

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

1 June 2005

**Millbank Primary School Nursery Class
McWilliam Crescent
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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 acting 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

Millbank Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in February 2005 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. An inspection of the primary school was carried out at the same time by HMIE and is the subject of a separate report. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 50.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was in a spacious, self-contained detached building situated within the grounds of the primary school. There were two adjoining open-plan areas with two additional smaller rooms located at each side which were used for music and imaginative play. There were good cloakroom and kitchen facilities. All play areas were warm, bright and attractively decorated with children's work. The premises were well maintained and provided a safe and secure environment. Staff implemented good hygiene practices and daily risk assessments of the premises.

The layout of the rooms allowed children to play independently or in small groups. Staff organised the play areas well to give children access to a wide variety of activities and resources.

Children had daily access to an interesting, enclosed outdoor play area. This area provided good opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the natural environment, and space for more challenging physical play. Children also used the gym hall each week.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had established good relationships with children. They were caring and friendly in their interactions and paid good attention to children's physical and emotional needs. However, they did not always use questioning and explanation effectively to extend and support children's learning. Staff provided activities in each aspect of children's learning and development, but these were not sufficiently well matched to children's ages and stages of development. The pace of learning and the level of challenge was not always appropriate to meet the needs of all children. The daily "altogether session" did not make good use of time or engage children. Staff valued children's contributions and promoted positive behaviour. However, management and staff should continue to review and improve the policy on positive behaviour and parents should be consulted on developments.

Staff took some account of the learning to be developed when planning activities. However, planning was not sufficiently responsive to children's needs. Staff recorded their observations of children's learning and progress. They needed further support to develop their skills in using assessment information to identify appropriately challenging next steps in learning for individual children. Staff shared information on children's progress with parents through informal discussions and formal parents meetings.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Most children were happy, relaxed, confident and familiar with simple routines. Some related well to one another and were learning to cooperate and develop positive relationships with other children. However a few children found it difficult to take turns and share. Children were learning simple rules of hygiene such as washing their hands before eating snack. Staff made good use of snack times and tidying routines to promote independence and encourage children to take responsibility for small tasks.
- The programme for communication and language was good. Most children were beginning to talk confidently to one another during play but needed to talk for a variety of purposes in more challenging situations. Most children listened attentively to stories and followed instructions carefully. Children accessed a variety of books independently from the well-resourced book area. Staff promoted children's interest in books well. As part of a home-link project, they encouraged children to borrow reading books. Staff needed to provide further activities to develop children's early skills in reading. All children could recognise their name in print and many could write it.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children had good opportunities to learn about and celebrate festivals throughout the year. Children were developing good skills in sorting, matching and counting. Most could identify colours and simple shapes. Staff used computer programmes to promote children's early number awareness. Children were learning about caring for plants and enjoyed watering them. Staff did not provide a suitable range of activities for children to develop their skills of observation, investigation and problem solving.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children had daily opportunities for self-expression through modelling, using dough, making models, painting and gluing. They enjoyed making cards for Valentine's Day. Children had some opportunities to be involved in role-play but these needed to be extended to allow children to express themselves more imaginatively. They had access to musical instruments but staff needed to support children more in using them. Some children enjoyed singing songs in the group.

- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Staff made good use of the extensive and challenging outdoor area throughout the year. They provided a range of large equipment and wheeled toys which extended children's skills and abilities very well. Children had access to the school gym hall twice a week where they were learning to skip, hop, run, throw and catch. Children were developing very good control of their fingers and hands through writing activities and using scissors and a variety of games.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

There had been several changes in the staff team and staff were still getting to know the children and their families. They were responsive to children's personal, emotional and physical needs.

Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were generally happy with the service provided. However, some parents wanted more information about their children's development and progress, to be consulted more and to be given regular information about the work of the nursery.

The nursery employed specific additional staff to support the needs of individual children who required extra support in their learning and development. They worked well with a range of professional agencies who provided practical support and advice. All children with additional support needs had individualised educational programmes and plans to support them.

Management

Standard 14

The management of the nursery was good overall. The nursery was currently operating with a temporary teacher and several staff changes had recently taken place. The acting headteacher was actively involved with the nursery and had placed a high priority on developing more systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the service. She now needed to develop formal procedures for nursery staff to discuss their professional development and training needs.

The acting headteacher organised and facilitated a programme of regular staff meetings and promoted good teamwork.

A comprehensive range of written policies and procedures was in place. The policy relating to behaviour management needed to be reviewed to identify a more positive approach to responding to inappropriate behaviour, and to provide clearer guidance for staff and parents.

All nursery staff had recently completed child protection training with The Moray Council.

Staff were suitably qualified and continued to further develop their skills and knowledge through a good range of training courses. They were also involved in local network meetings.

Information had been received in relation to the Scottish Social Services Council and staff were aware of its codes of practice.

Key strengths

- The attractive nursery environment.
- The very good programme in physical development and movement.
- The good support for children with additional needs.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

All recommendations from previous inspections had been actioned.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should improve their use of questioning and explanation to extend children's learning.
- Staff should take more account of children's ages and stages of development when planning activities and provide a greater level of challenge for some children.
- Staff should continue to develop their communication with parents.
- Staff should review their policy on positive behaviour and keep parents informed of developments.

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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