

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

31 August 2005

**Eastern Primary School Nursery Class
Whinny Brae
Broughty Ferry
Dundee
DD5 2HW**

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 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

Eastern Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in May 2005 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. The nursery catered for children aged three to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 60.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery operated from a classroom within the primary school building, with nursery children regularly accessing other parts of the school, including the gym hall. The accommodation was bright, inviting and safe. The room had good natural lighting and ventilation. Staff made effective use of displays of children's art work and photographs of the nursery children to create a welcoming environment. They used notice boards appropriately to provide a range of relevant information for parents.

Staff organised space well to provide opportunities for a range of activities to operate simultaneously, enabling children to play independently and in groups. The nursery had good resources, and play equipment was clean and well maintained. The outdoor play area had been recently developed. It offered a safe, outdoor facility that was well resourced and easily accessed from the nursery. Staff offered a wide range of stimulating and enjoyable activities outdoors. They paid good attention to health and safety issues and had put in place appropriate procedures to maintain good hygiene throughout the nursery.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Children were happy, relaxed and familiar with daily routines. Staff knew children well and were warm and caring towards them. They had a good understanding of their individual needs and provided a varied range of play experiences. Children engaged happily and showed interest in, and enthusiasm for, the activities on offer. They investigated and enthusiastically made discoveries for themselves. Their contributions were actively encouraged and valued by staff. Overall, the pace and organisation of sessions enabled children to take responsibility for their own learning and make their own choices. However, at large group activities, not all children were interested or focused. At times, a few of the activities were too adult directed.

Staff interacted well with children. Most engaged with children to support and challenge their learning. At these times, children were well motivated. Staff had developed good procedures to

plan children's learning. They now needed to ensure that assessment information was easily managed and accessed to support individual children's future learning.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were making very good progress. They showed consideration for others, helped each other at snack and responded very well to simple rules and routines. Children were independent. They often took the initiative, made choices and were learning to express their ideas confidently. They planned and made decisions when choosing equipment for the outdoor play area. They took responsibility for tidying their environment and cared for seeds which they had planted.
- The programme for communication and language was good. Children talked confidently to other children and adults about themselves and their experiences. They used their imagination to describe a 'train journey' when having fun outdoors. They took part in short conversations. Large-group story-telling sessions did not allow children enough opportunities to develop their listening skills. On these occasions, children did not always listen well to the adult or to each other. The nursery teacher made effective use of picture clues to develop children's early reading skills. Children enjoyed making marks outdoors and were developing an awareness of letter names and sounds. A few wrote their own names and a few of the younger children were making very effective progress with their early writing skills.
- The programme for developing children's knowledge and understanding was very good. Staff provided effective experiences which increased children's knowledge about people in the community, for example fire fighters. Children used their senses well and actively explored, experimented and investigated the outdoor environment. They were learning about speed. Children recognised patterns and shapes around them. They described colours and sizes and appropriately used mathematical language. Children counted, measured and monitored the growth of runner beans. They were developing effective skills in information and communications technology (ICT). A few children used the computer camera effectively.
- The programme in expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children expressed themselves well in paintings and models using various materials. They had made effective collages to represent buildings in their local community. The use of pre-printed colouring-in sheets was not appropriate for some children who often found it difficult to stay within the lines. Staff provided a good range of dressing-up clothes and opportunities for children to role-play. Children made good use of uniforms and 'walkie-talkies' when being 'fire fighters'. Staff did not encourage children enough to experiment with various musical instruments or in music making. Children had some opportunities to sing and dance when playing in the hall.

- The programme in physical development and movement was very good. Staff and children made effective use of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Children enjoyed fresh air and a feeling of well-being through energetic activity outdoors and in the hall. They could run, jump and skip with increasing skill and confidence. Many children competently rode bicycles. They balanced on boards and beams and confidently enjoyed using a range of apparatus. Children were developing very good control of their fingers and hands through using a range of equipment such as brushes, pencils and other tools. They cooperated well with others in physical play and games and, overall, made very good use of all available space.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff knew children and families well and provided good support to them. They responded sensitively to children's individual circumstances and provided support when they needed extra help. Parents were kept well informed about nursery life through useful newsletters, notice boards, information sheets and parents' evenings. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires were very satisfied with the work of the nursery. They were positive and supportive of staff's approach and the relaxed, welcoming atmosphere they had created. A few wanted more information on their children's progress and the work of the nursery. Staff shared written progress reports with parents and passed appropriate information on to P1.

Staff were aware of the need to support children with additional needs. However, they had not yet identified in their plans enough focused support for these children, including those for whom English was an additional language. Staff accessed other agencies and professionals to help them meet children's needs. They had established a productive partnership with the local education authority which was assisting them to meet the needs of children and families.

Management

Standard 14

Leadership of the nursery was good. The headteacher had overall responsibility for ensuring the quality of nursery practice. She had established regular time to monitor the quality of children's experiences. She had delegated responsibility for managing the nursery to the depute headteacher, who was also the nursery teacher. The depute headteacher also had other duties within the school. At these times, her absence was covered by two teachers, resulting in nursery children relating to a larger staff team. The impact of these significant staff changes on children's learning needed to be monitored by management.

The nursery teacher ensured the smooth day-to-day running of the nursery. She was approachable and shared tasks with other team members. There was good communication within this experienced nursery team, who were all clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff were motivated and enjoyed their work with children. They accessed a range of reference materials within the classroom. Staff had been recruited in line with local authority procedures and held appropriate education and childcare qualifications. They had good opportunities for

appropriate continuous professional development. Staff, parents and students were supported in their work through guidance contained in a comprehensive range of specific, nursery policies and procedures. However, staff were not consistent in their knowledge of how to approach and deal with child protection matters. A review of child protection procedures, including reporting procedures, needed to be undertaken to ensure that consistent and effective action was taken to protect children.

The nursery teacher was aware of the need to review nursery practice. Staff took part in regular meetings to review practice and the quality of children's learning experiences. The main points for actions from these meetings needed to be recorded to ensure that identified areas and goals were effectively addressed. Nursery staff made good use of national guidance when reviewing practice to help them to improve. They needed to be more engaged in self-evaluation on a more regular basis to support future improvements. Parents and children were involved in evaluating aspects of the nursery and their views had been appropriately sought.

Key strengths

- Effective relationships between children, parents and staff.
- Very good programmes in emotional, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and movement and their positive impact on children's progress.
- Children's developing independent skills.
- High-quality learning environment both in- and out-of-doors.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The nursery has sought parental views by a variety of methods and has used the information in the evaluation of the nursery.

Recommendations for improvement

- The senior management team should continue to develop staff's skills in self-evaluation.
- A review of child protection procedures, including reporting procedures, needed to be undertaken to ensure that consistent and effective action was taken to protect children.

Care Commission Officers and HM Inspectors have asked the pre-school centre and the 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 the education authority, Care Commission Officers and HM Inspectors will monitor progress to ensure improvements are in line with the main findings of the report.

Karen Lock
Care Commission

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