

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

**28 June 2006**

**Mortlach Primary School Nursery**  
**York Street**  
**Dufftown**  
**Moray**  
**AB55 4AU**

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 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 Mortlach Primary School Nursery The Moray Council**

## **Introduction**

Mortlach Primary School Nursery was inspected in February 2006 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. It was registered for 20 at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 25.

## **The environment**

### **Standard 2**

The nursery was accommodated in a classroom within Mortlach Primary School. It offered a safe, secure and welcoming environment for children. The premises comprised of one large self-contained playroom with adjoining toilets and kitchen facilities. The nursery used the main school entrance which had a secure entry system. The building was generally in a good state of repair and decoration. The accommodation was attractively decorated with children's work, commercial posters and photographs.

Staff implemented good hygiene practices and carried out daily risk assessments of the premises.

The nursery was equipped to a high standard. The resources were well organised and activities were easily accessible to the children. Staff made good use of the classroom space to enable children to play independently or in small groups. However, floor space was limited and did not allow children to extend their play experiences onto the floor. The staff and children had timetabled access to the gym hall and canteen area for large-group and energetic, physical indoor play activities. Access to these areas was flexible at other times. The nursery children also had access to part of the enclosed playground area and a wide range of outdoor equipment was available. The outhouse, where this equipment was stored, was damp and dusty. However, staff had taken effective measures to protect equipment.

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

### **Standard 4 & 5**

Staff were friendly and approachable. They had established very good relationships with children. Staff supported children effectively through good use of discussion, but were at times too involved in more structured activities to fully extend some children's learning. Children were interested and purposeful during free play. They chose from a wide range of activities, although some activities lacked challenge for a few more able children.

The staff had very good arrangements for planning. Written plans showed clearly what children were expected to learn. Staff effectively evaluated their planning and adapted activities to meet the needs of most children. Staff were developing records of children's achievements. They made detailed observations of children's learning and made good use of photographs to record progress. Children were encouraged to evaluate their own learning and contribute to the records, which were shared with parents. Staff informed parents about their child's progress through informal discussions, meetings and written reports.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for children's emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were very happy, confident and well behaved. They were developing friendships and were thoughtful towards each other. Children were very aware of the importance of hygiene and washing hands. They were developing very good independence through snack and changing to go outside. Children were developing responsible attitudes through helping with tasks in the nursery. Most children persevered to complete tasks. Staff made effective use of praise to promote children's self esteem.
- The programme for children's communication and language development was very good. Children took part in a range of talking and listening activities. They confidently shared ideas about shopping lists in the home corner. Most children listened well to stories. Children used the book corner independently. Staff promoted an interest in books through 'read and enjoy' packs for children to take home, and trips to the library. Children used the well-resourced writing table effectively. They were making marks and experimenting with early writing activities as they wrote 'letters' to friends. Many children were attempting to write words including their own and friends' names. Children were engrossed as they wrote 'shopping lists' on a whiteboard.
- The programme for children's knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Children understood how materials change by making ice and were fascinated as they observed large blocks of ice melt. Children had very good experiences of planting bulbs and caring for plants in the nursery. They were learning about healthy eating and this was promoted at snack time through eating fruit. Children used mathematics in their play. The children were confident in using information and communications technology (ICT) such as computers and toys in the home corner. They were learning about their own and other cultures through their play and through the celebration of important festivals.
- The programme for children's expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children used role-play areas to recreate situations. They acted out stories enthusiastically in the role-play corner and when using the small world equipment. Staff were not sufficiently involved in extending children's learning during role-play. Staff provided good opportunities for children to use taped music and instruments by themselves. Children used a range of materials to create models. They were able to take part in painting and express

their ideas. However, at times children's art work was overly directed by staff.

- The programme for children's physical development and movement was very good. Staff provided very good opportunities most days for children to use the outdoor play area for a variety of playground games. Children enjoyed energetic play and they cooperated well with their friends. Staff encouraged children to develop increasing control of a range of movements and coordination during regular gym lessons. There were many opportunities for children to develop control of their fingers and hands. Most children used scissors and pens well.

## **Support for children and families**

### **Standard 6**

Staff communicated with parents about the work of the nursery through displays of information on the notice board and regular newsletters. More formal meetings were organised with parents twice a year. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with almost all aspects of the nursery. Some wanted more information about their children's progress and the day-to-day work of the nursery. The arrangements for entry to the classroom did not allow parents easy access to staff and, as a result, staff did not provide sufficient opportunities for daily communication with parents.

Parents reported that a recent 'open week' had been successful and enabled them to become more aware of nursery activities. Staff did not sufficiently encourage parental involvement in the nursery. Staff operated a lending library offering a 'read and enjoy' pack which provided an effective link to promote learning at home.

Transition arrangements for children moving on to school were well organised. Most children moved into the P1 class within Mortlach Primary School and liaison was good. Children were already familiar with the school facilities and were able to meet staff. The children also had the opportunity to take part in a structured play session in the playground along with older children.

The school had established very good links with professional support agencies and the nursery had regular contact and assistance from the education authority pre-school development officer.

## **Management**

### **Standard 14**

The management of the nursery was good. The headteacher and one of the principal teachers shared the responsibility of the nursery classes. They were ably supported by the hardworking nursery staff who were committed to developing the quality of the provision.

Staff were recruited in line with local authority procedures and held appropriate qualifications. All staff had received training, or were about to update their training, on child protection. Staff appraisals were in place for teaching staff and nursery nurses but not for support staff. Staff were aware of the Scottish Social

Services Council Codes of Practice and the registration process. There was a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place providing useful guidance for staff and parents. These were easily accessible to parents on a daily basis.

A good start had been made to formally monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision. The headteacher made formal visits to observe classroom practice. However, the headteacher had yet to implement procedures for monitoring teachers' plans and provide written feedback to staff. She was aware of the need to improve the frequency of informal visits and provide written feedback to staff. The service had an appropriate development plan in place.

## **Key strengths**

- The happy, well-behaved children.
- Overall, high quality of programmes in each of the five key aspects of children's development and learning.
- The very good teamwork of the nursery staff.

## **Recommendations for improvement**

- Staff should ensure activities are sufficiently challenging to meet the needs of all children.
- Staff should improve communication with parents about children's achievements.
- The headteacher should develop procedures to monitor the planning in the nursery and improve the frequency of informal class visits.

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

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