

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Head of Muir Primary School
Nursery Class
Falkirk Council**

15 December 2004

**Head of Muir Primary School Nursery Class
Haypark Road
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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

Head of Muir Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in September 2004 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. The nursery catered for children from age three to five. At the time of the inspection the roll was 55.

The environment

Standard 2

The overall nursery environment was in need of refurbishment. Paintwork around doors and skirting was chipped and the carpets needed to be cleaned or renewed. Staff had covered the walls with bright paper and displayed children's work to make the playroom environment more attractive. The facilities within the toilet area were dated. There was no hot water from any of the taps within the nursery and no drinking water taps freely accessible to children.

The main entrance to the nursery was shared with the infant department. While the entrance door had an alarm which staff were vigilant in responding to, there was a need to review the overall effectiveness of the entrance in relation to the needs of pre-school users. The entrance area and the narrow cloakroom area regularly became congested. Although measures were in place to ease congestion, it was an ongoing problem.

The layout of the nursery was cramped. The book corner was situated outwith the main playroom in the entrance hall area. This limited children's access to it.

The outdoor area was small and had no garden area. Staff had introduced plant pots to the area but further development was needed. There was no adequate outdoor storage space thereby limiting the range of equipment. Storage required to be improved.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff were consistent in their approach to children. They interacted well with children to support them in the nursery and were aware of children's individual personalities. However, they missed a number of opportunities to extend children's learning through conversation and dialogue. Staff used short topics such as 'the seasons' and 'people who help us' to plan children's learning experiences. Although they were willing to alter their plans, they did not take enough account of children's strengths, development needs and interests when planning activities. The

quality of assessment and recording was fair. Staff needed to make greater use of ongoing observations as a means of assessment and record this information appropriately. Staff compiled progress reports for all children in October and for pre-school children in June. They had developed very good transition arrangements with P1 teachers.

Staff provided a curriculum covering the five key areas in children's development. They gave children opportunities to enjoy organised and free play. Children were able to interact with others or play alone. Most children were motivated by the activities offered but there was insufficient challenge and stimulation for some of the older children. Children needed greater opportunities to influence the curriculum.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Children were secure and comfortable with routines. They cooperated well with each other and were sensitive to the needs of children with particular difficulties. Staff encouraged children to be independent at snack time. They supported developing friendships. They widened children's understanding by celebrating festivals from a variety of cultures. They now needed to give children more opportunities for choice.
- The programme for communication and language was fair. Children were not being supported in the use of books, the listening centre, or the computer to extend their learning. There were few early writing activities available and no examples of print such as catalogues or magazines to help children to extend role-play. A large group story time was not effective for the range of abilities and experience within the group. However, most children were able to recognise their own name in print and some children were using chalk boards and pens for early mark-making.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children were well supported by staff to use numbers in a variety of real-life situations. They were recognising change through growing flowers and observing the seasons. They had opportunities to use their senses and sort items by shape, colour or purpose. Staff provided a wide range of visitors to help children understand people's jobs. There was insufficient adult support to help children make use of technology.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was fair. Children's opportunities to express themselves through music were limited to a short period at the end of the session. They had access to painting at any time and used this well. However, staff needed to reorganise the area and activities to ensure that supporting self-expression was their main aim for art and craft. Equipment to support role-play was very poor. However, children were very inventive in their role-play with the materials available.
- The programme for physical development and movement was good overall. Staff made children aware of the importance of healthy eating with a varied choice of healthy foods at snack time. Children were developing control of their fingers through cutting, gluing and manipulating small toys. Staff

made use of the outdoor play area and gym hall to extend skills in throwing, catching, jumping and using wheeled toys. They needed to make use of these areas more regularly.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff supported children and their families well. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with all aspects of the provision. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection expressed their appreciation that they had been made very welcome in the nursery and were able to stay as long as was necessary to settle their children. They also felt that staff were very approachable and always took time to respond to their queries. Parents received helpful newsletters within the first two weeks of term explaining routines. A parents' workshop, open evening and transition meeting for children moving on to school were held each year. A key worker had been identified to link with each child's parents.

Children with additional needs were very well supported. Staff sensitively helped them access the curriculum and build relationships with other children. They linked well with support agencies and other centres which children had attended. Parents were involved in drawing up individualised educational programmes and appropriate targets were identified. Children's progress towards meeting targets was reviewed weekly by nursery staff.

Management

Standard 14

Staffing issues had impacted on the management of the service and this meant that there were some significant weaknesses. A new headteacher had been appointed and will take up post on 14 September 2004. Once the management team is established they should develop a clear vision for the nursery. Evaluation of the nursery was not adequate. A more rigorous system needed to be developed to identify aspects for improvement.

Staff had good working relationships. They had established very positive relationships with parents and sought their views. Both full-time members of staff were trained and experienced in nursery. A part-time support assistant had recently joined the staff. Staff had access to training courses provided by the local authority. However, the staff development and review system in place needed to be further developed. Newly appointed staff should attend child protection training at the earliest opportunity. Deployment of staff was difficult due to the layout of the nursery and should be reviewed.

Policies and procedures were in place for the service. A separate recording system to differentiate accidents and incidents should be introduced.

Key strengths

- The interaction between staff and children.
- Programmes for emotional, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development and movement.

- Staff commitment to involving parents and parental satisfaction with the service.
- Support for children with additional needs.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The recommendations from the previous inspection have not been fully addressed. Although staff have implemented some changes in regard to the entry system there are still issues of congestion.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should review the layout and use of nursery space to improve experiences for children and some aspects of safety.
- Staff should offer able children more challenge.
- Staff should further develop assessment, recording and planning to ensure that children's strengths, weaknesses and interests impact more clearly on experiences offered.
- Management team should develop a shared vision as a means to improve the service.

Requirements

- The service is required to address the issue of the water system within the nursery given that there is no hot water within the service and children do not have ready access to drinking water.
- The service is required to address the issues regarding the premises mentioned in the report. A plan to refurbish the service should include updating the toilet facilities. A separate entrance should be provided for the nursery. The service requires to be decorated and the carpets replaced.

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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