

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

8 March 2006

**Castletown Primary School Nursery Class
Castletown
Thurso
Caithness
KW14 8UA**

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

Castletown Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in November 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 23 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 23.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located in a wing of the primary school building. It consisted of an entrance area and playroom and provided a safe, secure environment. The playroom was spacious and provided areas where children could play independently and in small groups. Although the overall condition of the playroom was good, it would benefit from redecoration. The nursery did not have a designated outdoor play area but did have access to the substantial playground shared with the primary. The toilet was located outside the playroom and children accessed it independently. There was a need to provide a locking device which could be opened from the outside. Staff should ensure that children are adequately supervised when leaving the playroom as there were a number of potential hazards. For example, the carpet en route to the toilet was loose. Staff ensured that play equipment was clean and well maintained and effective measures were in place to control the spread of infection. Some risk assessments were in place but they were inadequate and staff were not fully aware of them. Fire extinguishers were located throughout and exits clearly marked. The fire safety assessment and fire register was not kept up to date.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff were friendly and approachable and had developed very good relationships with the children. They engaged with the children and used questioning very effectively to support and extend children's learning. There was a good balance between adult-led activities and activities which children could choose for themselves. Staff provided opportunities for children to access a good range of resources and children were confident in their choices.

Staff planned and evaluated weekly to ensure learning experiences for the children were appropriate. However, planning did not always reflect children's interests. Useful observation and assessment information was gathered and used to identify next steps in children's learning. However, information was not gathered systematically or updated regularly.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were happy and secure. They worked independently and in small groups, cooperating and sharing resources with each other. Children persevered with puzzles and collage activities. Staff encouraged them to develop independence skills in tidying up, washing hands and pouring drinks at snack. They were very good at using praise and encouragement to recognise achievement and raise children's self esteem.
- The programme for communication and language was good. Staff provided very good opportunities for children to develop skills in listening and talking. They encouraged children to contribute to discussions and valued their contributions. Children had a number of opportunities to develop skills in identifying their own name. They enjoyed having stories read to them on a daily basis and were developing an awareness of the language and layout of books. The selection of reading resources available for children in the nursery was limited. A home lending initiative allowed children to take books home and further develop an awareness of print. Children did not have sufficient opportunity to develop early writing skills through play.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children were developing simple shape and number awareness through play. Staff encouraged them to count out during group time. Children enjoyed exploring pattern and sequencing activities. They had recently been investigating the growth process and were involved in measuring each other. Some children enjoyed investigating pouring and filling activities in the sand tray. They were learning about their local environment through visits to the hospital and the forest. Children used a computer well to explore pattern and colour. However, staff should review the positioning of this to allow children better access. Children had limited opportunity to develop problem-solving skills through science.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children made good use of small world toys such as the cars and road mat to develop imaginative play. They were dressing up and taking part in role-play in the 'bakers shop' in the imaginative area. Staff provided regular singing opportunities and involved children in exploring sound and rhythm. Some children were painting at the easel, exploring colour and printing with their hands. Children did not have sufficient access to a variety of art and craft materials to allow them to explore and be creative.
- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Staff used another room housed within the school to provide regular opportunities for children to take part in energetic physical activity. Children explored the different

ways they could use their bodies and were developing an awareness of space. They accessed the designated outdoor area regularly to use wheeled toys, balls and hoops and develop coordination skills. Staff did not plan sufficiently for physical play to ensure the needs of all children were met.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

There was a planned programme of support for children transferring to primary school and good links had been established with the playgroup. Parents were kept informed about the work of the nursery through regular newsletters, a notice board and annual progress meetings. Some parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires stated they would like to be better informed about the work of the nursery. Staff needed to look at ways to improve communications with parents to ensure they were kept adequately informed about their children's progress.

Staff had established links with outside agencies such as occupational health and physiotherapy to support children who had additional needs. As yet, individualised educational programmes were not in place for children with additional needs.

Management

Standard 14

There had been recent changes in the nursery staff and the headteacher had been very supportive in helping staff establish new roles and remits. Staff found her to be very approachable. She held regular meetings with the senior early years worker to discuss issues arising in the nursery. Staff had access to a range of training courses provided by the local authority. However, a formal system of staff appraisal where individual training needs were identified was not yet in place. Individual training records were not available.

A comprehensive range of policies and procedures was in place and all staff were familiar with child protection procedures. Staff were not aware of the work of the Scottish Social Services Council.

Staff were not sufficiently involved in the self-evaluation process and the headteacher had identified this as an area for development. She visited the nursery regularly but systems to ensure the work of the nursery was formally monitored were not yet in place.

Key strengths

- The very good programme in emotional, personal and social development.
- The high-quality staff/child interactions.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

Most of the issues raised in the previous inspection report had been addressed. However, the following recommendations had still to be addressed:

- The redecoration of the nursery.
- Improvements in parental involvement and communication.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should further develop risk assessments to include toileting.
- Staff should improve areas of curriculum delivery as outlined in this report.
- All staff should become familiar with the work of the Scottish Social Services Council.
- The headteacher should improve overall leadership to address issues raised in this report.

Requirements

- A record of all fire drills and fire alarm system tests needs to be maintained. Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002 Number 114 Regulation 19 (3)(c) Records.

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.

Donald Currie
HM Inspectorate of Education