

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

29 June 2005

**Milne's Primary School Nursery Class
High Street
Fochabers
IV32 7EP**

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.

Complaints Coordinator
Headquarters
Care Commission
Compass House
Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Hazel Dewart
HM Inspectorate of Education
Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston
EH54 6GA

Crown Copyright 2005

Care Commission
HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of Milne's Primary School Nursery Class The Moray Council

Introduction

Milne's Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in March 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 32.

The environment

Standard 2

Milne's Primary School Nursery was located within an annexe adjacent to the primary school. The annexe and garden area were shared with the pre-school centre. The surroundings were in a good state of repair and well maintained. However, staff needed to monitor the temperature to ensure the playroom was always appropriately heated.

The nursery accommodation provided a bright, stimulating environment enhanced by good natural lighting and attractive displays of children's work. Staff had organised the activities in the playroom well to ensure very good use of the space available. Children were able to play together, independently, and in small or larger groups. Children had access to a wide variety of activities and to a range of appropriate resources to support their learning and development. Staff implemented good hygiene practices and daily risk assessments of the premises.

Children had access to an interesting outdoor play area which provided very good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the natural environment as well as affording space for more challenging physical play. The nursery had weekly access to the primary school gym and library to extend children's learning activities.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff knew children well and had developed very good, supportive relationships with them. They intervened appropriately and made very good use of questions to extend and support their development and learning. However, staff needed to review the structure of the day to further extend opportunities for uninterrupted free play.

Staff planned an interesting range of activities related to the key aspects of children's development and learning. They planned to further develop their systems to take more account of children's

interests and use assessment information to plan next steps in children's learning. Staff assessed children regularly and kept detailed notes on their progress. They had developed a series of very good progress reports which were shared with parents each term. An attractive and informative photographic record of children's time at nursery was developed by children and staff and was given to parents at the end of the session. Children were motivated and keen to learn. They were developing friendships and expressed their ideas confidently.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were happy in the nursery and comfortable with the routines and simple rules. They accessed activities of their choice independently and had opportunities for responsibility. Staff made very good use of praise and encouraged children to persevere at their tasks. Children were developing friendships and an awareness of the needs of others. They had a good understanding of personal hygiene and helped to tidy around the nursery. Children were very confident and cooperated well with one another during play.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Staff provided opportunities for children to talk and listen to adults and one another for a range of purposes. Children enjoyed listening to stories and accessed books independently in the book corner. Staff made good use of children's stories and factual books around the nursery. They organised weekly visits to the school library. A home lending library encouraged good habits in reading at home. Most of the children could write their own name and copy the names of others. Staff provided a wide range of appropriate opportunities to develop children's skills in early writing.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Children were learning about their own and other cultures through participation in a range of festivals and sampling foods from around the world at snack time. Staff organised a wide range of activities to develop children's understanding of early mathematics and solve simple problems. Children were enjoying bird watching in the garden and had made bird cake to feed the birds. They were learning about road safety and had a visit from the police. Staff made good use of the outdoor area to provide opportunities for children to collect and investigate natural materials. Children regularly experimented in sand and water play.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children thoroughly enjoyed imaginative play and dressing up in the 'hospital' corner. Staff intervened effectively to extend and support their play. Children expressed themselves freely using a range of art and craft materials and techniques. They had enjoyed singing along with a parent who played a guitar and listening to Scottish music as part of their Burns' day celebration. Staff planned to further extend opportunities for movement to music and the range of songs.

- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Children were developing good control of their fingers and hands through use of a wide range of appropriate tools and challenging construction activities. They had access to large wheeled toys in the outdoor area. Staff organised weekly visits to the school gym. Children were developing skills in climbing, balancing, jumping, and throwing and catching. Staff needed to plan alternative energetic play experiences when they were unable to go outside.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Relationships between staff and children were very good. Staff had good knowledge of individual children's needs and provided very good support for them and their families.

Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed their satisfaction with the service. They were well informed about the work of the nursery through informal discussions, regular written information and the notice board. They also had opportunities to discuss their child's progress through more formal meetings with staff. Parents were very supportive of the nursery and helped out with story telling, outings and the development of the outdoor area.

Baxter and Millie bear were used effectively as a home link throughout the year. Staff operated a lending library for children and during the summer term activity bags were available to further support and extend learning at home. The nursery had a planned programme of curriculum workshops and parents' information evenings.

There were good transition and induction arrangements for all children moving on to P1 at Milne's Primary School. For alternative schools, the headteacher or the P1 teacher of each school would be invited to meet the child at nursery.

The nursery had employed a specific member of staff to support the needs of individual children who required extra support in their learning and development. Good links with outside professional agencies were established and careful attention was paid to implementing individualised educational programmes. Staff organised one-to-one activities to support children's development and learning. They had attended training to help them support children's individual needs. A diary of information was exchanged on a daily basis with their families.

Management

Standard 14

The headteacher provided strong, effective leadership. She was ably supported by the hardworking and committed nursery teacher and senior nursery nurse who demonstrated a high level of professional competence. They placed a high priority on continuing to develop the quality of the provision and were clearly committed to attending further training courses. Commendably, they developed good-practice guidance documents on their learning events.

There was a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place providing useful guidance for staff and parents. All staff had been trained on child protection policy and procedures and they followed the local authority guidance. Staff were recruited in line with local authority procedures and held appropriate qualifications. They were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and the registration process.

There were good systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision and the nursery staff felt well supported by the local authority. Parents were consulted regularly on the quality of provision and their comments were used when planning for improvement. An appropriate action plan for the nursery was in place and the priorities for improvement were being successfully implemented. The headteacher and staff should continue to develop more rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate with a view to maintaining and improving the high standard of service provided.

Key strengths

- High-quality interaction between staff and children to extend and support children's development and learning.
- Confident and independent children.
- Very good programmes in emotional, personal and social development, communication and language, and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Effective partnership with parents and very good support for children with additional needs.
- Hardworking staff team committed to the ongoing development of the nursery.
- Strong, supportive leadership demonstrated by the headteacher.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The previous recommendation for all staff to undertake training in relation to child protection had been actioned.

Recommendations for improvement

- The headteacher and staff should continue to develop rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of provision with a view to maintaining and improving the high standards.

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.

Margaret Irons
Care Commission

Alison Watson
HM Inspectorate of Education