

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Mid Calder Primary School
Nursery Class
West Lothian Council**

27 April 2005

Mid Calder Primary School Nursery Class
Mid Calder
Livingston
West Lothian
EH53 0RR

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

Mid Calder 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. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 58.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located within the grounds of Mid Calder Primary School. The nursery building was surrounded by an enclosed garden area which was used exclusively by nursery children. The accommodation provided a safe and secure environment for the children. Internally, the premises were well heated and ventilated and had been attractively decorated. Children's work was well presented and valued. There was a very good range of stimulating displays which children could access.

There was sufficient space for children to play independently and in small groups. However, some reorganisation of space was needed in order to provide children with improved opportunities for group activities.

The outdoor area provided children with a variety of play surfaces and activities. They had regular access to the gym hall within the primary school for physical activities. They also made good use of the school's music room.

Appropriate measures were in place to control the spread of infection. Play equipment was clean and well maintained.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff interacted well with children to promote confidence and self esteem. Children concentrated well during their play and were enthusiastic and motivated. Key workers, who had responsibility for small groups of children, knew them well, and valued their contributions. Staff actively encouraged positive behaviour amongst children. They needed to develop their use of questions to further support and extend learning.

Staff organised a range of play activities with an appropriate balance between activities children could choose for themselves and those directed by adults. Staff planning was generally good

and took account of children's interests. Management and staff should continue to review and improve their systems for planning, observing and recording children's progress in all aspects of their learning to meet the needs of all children effectively. Staff kept parents well informed about their child's progress through regular informal discussions, formal parents' meetings and helpful written annual reports.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were happy, secure and comfortable with nursery routines. Staff had established a calm, purposeful and relaxed environment in which children were happy to learn. Children were developing friendships and learning to cooperate with one another. They were learning simple rules of hygiene such as washing their hands before eating snack. Staff encouraged children to be independent, for example in helping to prepare their snack and dress themselves to go outdoors.
- The programme for communication and language was good. Most children were beginning to talk to one another confidently during play. However, they needed more opportunities to talk for a variety of purposes in more challenging situations. Most children listened well during stories. Children had access to two well-resourced book areas but did not always access them independently. Staff and children promoted children's interests in reading through, for instance, the use of 'story sacks' and the Bookworm Club which encouraged children to read books at home. Most children could recognise their name in print and some could write their name.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Children were making good progress in their understanding of colours, numbers and shapes. They were learning about caring for animals. Children were encouraged to appreciate nature in, for example, observing changes in the bulbs they had planted. Staff supported children well in their use of the computer. Children were very enthusiastic in using a smart board as part of a music session.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children were developing skills in drawing, painting and model making. However staff should review their duties to ensure children are fully supported in this area and able to access all resources available. Children enjoyed singing action songs in a group, listening to music and playing a range of interesting percussion instruments. They enjoyed role-play in the well-resourced house corner.
- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Children were developing good hand and finger control using paintbrushes, pens, jigsaws, small world toys, computer keyboard and scissors. Staff and children made very good use of the outdoor area throughout the year and had regular access to the school gym. They provided a wide range of large equipment and wheeled toys which enabled children to extend their skills and abilities very well. They were learning to run, jump, climb, throw and catch.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff responded very well to the support needs of children and families, and were sensitive to individual circumstances. Parents were actively encouraged to participate in the life of the nursery. A well-organised rota was in place to encourage parental involvement in the nursery. Parents were responsible for organising the 'busy bag', a project that encourages parents to become involved in their child's learning at home. Staff shared information with parents through informal discussions, formal meetings, curricular workshops, use of an informative notice board, newsletters and photographs. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with the service provided.

Staff had effective links with support agencies and other establishments, for example speech and language therapists and educational psychologists. Individualised educational programmes were in place for children with additional learning needs. Staff worked closely with other professionals and parents, as appropriate.

Management

Standard 14

The headteacher had recently established a new management team for the school. A newly appointed depute headteacher had specific responsibility for the day-to-day running of the nursery. She was actively working with staff, getting to know children and their parents. Overall, the senior management team provided good leadership. They demonstrated a good level of professional competence. Staff worked together well as a team and were deployed effectively.

Senior management and staff actively promoted the aims and objectives of the nursery and shared these with parents. Relationships between staff and parents were very good. Parents were valued, consulted and included in the life of the nursery.

A formal monitoring system had not been established although effective evaluation procedures were already in place. All members of staff were appraised annually and were committed to ongoing training. On the day of the inspection, the appropriate ratio of adults to children was in place.

All appropriate policies and procedures, including a child protection policy, were in place. Policies and procedures were appropriately shared with staff and parents. Staff were suitably qualified and recruited in line with local authority guidance. All members of staff were committed to ongoing training.

The nursery had received and distributed copies of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and staff were aware of the implications of these.

Key strengths

- Very good programmes in emotional, personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development and movement.
- The very good variety of displays which children were able to access and touch.
- Effective support for children with additional learning needs.
- Encouragement for parents to be involved in their child's learning at nursery and at home.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The recommendations made at the time of the previous inspection had been satisfactorily addressed.

Recommendations for improvement

- Continue to improve systems for planning, observing and recording children's progress to meet the needs of all children effectively.
- The management team should implement plans to introduce a formal monitoring system.

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.

Carol Campbell
Care Commission

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