

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

**7 June 2006**

**Farr High School Nursery Class  
Bettyhill  
By Thurso  
Caithness  
KW14 7SS**

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.

<b>National Care Standard</b>	<b>Child at the Centre Quality Indicator</b>
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](http://www.carecommission.com) and HMIE website: [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://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 Mr 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](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk).

A copy of the HMIE complaints procedure is available from the HMIE website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01506 600 258.

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# **Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of Farr High School Nursery Class The Highland Council**

## **Introduction**

Farr High School Nursery Class was inspected in February 2006 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. HMIE carried out this inspection on behalf of both organisations and consulted the Care Commission about its findings. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. It was registered for 20 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was seven.

## **The environment**

### **Standard 2**

The nursery playroom was located in the main building of the primary and secondary school. Staff had created a welcoming, safe and interesting environment. They made good use of the available space to provide opportunities for children to choose from a stimulating range of activities. A wide variety of children's work and information for parents was attractively displayed throughout. There was a secure outdoor play area, which was accessible from the playroom. Commendably, staff had involved children in the planning to improve this space and make it more attractive. Children enjoyed using play equipment and wheeled toys outdoors. Staff carried out risk assessments for outings but needed to extend these to include playroom activities and the weekly visits to the swimming pool.

## **Quality of children's experience**

### **Standard 4 & 5**

Staff had developed very good relationships with children. They interacted effectively with them to extend and support their learning. Children showed good awareness of the needs of others and were very well behaved. They were confident about seeking help from adults. Staff had regular planning meetings and were developing a more effective system for planning and assessing children's learning. They evaluated activities but did not clearly identify next steps in children's learning and development. Helpful folios of children's work were kept.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Staff effectively used praise and encouragement to support children to persevere at activities and to try out their own ideas. Children were happy and secure. They were developing friendships and were familiar with nursery routines. Staff offered children opportunities to take responsibility in the nursery. The snack

helper of the day assisted a member of staff to prepare the fruit and vegetables. The nursery was actively involved in the 'health promoting school' initiative and children were learning about healthy eating choices and exercise. Staff supported children to be independent in personal hygiene and when dressing themselves.

- Overall, the programme for communication and language was good. Due to the limited space in the main playroom, staff had created a comfortable story area with a good range of resources in the corridor. However, this was not always accessible. Children needed further opportunities to have fun with stories and rhymes. Staff provided an appropriate range of activities for children to develop their listening and talking skills. Children were very interested in learning about letters and recognising their own names. They had interesting opportunities to develop their skills in early writing in the nursery 'office' and at the writing table. The nursery made good use of the village library.
- In knowledge and understanding of the world, the programme was very good. Staff provided interesting opportunities for children to learn about their own and other cultures. They encouraged children to develop their investigative skills and to extend their knowledge of science. Children had made snowman shakers and were helped to follow instructions from a book. They were enjoying learning about technology through using programmable toys and a new computer. Children had good opportunities to learn about colours, counting and making patterns in play contexts. Staff were working closely with children to develop their knowledge of ecology. They had been interested in making their own compost, recycling materials and clearing litter.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Children thoroughly enjoyed role-playing in the home corner and dressing up. They worked well together organising a picnic for the dolls. Staff encouraged and supported children to express their own ideas through a wide range of art and craft activities, including painting, printing and collage. They provided very good opportunities for children to explore sound using a variety of instruments. Children were very keen to be the conductor of the band making music to accompany other children singing nursery rhymes. They had previously had fun dancing to bagpipe music played by a visiting piper.
- In physical development and movement, the programme was good. Staff provided appropriate opportunities for children to develop their hand control using construction equipment and a range of tools, including scissors at the dough and drawing table. Children were keen to participate in weekly visits to the school swimming pool where they had exciting opportunities to develop their water confidence skills. At these sessions, they were also able to meet and play with pre-school children from other centres. With the support of parents and the community, staff were beginning to develop and extend the use of the secure outdoor play area. However, they needed to ensure that children had daily energetic physical play activities.

## Support for children and families

### Standard 6

Staff provided good support to children and their families. They responded sensitively to differing needs and circumstances and had established positive relationships with parents. Parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, and those who were interviewed, expressed their satisfaction with all aspects of the service. They were kept well informed about the work of the nursery through informal daily discussions and notices. Staff were planning to further improve their communication with parents through preparing regular nursery newsletters. There were very good arrangements for children transferring into P1 and close working relationships had been developed with the early stages teacher. Staff had a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting children with additional needs, including the use of individualised educational programmes. They liaised effectively with outside agencies to meet children's needs.

## Management

### Standard 14

Overall, the management and leadership of the nursery was fair. The headteacher visited the nursery daily and kept staff fully informed about the life of the school and training opportunities. He was very friendly, open and approachable and knowledgeable about children and families. However, the education authority had not been able to provide appropriate support for the nursery due to difficulties recruiting staff. The assistant headteacher who had been responsible for the nursery had retired and had not been replaced. Staff worked very well together as a team. They had attended a number of relevant development courses. However, they did not have opportunities to discuss their work at staff reviews.

The nursery had an appropriate range of policies and procedures, which provided useful guidance for staff and parents. Staff had undertaken child protection training and demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the nursery's child protection policy. The headteacher and staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and the registration process.

Staff had limited knowledge of the self-evaluation process. They needed advice, guidance and support on how to take this forward. The headteacher did not formally monitor or evaluate the quality of the provision.

## Key strengths

- The effective staff-child interaction and very good team work.
- Very good programmes in emotional, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and expressive and aesthetic development.
- Confident and happy children.
- Very good relationships between the headteacher, parents and the community.

## Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The previous requirements and recommendation had been met.

## Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should extend the risk assessment procedures.
- Staff should extend the opportunities for children to have fun with stories and rhymes.
- The headteacher should work with staff to develop self-evaluation and a formal system of monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision.
- The headteacher should implement a programme of staff reviews.

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.

Moira Lawson  
HM Inspectorate of Education