

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

8 February 2006

**Dingwall Primary School Nursery Class
Ross Avenue
Dingwall
IV15 9UU**

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
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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.

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Introduction

Dingwall Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in October 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 48 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 64.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located in a separate building within the grounds of the primary school. The provision offered two English medium classes in the morning and one English medium class and one Gaelic medium class in the afternoon. The nursery had sole use of two classrooms, a cloakroom/entrance area and toilet facilities. There was a large, grassed area to the rear of the building, which contained several pieces of outdoor equipment. However, this area could often not be used as a result of poor drainage. Staff provided weekly opportunities for children to take part in energetic play in the school gym hall.

The classrooms were bright and welcoming. Staff had attractively displayed examples of children's work. There was a large notice board in the entrance area with helpful information for parents and carers.

An effective alarm system was in place, which ensured the safety of the children. Fire drills and alarm checks were carried out regularly and these were recorded. Staff had appropriate systems to prevent the spread of infection. Toys and other equipment were well maintained. The surroundings were in a reasonable state of repair. There was not a supply of hot water in the nursery toilets.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had developed positive relationships with children. They used praise effectively to encourage children to cooperate and to develop their confidence. They sensitively supported a few children who needed time to settle. There were some examples of very good interaction by staff to sustain and develop children's interest in both the English and the Gaelic classes. However, not all staff appropriately supported and extended children's learning.

Staff planned an interesting range of topics and activities. With the support of the nursery coordinator teachers, they were developing a good system of assessing children's learning through observations. This approach was helping staff to identify the needs of individual children and the action to be taken. Good use was made of digital photography to record children at play. Weekly planning was shared with parents and carers. Children were encouraged to select pieces of work to keep in their folios. The nursery classes had very good opportunities to be involved in the life of the school.

Staff had arranged the two playrooms with activities which covered different aspects of the curriculum. On occasions, children were not able to access resources in each area of the curriculum.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme in emotional, personal and social development was good. Staff encouraged children to be independent in dressing to go outdoors or to get ready for gym. Children were happy, secure and familiar with nursery routines. They were developing friendships and were confident in seeking help from staff. They enjoyed being chosen as the helper of the day. Most children helped to tidy the playrooms and were well behaved. Staff needed to become more involved in developing children's social skills at snack.
- The programme for communication and language was good. Staff provided very good opportunities for children to develop their skills in early writing. A few children were able to write their own names and were showing interest in recognising and matching letters. They had enjoyed making a big book about pirates. Most children listened well to each other and to adults at activities in English and Gaelic. They needed more opportunities to express their own views and talk for a variety of purposes. Staff read to individual children and encouraged them to use the well-resourced story corner. Commendably, in the Gaelic class, staff were very expressive speakers and made very good use of praise to motivate children to try the language.
- In knowledge and understanding of the world, the programme was good. Staff provided an interesting range of activities for children to learn about autumn and to explore the natural world. Children enjoyed using magnifying glasses to closely examine conkers and leaves and were using a tape to measure items on the nature display. Staff were developing children's knowledge and interest in technology through appropriate use of computers and programmable toys. They made very good use of instructions in Gaelic when children were talking about directions using the remote-controlled cars. Children had good opportunities to develop their understanding of early mathematics through counting, colour and pattern games. Staff did not provide enough opportunities for children to investigate and solve simple problems.
- In expressive and aesthetic development, the programme was good. Children interacted well at role-play in the hospital corner and they enjoyed using the dressing-up clothes.

Although there were other contexts for role-play led by children, staff did not always intervene effectively to support and extend their play. Staff planned a good choice of art and craft activities to encourage children to express their own ideas in painting, printing, modelling and collage. In the Gaelic class, staff provided good opportunities for children to sing and play action games to enhance the learning of the language. Children enjoyed taking part in the annual 'rumble in the jungle' expressive arts activities day with the whole school.

- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Staff provided an appropriate range of activities to develop children's hand control through using the computer mouse, construction equipment, dough and a variety of drawing materials. Children thoroughly enjoyed the music and movement work in the gym and dancing with the staff. They were developing good awareness of space and were trying out different ways of moving their bodies at physical play. Although the secure outdoor area was not always suitable for use, staff regularly used the school playground and early stages garden. Staff needed to plan daily opportunities for energetic play.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Dingwall Primary School had community school status and the nursery was an integral part of this. Staff knew children and parents well and had developed warm and caring relationships with them. All parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with almost all aspects of the service. They stated that their children enjoyed coming to nursery. A few wished to receive further information about their children's progress.

The nursery had established strong links with other professionals and support agencies and there was clear evidence of multi-disciplinary working. There was appropriate information contained within the children's personal profiles. However, staff needed to ensure that children with additional support needs had an individualised educational programme.

Children transferring to primary school were well supported with a very good programme of visits. Staff provided parents with informative written reports which identified next steps in children's learning.

Management

Standard 14

The leadership of the nursery was good. The headteacher demonstrated effective communication skills and fostered very good working relationships between staff, parents and children. He had delegated responsibility for the nursery to two deputy headteachers for the English and the Gaelic nurseries. There were regular meetings with the nursery coordinator teachers in the English and the Gaelic classes and nursery staff. Although there had been recent changes of personnel, staff were developing good team work.

Staff showed good awareness of the procedures for protecting children. They had accessed an appropriate range of staff

development opportunities. A staff review and development programme was being implemented. 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. Staff were familiar with the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and their roles and responsibilities in relation to these.

Staff were involved in the process of self-evaluation. Their views were sought and they contributed to the school's development plan. The depute headteacher with responsibility for the nursery had recently started formally monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision.

Key strengths

- The involvement of the nursery in the life of the school.
- The very good support for children and families.
- The effective, structured language programme in the Gaelic medium.
- The commitment of the headteacher and staff to develop and improve the service.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The requirement made at the previous inspection regarding the re-instatement of the hot water supply had not been met.

The nursery needs to ensure that children have access to hot water at all times and this is in accordance with the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2002 Regulation 10(1). This requirement is to be actioned immediately.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should review the use of the playrooms and the time allocated to nursery classes to ensure an equitable choice of resources for all children.
- The headteacher and staff should develop individualised educational programmes for children with additional support needs.
- The headteacher and management team should continue to develop the good start made to monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision.

Requirements

- That children have access to hot water at all times. This in accordance with Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002 Number 114 Regulation 10(1). Timescale: Immediate.

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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