat their snack outside.

Appropriate written procedures relating to the control of the spread of infection were in place. Cleaning rotas of the premises, toys and equipment were in place, together with a record of cleaning undertaken. There were suitable adult and child height hand-washing and toilet facilities and children were encouraged to make proper use of these at all times.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff provided a very welcoming environment and had very positive relationships with children. They skilfully interacted with children to support and extend their learning. Staff had high expectations of children's learning and behaviour. They chose activities and resources well to meet children's needs. There was a very good balance between free play and more structured activities. Staff exhibited a sound knowledge and understanding of children's development and play. Early literacy and numeracy activities were set firmly in the context of play.

Staff from both nursery classes planned together. Planning was closely related to the five key areas of children's development and learning. Evaluative assessments were used to plan next steps in learning for individual children and groups. Observations were carried out and recorded to show progress and development. Work folders containing dated samples of work were available for parents to view regularly.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for personal, social and emotional development was very good. Children were happy, safe and secure in the nursery. They were comfortable with simple rules and routines. They were developing confidence and good self esteem. Staff consistently used praise to encourage children to persevere when tasks were more difficult. Children helped prepare and serve snack. They understood personal hygiene and were developing independence appropriately. They played cooperatively, took turns and shared resources well. They were aware of and respected the needs and feelings of other children. Staff provided a range of opportunities for children to appreciate the importance of celebrating religious and cultural festivals. Children were developing very positive attitudes to diversity.
- In the English-medium class, the programme for communication and language was very good. Children listened and talked for a range of purposes to adults and each other. They enjoyed using language to tell stories, ask questions, predict endings and sequence ideas. They took part in short and extended conversations and were able to express their feelings and needs appropriately. The attractive book corner was used effectively to promote an interest in reading in both languages and in finding information. Staff used information and communications technology (ICT), including computer programmes and listening tapes, to encourage children to read. Children were beginning to recognise the link between the spoken and the written word. Staff provided a variety of papers and writing utensils to allow children to experiment with a variety of symbols, letters and drawings. There was a very good range of environmental print in both languages throughout the playroom to promote the importance of reading in everyday life situations.
- In the Gaelic-medium class, the programme for communication and language was very good. Gaelic was a second language for all the children. Staff placed good

emphasis on developing children's oral skills. Children were encouraged and supported to try out new vocabulary in Gaelic, and most did so. Staff spoke mostly in Gaelic and children responded appropriately, for the most part in English. Role-play in the 'hospital' area was used effectively to promote language development through talking. Children enjoyed listening to stories and songs in Gaelic. The attractive book corner was used to promote an interest in reading. Children were developing a good understanding of the link between the spoken and written word. Staff encouraged children to develop an understanding of the language and layout of books. They provided a range of writing materials including whiteboards, markers, pens, papers and card to encourage children to make marks, scribble and write letters.

- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Staff provided a range of scientific, technological, ICT, mathematical and numerical learning opportunities for children to develop skills and knowledge. There was a variety of resources to promote an interest in finding out about how things work, including torches, magnifying glasses and magnets. Children used sand and water play to experiment. They enjoyed finding out about how things worked by directing the remote-control car and using magnifying glasses, magnets and torches. They were also developing skills in using the computer. They were learning about the care of pets, baby farm animals and plants. They had experience of planting, growing and harvesting in the outdoor garden area. Staff provided a range of opportunities to encourage children to develop their powers of observation and a sense of wonder about the world through using their senses. Wind chimes, windmills, and equipment for blowing bubbles in the outdoor area effectively promoted an interest in the elements. Children were able to count, sort, match, measure and recognise simple shapes and colours. They were beginning to recognise daily time sequences.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Staff provided a wide range of art and craft activities to encourage children to be expressive and creative, including painting, gluing, modelling and printing. Children used role-play in a variety of contexts, including dressing up, dramatic play and puppetry. The hospital play gave children opportunity to recreate situations and to make sense of real life. Children used musical instruments to accompany music, make music and express feelings. They knew a variety of traditional and modern songs and rhymes and sang with enjoyment. Staff provided music for listening related to children's interests. Children moved rhythmically to music and participated in dance.
- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Staff provided a wide variety of tools to encourage children to develop hand and finger control, including scissors, writing tools, computer mouse, remote-control unit and construction toys. Children were becoming skilled in using various fasteners. They had daily access to the outdoor area or to the school gym. They were developing skills and confidence to run, jump, hop, throw,

catch, balance and climb. Staff provided wheeled toys for children to ride, push and pull. Children cooperated well with each other throughout physical play. They were developing an awareness of space and of the need to be safe in energetic play.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff were supportive and sensitive to the needs of individual children and families. They actively encouraged parents to discuss children's development informally and, when necessary, in a more formal and confidential setting. Parents were encouraged to collect children from the playroom and to view the activities they had undertaken.

Parents received an informative nursery handbook at the start of the school year. The nursery notice board had a very good range of information about the nursery, its planning, curriculum and general events. It displayed photographs of all nursery staff and other support professionals, including the speech and language therapist, school secretary and support for learning teacher.

There were very good links established with teaching staff within the primary school. A very positive transition programme ensured a smooth move from nursery to P1.

Very good relationships had been established with other health and educational professionals. There were no children with additional support needs in the nursery. However, staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedure to access support for children with additional learning needs.

Management

Standard 14

Leadership of the nursery was very good. The headteacher was enthusiastic and committed to developing and supporting the service. A very positive, professional relationship had been developed between the headteacher and staff. A rigorous and systematic monitoring and evaluation process included observation of practice, planning and informal and formal meetings. Formal minutes and feedback were provided for staff. The teacher coordinator had completed staff development and review meetings.

There was very good communication between all staff, and relationships were very positive. Systems were in place to allow open and effective daily communication between staff in the Gaelic- and English-medium classes.

Parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire were very pleased with all aspects of the service. Parents were encouraged to contribute to the smooth running of the nursery through regular contact and formal and informal opportunities for them to express their views. Children were consulted about their favourite and least-liked activities.

All staff were aware of, and working within, a very good range of written policies and procedures, including those for child protection. All policies and procedures were readily available to parents and other professionals within the nursery. All staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and the effect registration would have on them.

Key strengths

- Strong, motivating leadership of the headteacher to support and develop the service.
- A hard working, dedicated staff team committed to continual improvement of the nursery.
- Very effective staff and child interactions which supported and extended children's learning.
- The high quality of programmes across the five key areas of the curriculum.
- Very positive relationships between staff, children and parents.
- The outside area used to promote learning throughout the whole curriculum.

Recommendations for improvement

- The headteacher and staff should further develop work folders, children's profiles and information from parents within one working document for each child to record and inform progress and development.

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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