

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

8 March 2006

**Cullen Primary School Nursery Class
Old Church Road
Cullen
Buckie
AB56 4UZ**

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 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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Care Commission
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Introduction

Cullen 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. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. It was registered for 20 children for the morning session and 15 children for the afternoon session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 24.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery, which was located within an annexe of Cullen Primary School, offered a safe and stimulating environment for children. The accommodation comprised two large classrooms with adjoining toilets and cloakroom facilities. In addition, children had timetabled access to the school gym and library. The surroundings were in a good state of repair and decoration with children's work attractively displayed throughout. The nursery was equipped to a very good standard and resources and activities were easily accessible to children. Staff made very good use of the space to enable children to play together in small or larger groups, or independently. The nursery also had the use of two outdoor areas. Staff made very effective use of these areas to provide children with energetic play and to extend their knowledge and understanding of the natural environment. All appropriate health and safety procedures were in place. Staff had carried out and recorded a series of useful risk assessments to ensure facilities were hygienic and secure.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had quality relationships with children. They had created a calm, purposeful environment where children readily engaged in appropriately challenging activities. Staff valued children's opinions and encouraged them to express their views. They listened closely to children and used dialogue very sensitively to support their learning. They interacted very effectively to extend children's learning through play. Children concentrated and persevered well with challenging tasks. They were able to explore and investigate as part of their learning which included appropriate time and space to practise skills.

Staff provided a stimulating range of activities which were well chosen to suit the needs of all children. There was a good balance between activities children could choose for themselves and those directed by adults. Staff planning was very good. It took good account of children's interests and set out clearly what children were expected to learn. Staff made very effective use of

their observations of children's progress to identify the next steps in their learning. They maintained useful folios of children's work, recorded their achievements and appropriately shared these with parents. Staff shared children's learning plans with parents and kept them well informed about their child's progress through helpful reports, which they shared with support agencies and P1 teachers, as appropriate.

Features of the programmes for children 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 with routines. They made choices and took responsibility for organising their learning. They concentrated very well on activities and were proud of their achievements. Staff were sensitive and effective in their use of praise, to which children responded well. They supported children well in forming friendships and encouraged them to play cooperatively and share resources.
- The programme for developing children's communication and language was very good. Staff made very effective use of print on signs around the playroom to develop children's communication skills. Children talked readily to one another and to adults. They listened very well to instructions, information and stories. They handled books appropriately and used the book corner to share stories with each other. Children were developing very good early writing skills. Staff effectively developed children's understanding of the link between print and the spoken word. Children made detailed drawings to illustrate stories. They recognised their own names in print and most attempted to write them. Staff were very good at modelling writing for children. They provided valuable support to a group of children who were absorbed in using a range of computer word processing and presentation skills to make attractive posters for their enterprise sale.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Staff organised a wide range of visitors and visits to places of interest to help children become aware of their local environment. Children observed changes in the local environment during an autumn walk. They explored the natural world in activities in the outdoor garden. Children used the computer well and discussed programmes with friends. They were developing an understanding of people's jobs through their play in the 'vet's surgery'. Children were developing very effective early mathematics skills such as counting, measuring and sorting, which they applied during their play. They were developing a good understanding of their own and other cultures.
- The programme for children's expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Children expressed their thoughts and feelings very effectively using 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. For example, they were making decorations to sell as part of their nursery enterprise. Children's role-play was highly imaginative. They developed their characters effectively using puppets, small world toys and costumes in role-play areas. Children were practising songs to perform at

a forthcoming concert and they sang with enjoyment. They made interesting suggestions which were included in the programme. Staff needed to provide more opportunities for children to develop skills in using musical instruments.

- The programme for children's physical development and movement was very good. Children had valuable opportunities to enjoy regular, outdoor, energetic exercise. They were developing skills in throwing, catching and kicking balls. Children showed a sound understanding of safe practices in energetic play. They experienced weekly physical play in the gym hall. Children had many opportunities to develop hand and finger control using a wide range of resources such as play dough, jigsaws, construction toys, scissors and drawing materials.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff knew children and their families very well and responded appropriately and sensitively to individual needs. Links with parents were very good. Staff organised opportunities for parents and grandparents to actively participate in the life of the nursery. An imaginative home/nursery link about the adventures of a teddy bear supported children's early literacy skills very effectively. Staff provided a lending library for all children and story sacks for children who attended in the afternoon to further support and extend their learning at home. They shared information very effectively with parents through informal discussions, formal meetings, newsletters and a very informative notice board. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and those interviewed during the inspection, were satisfied with the work of the nursery. Parents' views and opinions were sought through questionnaires and an information box. Staff responded to comments promptly and appropriately.

There was a well-planned programme of induction for children transferring to primary school, and liaison was very good. Visits were organised to ensure nursery children became more familiar with school facilities. They were able to meet primary staff regularly. P7 pupils supported nursery children through a buddy system. Additional support staff provided effective assistance to children who required extra help with their learning. Staff worked well with a range of professional agencies who provided practical support and advice. Support included effective individualised educational programmes for children with additional needs.

Management

Standard 14

The headteacher provided strong leadership. She viewed the nursery class as an integral part of the whole school and ensured children took part in appropriate school projects such as enterprise week. She was ably supported by the hardworking and committed nursery teacher who demonstrated a high level of professional competence. Together, they had developed very good relationships with parents and staff and promoted positive and effective teamwork. Staff worked hard to develop the quality of the nursery.

There was a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place providing useful guidance for staff and parents. Staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and the registration process. Staff training needs were appropriately identified and supported by the headteacher through annual employee development reviews. Staff found these helpful in enabling them to access relevant training. All staff had been trained on child protection policy and procedures and followed guidelines appropriately.

Good systems were in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision. The headteacher was a regular visitor to nursery to observe practice. She led weekly planning meetings with staff who were fully involved in evaluating their work. Parents were consulted regularly on the quality of provision, which contributed to plans for improvement. Appropriate priorities had been identified and were being successfully implemented.

Key strengths

- The quality of staff interaction with children to support and extend their learning.
- The very good knowledge demonstrated by staff about children and their needs.
- The breadth and quality of the curriculum in providing children with very good learning experiences.
- Very positive relationships between and amongst children, staff, parents and carers.
- The very effective leadership skills of the headteacher and her vision and commitment to continuous improvement.

Recommendations for improvement

- The nursery should continue to maintain the high standard of provision.

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.

Margaret Irons
Care Commission

Gail Simcox
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