

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Dens Road Primary School
Nursery Class
Dundee City Council**

23 March 2005

Dens Road Primary School Nursery Class
77 Dens Road,
Dundee
DD3 7HY

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 acting 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

Dens Road Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in December 2004 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. At the time of the inspection the roll was 47.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located within the primary school building and provided a bright, open and stimulating environment. The building was in a good state of repair and there were secure entry arrangements in place. Play equipment was well maintained and staff took good account of safety measures with children. An infection control policy and good hygiene practices were observed. Adult/child ratios were appropriate. There was plenty of space in the playrooms for children to play both together and independently. Photographs and children's work were effectively displayed throughout the nursery to reflect children's experiences.

The nursery would benefit from a designated, enclosed outdoor play area which could be directly accessed from the nursery entrance. The staff offered good opportunities for challenging outside activities, but were restricted by the need to share this area with the school.

The nursery had improved the safety of their heating system by adding thermostatic controls. However, this did not fully prevent heating pipes from overheating. This should again be assessed by the nursery staff for risk to children. Staff are required to improve procedures for recording accidents and the administration of medicines.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff interacted very well with children to support and extend their learning. Staff were very warm, enthusiastic and had high expectations of behaviour. They supported and extended learning very well through questioning and dialogue. They had developed a good system of assessing and recording children's progress. They identified aspects of development to be assessed for all children through observation and used this to inform pupil

profiles. However, there was insufficient use made of general observations to identify children's strengths, needs and interests. They also needed to identify next steps for individuals more clearly in planning. However, staff planned a good variety of activities appropriate to the abilities of the children and had a good understanding of the stages of children's development.

Overall, staff offered a good balance of free play and adult-led activities. However, they needed to reduce the number of adult-led activities in art. They were flexible in their approach and covered all appropriate aspects of children's development and learning well. They offered good opportunities for children to play individually and in groups, as well as a variety of interesting displays and activities for children to learn through investigation. Children were stimulated and challenged by the range of activities on offer.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were secure and comfortable with nursery routines. They cooperated well at group activities led by staff or when playing together. Almost all children were confident when approaching adults or in challenging situations. They were building friendships and developing independence. They were encouraged to reflect on their play by choosing activities for the day and reviewing them at the end of the session. Staff made good use of praise to extend and support learning. They helped children develop an awareness of others by supporting them in sharing toys and by considering others' feelings in everyday activities. Staff developed children's awareness of a variety of cultures by celebrating a range of festivals.
- The programme for communication and language was very good overall. Staff provided a very attractive story corner and a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books which were well used. Books were also used at all display areas to extend learning. Staff supported children very well in linking the written and the spoken word through discussion at activities and a book bag lending scheme. They wrote children's phrases to accompany their drawings and models. Children were practising writing and most could recognise their name in print. Staff encouraged children to be aware of the print around them through magazines, catalogues and leaflets. They encouraged talking and listening skills and a listening centre was available. Almost all children spoke confidently to friends and adults. However, there was insufficient evidence of stories being read to groups of children daily.
- In the very good programme for knowledge and understanding of the world, children benefited from many opportunities to explore and investigate. Staff made effective use of displays and a light box which illuminated materials. Children were learning about their local environment through a range of visitors and outings. They were encouraged to develop an awareness of natural beauty through observing the changing seasons. Children observed change through planting and baking activities. They were able to experiment at the water and sand trays and wooden bricks. Staff supported children well in extending their understanding of

number, shape, colour and opposites through games. Use of the computer was well supported by staff to extend learning.

- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children were learning through role-play in a variety of settings and activities. This included free play in the home corner and the dolls' house. They enjoyed using puppets and taking part in group drama activities related to stories. Children participated enthusiastically in group singing, and singing took place regularly throughout the day as it arose naturally. Staff used a wide variety of musical styles for dance and drama activities. Musical instruments were available at all times. Staff provided very regular opportunities for painting, gluing and modelling for children to freely express their feelings and ideas. However, there was too much emphasis on adult-led activities.
- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Despite the limitations imposed by sharing the playground with primary school children, staff made strenuous efforts to ensure that children had regular opportunities to play outdoors throughout the year. An active advent calendar meant that children were very enthusiastic about the experiences on offer daily through the Christmas period. Staff also offered challenging physical activities indoors. Children were developing physical skills by using large wooden bricks to produce complex structures. Children were developing control of their fingers through a wide assortment of jigsaw puzzles, writing and threading activities. They were aware of the importance of healthy eating.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff were very responsive to the support needs of children and their families. They held meetings for new parents to introduce them to the nursery and explain the curriculum. A very attractive weekly plan was produced to inform parents of the activities on offer. Parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the nursery. Parents who were met with said in discussion that staff were very helpful, supportive and always willing to answer their questions. Individual members of staff had responsibility for a group of children and had formed close relationships with them and their parents. Parents received a settling-in report after their child had been in the nursery for six weeks. End-of-year reports were shared with parents at interviews. Nursery children were involved in whole-school activities, had visits to P1 and joined P1/2 children at playtime in the spring term. A nursery nurse from the school with a remit for early intervention visited the nursery twice each week from February onwards, and P6 'buddies' were allocated to help children settle into primary school.

Children with additional needs were well supported. A number of children in the group had English as an additional language. Two bi-lingual support workers offered guidance to staff and worked very appropriately in the nursery with children to support their mother tongue and develop English. Staff liaised well with a wide range of professionals from other organisations including the speech and language therapist, health visitor, learning support teacher and educational psychologist. They worked closely with

parents to support children with additional needs and were in the process of developing individualised educational programmes. However, there was insufficient attention paid to setting short-term goals and evaluating progress for children with additional needs before formal individualised planning was in place.

Management

Standard 14

Leadership in the nursery was good. The depute headteacher was committed to the ongoing development of the nursery. She had established good working relationships with parents and staff. She was experienced, knowledgeable and consulted staff and parents widely. She had direct contact with children and supported nursery staff through weekly meetings. The acting headteacher supported the depute headteacher in her work in the nursery. Nursery staff were approachable and well informed. They were appropriately qualified in education and childcare. A comprehensive set of nursery policies and procedures was in place. The depute headteacher ensured that staff had opportunities to attend relevant ongoing training to meet their needs and improve practice.

The depute headteacher had some knowledge of the Scottish Social Services Council and the implications regarding her role as manager. Nursery priorities were appropriately included in the whole-school development plan. This was effective in improving performance. The acting headteacher and depute headteacher needed to improve arrangements for direct observation of the work of the nursery. In partnership with staff, they should develop more effective procedures for evaluating the overall quality of provision.

Key strengths

- Very good interaction between staff and children.
- Children's very good learning experiences in emotional, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development and movement.
- The opportunities for children to develop through active learning.
- Strong partnership with parents.
- The depute headteacher's effective management and the strong teamwork of the staff.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The nursery staff and local authority were responsive to the requirement made as a result of their previous Care Commission Inspection on 12 March 2004. The nursery was required to risk assess the heating facility to ensure that it was made safe for children and the most appropriate option was implemented. Evidence was noted at the joint HMIE and Care Commission inspection that action had been taken and thermostatic controls were added. However, this did not fully prevent heating pipes

from overheating. It has been recommended that this should again be risk assessed by the nursery.

Recommendations for improvement

- The nursery and education authority should work together to improve the heating system and ensure consistent appropriate temperatures.
- The acting headteacher and depute headteacher should pursue the development of an enclosed outdoor play area for the nursery.
- Staff should further develop assessment and recording to more clearly identify next steps for individual children.
- The acting headteacher and staff should further develop evaluation of the nursery by all staff.

Requirements

- The nursery is required to improve procedures for recording accidents and the administration of medicines. SSI, The Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 (SSI 2002/114), Regulation 19(3)(d) and (k). Timescale for implementation: 3 months.

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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Care Commission

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