

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

18 January 2006

**Conon Bridge Primary School Nursery Class
Leanaig Road
Conon Bridge
Ross-shire
IV7 8BE**

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

Conon Bridge Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in September 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. It was registered for 34 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 30.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located within the school at Conon Bridge and provided a safe and secure environment. Children's work was displayed on walls and staff used space well to provide various activities for children. They used the notice board to provide parents with useful information, including details about the curriculum. The floor surface within the nursery was aged and in need of replacement. The water and sand play area was too small. Children had good access to computer and other information and communications technology (ICT). Staff had appropriate controls for internet access.

Staff ensured that the secure, outside play area was well equipped with appropriate equipment. Children also accessed the school gym and community room for regular energetic play. Staff provided a few opportunities for energetic play through supervised access to the large school field. Parents and carers accessed the nursery from the enclosed outside play area. However, this area became congested at the start and end of the session. Staff needed to review arrangements at these times.

Staff had undertaken appropriate risk assessments for various activities including outings. They had an appropriate infection control policy. Staff were aware of their responsibilities in maintaining good hygiene practices. Fire exits were clearly marked, fire procedures were in place and records maintained.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had positive relationships with children. They valued children as individuals and encouraged them to contribute to discussions. Children were confident and engaged readily with activities. A few were very well motivated. However, staff did not intervene sufficiently to develop children's play. They did not

respond enough to children's ideas and extend or support their learning. Staff did not adequately develop questioning to extend children's learning and provide more challenge. Staff had organised an appropriate balance between activities children chose for themselves and those directed by adults.

The nursery team met regularly to plan learning activities and took appropriate account of children's interests. Staff did not take enough account of the stages of children's development and learning to plan appropriate learning experiences. They provided a good range of activities but these were not sufficiently challenging for some children. Staff observed the children and recorded children's progress, but did not use this information enough to impact fully on the children's learning. They kept parents well informed about their children's progress through informal discussions, meetings and an annual written report.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for children's emotional, personal and social development was good. Staff had created a happy and purposeful learning environment. Children were secure with nursery routines. They were encouraged to express their feelings and to be independent in their dressing and personal hygiene. The majority of children expressed views and choices and made plans for their play. Most played well with their friends. Staff encouraged children to share their interests and toys at 'show and tell' time. The nursery teacher had made very helpful posters about the nursery's rules for children, which most knew. However, staff needed to ensure that children consistently follow these rules.
- The programme for children's communication and language development was good. Children listened with enjoyment and responded to a group story. Most children expressed themselves well and talked about their interests and experiences. However, they needed more support to listen carefully to each other and adults. Children used the book corner very effectively. They effectively retold stories to each other using the books. Children had appropriate opportunities to explore early reading and writing skills in different contexts. They enjoyed writing letters for the postman to deliver to the house corner.
- The programme for children's knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children enjoyed playing with plastic insects in the sand tray. They had a good knowledge of insects and discussed them in detail. Staff provided good opportunities for children to develop skills in counting, matching and sorting. They were learning about healthy lifestyles and the dental hygienist had discussed personal hygiene with children. Children had a few opportunities to learn about different cultures, including learning about a nursery in Gambia. However, children did not have sufficient play materials to develop their understanding of different cultures. Children did not have enough opportunities to enhance their learning through problem solving, investigating or exploring the environment.
- The programme for children's expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children enjoyed experimenting with

clay and used a range of materials to create clay models. They engaged in painting but had insufficient materials to express their ideas and feelings. Children used role-play areas to recreate situations and act out stories in the home corner. They made good use of costumes to enhance this, including postman props. Children enjoyed learning new songs at singing time. However, they needed further opportunities to make music and experiment with musical instruments.

- The programme for children's physical development and movement was good. Children were improving their hand and finger control through using a wide range of resources including the drawing table, clay and board games. A few were adept with scissors. Children had regular opportunities to enjoy physical play indoors through weekly use of the hall and large community room. They had daily, outdoor play in a small, secure area. Children were confident on the large apparatus and were developing good skills in balance, using stilts and when climbing. However, overall, staff did not provide sufficient opportunities for children to enjoy regular energetic play.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff knew children and their families well and responded appropriately and sensitively to individual needs. They had established links with parents through informal and formal meetings, newsletters and an open door policy. Staff had successfully established the lending of story sacks and library books to parents to encourage their children's reading at home.

Parents and carers surveyed were very happy with almost all aspects of the service. A few wanted more information about their children's progress. Staff operated a 'buddy' system to aid children's smooth transition when they moved from nursery to school.

Staff had an appropriate policy for supporting children with additional needs. They were responsive in identifying children who needed extra help with their learning. However, they were not always quick enough in delivering an appropriate programme to meet their specific needs. The headteacher and staff commented that they had been waiting for advice and guidance from other agencies for some time. When planning, staff did not involve parents and carers enough in order to meet children's needs.

Management

Standard 14

The headteacher had been appointed within the last year and was already providing good leadership to staff. She had made a very good start in establishing relationships with staff and implementing systems for support and improvement. She was an effective communicator and staff found her approachable. The headteacher had delegated the day-to-day management of the nursery to the nursery cluster teacher. They worked effectively together and supported each other well.

Staff used a range of policies and procedures which provided them with good guidance for working within the nursery. They made these available to parents. Staff had recently received training in child protection and knew the school's policies in this regard. All staff were involved in a review of their work and took part in a range of training to further develop skills, for example in food hygiene and in developing outdoor play. The headteacher did not have knowledge of the Scottish Social Services Council's codes of practice or the implications for the service.

The headteacher had started to develop systems to review nursery practice. She visited the nursery weekly as part of her informal monitoring. She had yet to further develop systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision with a view to improving children's experiences. The school's current procedures to evaluate the work of the nursery were not well developed. They did not support staff to further improve practice and take forward developments for the nursery. The headteacher had yet to develop systematic, formal and robust procedures for self-evaluation involving staff and children as appropriate.

Key strengths

- Happy and confident children in their play.
- Children's early reading and writing experiences, in which they readily engaged.
- Relationships between staff and children.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should improve their use of questioning to develop children's play, respond to their ideas and extend their learning.
- Staff should plan appropriate experiences to meet children's learning and developmental needs.
- The headteacher, involving staff, should review procedures for self-evaluation to identify future development priorities.
- The headteacher and staff should develop systematic and rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the nursery, including the quality of children's experiences.

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.

Paul Hersee
Care Commission

Gail Simcox
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