

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

17 March 2004

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 Director of Education, Culture & Sport. 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

Dalneigh Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in December 2003 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 children from age four to the start of school. At the time of the inspection the roll was 20.

The environment

The nursery was located in the main building of the school. The quality of the accommodation was poor. There were plans to begin refurbishment in the current session. A small, and as yet unfinished, outdoor area had been temporarily set up. Despite the limitations of the accommodation, staff provided a welcoming and stimulating environment. Children's work and photographs along with useful information for parents and carers were well displayed throughout the nursery.

Staff made creative use of the available space to allow children to play independently or in small groups. There was a good range of play equipment and resources. Storage space was limited. There was no room for large pieces of play equipment or for energetic play. However, children had daily access to the outdoor area and weekly use of the school hall.

Children were unable to use hot water for hand washing in the main playroom. Toilet provision was located outwith the nursery area and shared with other classes. Hand drying facilities were inappropriately situated. Staff should ensure that children were able to follow good hygiene practice while using the toilet area. Arrangements for allowing children to attend the toilets independently should be formally risk assessed.

Quality of children's experience

Staff interacted very effectively with children. They had a good understanding of children's needs and intervened sensitively to support and extend their learning.

Children interacted very well with each other. They were well motivated and involved in a range of activities. They had good opportunities to play in groups or on their own. The overall balance of the session was very good.

Staff had good arrangements in place for planning and assessment. They made good use of the information they

acquired from assessment to guide plans and to report to parents on their children's progress. They had plans to develop this further.

Features of programmes included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Staff provided a range of very good activities for children to learn skills such as sharing and taking responsibility. Children were happy and secure in the nursery. They were developing confidence and independence.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Children were able to listen to stories being read and talk to each other in small groups or as a class. They had opportunities to look at books and use writing materials in their play. Most children were using language for a variety of different purposes and making good progress in developing early literacy skills.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Staff set up a range of activities for children to explore and talk about their environment. They now needed to extend the range and challenge of these activities and, when possible, make more effective use of the outdoor area. Children were developing an awareness of science and technology. Most were making good progress in developing early numeracy skills.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Good attention was given to developing children's art and craft skills. Staff had recently improved provision for role play for all children. They also recognised the need to widen the range of opportunities to learn music. Children expressed themselves well using a variety of different media such as paint and modelling. They were able to sing together in a group.
- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Staff provided a good range of opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills. They used the outdoor area for good, but limited, energetic play. Children used space well and had a good understanding of what they needed to do to keep safe. They co-operated well with each other in physical play.

Support for children and families

Staff worked very well with parents and carers to support children's development and learning. They had good links with other agencies including social work and speech and language therapists and with the related playgroup.

Staff had a good understanding and experience of working with children with special needs.

Management

The headteacher was very committed to developing the work of the nursery. She had placed an appropriate focus on promoting effective team work and improving the quality of children's experiences. She recognised the need to continue to focus on improvement.

Staff worked very well together as a strong and enthusiastic team. They held regular meetings and all contributed effectively to the overall running of the nursery. This included developing arrangements for monitoring and evaluating their own practice. They communicated well with parents and carers and there were good arrangements in place for formal and informal feedback. Staff had worked hard to involve parents and carers in the life of the nursery and were keen to develop this further.

Appropriate procedures were in place for staff recruitment and selection although not all staff had job descriptions. Staff had access to training but opportunities for review were not regular enough.

The nursery had a range of policies and procedures in place to support the care and welfare of the children and had shared these with parents and carers.

Key strengths

- The nursery's confident and happy children.
- Strong and positive teamwork.
- The quality of interactions between staff and children.
- Programmes for emotional, personal and social development and for communication and language.
- The commitment of the headteacher and the staff to the development of the nursery.

Recommendations for improvement

- In line with current plans, the education authority and nursery class should improve the overall quality of the accommodation.
- Staff should continue to improve programmes for knowledge and understanding of the world, expressive and aesthetic development and physical development and movement.
- Staff should continue to improve procedures for assessment and self-evaluation.

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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