

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

15 June 2005

**New Elgin Primary School Nursery Class
Bezack Street
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Elgin
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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

New Elgin 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 33.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located within the primary school and comprised two large self-contained classrooms with toilet and cloakroom facilities. There was a designated changing room for children with specific medical needs. The toilets were currently being upgraded. The nursery had timetabled access to the school gym hall. An outdoor play area was available.

The well-maintained accommodation provided a warm and safe environment. Plans were in place to install an internal door in the corridor to further enhance the overall security of the nursery. However, current supervision arrangements were appropriate.

The layout of the rooms and the very structured daily routine limited the children's independence and choice of activities. Staff did not use the available space effectively enough to enable children to access a wide variety of resources and activities. They should review the layout of the playrooms to enable children to make full use of a wide range of art and craft resources daily. They needed to provide children with more opportunities for creative and imaginative play and offer daily use of both sand and water play. Children had insufficient opportunities for energetic physical play inside. They needed further encouragement to make more independent use of the book area.

The nursery benefited from a large, partially enclosed outdoor play area and a wide range of outdoor equipment. However, children had limited opportunities to take part in outdoor play. Children's access to energetic physical play outdoors required further improvement.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff were pleasant and approachable and had created a caring environment in which children were happy.

Play and structured learning opportunities for children were timetabled across each morning and afternoon session. The nursery also had a formal teaching programme in place for all children. However, the programme did not provide a sufficiently broad range of activities each day. Staff did not always intervene effectively enough to extend children's play and make it more challenging. They needed to restructure the daily programme and provide children with daily opportunities to make their own choices. Children needed to take responsibility for their own learning and access a much fuller range of activities independently.

Planning, assessing and recording of children's progress were at very early stages of development. Staff planned a range of topics based on adult-led themes. They had begun to make some written observations of children's progress. However, staff took insufficient account of children's interests, needs and stages of development when planning activities. They had yet to use assessment information to plan next steps in children's learning. Staff should improve the planning process, link assessment information more closely to planning and identify clearly next steps in children's learning.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was fair. Children were happy and familiar with nursery routines. They understood simple rules and most cooperated well with one another and adults. Children were learning basic rules of hygiene and tidied well around the playrooms. However, staff needed to intervene more to encourage children to concentrate and persevere. Children did not have enough opportunities to exercise skills of independence, including preparing and serving their own snack.
- The programme for communication and language was fair overall. Most children listened well and were beginning to talk to one another during play and in small group situations. However, children did not have enough opportunities to talk and listen for a variety of purposes in more challenging situations. While some children could recognise their name in print, overall children had too few opportunities to develop skills in early reading and writing through play. There was scope for greater display of the written word around the playrooms.
- The programme for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world was fair. Visitors to the nursery included the dentist, minister and policeman. The majority of children had a basic understanding of numbers and recognised colours and simple shapes. They had timetabled use of the computer to enhance their skills in early mathematics. However, they needed daily play opportunities to develop skills in sorting, grouping, matching and

measuring. Staff did not provide enough experiences for children to develop their skills of observation, investigation and simple problem solving.

- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was fair overall. Although children took part in a few art and craft activities, which were timetabled across each week, their opportunities to make choices were too limited. They enjoyed taking part in some role-play but would benefit from a wider range of contexts for imaginative play, including when outdoors. Staff did not provide enough experiences for children to sing or make music using percussion instruments.
- The programme for physical development and movement was fair. Children were developing some hand control through timetabled activities such as painting, drawing and use of the computer mouse and jigsaws. Staff made weekly use of the school gym to provide opportunities for energetic activities. However, children had limited opportunities for daily energetic physical play. They had insufficient opportunities to use large-scale climbing apparatus.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

The nursery offered good support to children and their families. Staff had built positive relationships with parents and children and responded to them in a caring and friendly manner. Staff knew children well and had responsibility, as key workers, for their own groups.

Staff kept parents informed about their children's activities through newsletters and informal daily discussions. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and those interviewed during the inspection, expressed their satisfaction with almost all aspects of the service. A few stated that they felt activities were not stimulating enough to challenge their children.

The nursery had a well-planned programme of induction for children transferring to P1. Links with other schools had been established and visits from school staff were encouraged.

Staff had a clear understanding of relevant legislation and procedures for supporting children with additional needs which they implemented. Effective, daily support was provided by two auxiliaries. Some links were established with outside support agencies. Staff needed to extend these, and consult with other centres in order to support children more fully.

In consultation with parents and professionals, staff needed to develop individualised educational programmes for all children with additional support needs and regularly monitor progress in their learning.

Management

Standard 14

The newly appointed headteacher was still in the process of becoming familiar with the service. She was strongly committed to ensuring the nursery became an integral part of the school provision and had a clear vision for its future development. This

included extending the accommodation to incorporate a parents' room to encourage further communication and involvement in the nursery.

There was a comprehensive range of policies for children's care and welfare in place. The headteacher planned to review and update policies in line with school procedures.

Staff were recruited in line with local authority procedures and appropriate staff ratios were maintained. All staff were appropriately qualified and had good opportunities to access training to extend their professional development.

All nursery staff had recently completed child protection training.

The nursery staff monitored the quality of the provision informally but systematic self-evaluation procedures had not yet been established. The headteacher had good plans to formalise procedures in line with national and local guidelines. She and the staff should now make use of self-evaluation procedures to audit the nursery provision and identify appropriate priorities. The headteacher should introduce a more systematic and rigorous approach to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the nursery's work.

The headteacher had knowledge of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and its role in registering and regulating staff, their education and training. The headteacher should ensure that all staff familiarise themselves with this document.

Key strengths

- Positive relationships with parents.
- The good support for children and their families with additional needs.
- The enthusiastic and committed primary headteacher and the friendly, happy children.

Recommendations for improvement

- The headteacher and staff should improve the layout of the playrooms and provide a wider range of resources daily, as identified in the report.
- The headteacher and staff should restructure the daily programme to ensure that all children are able to choose independently from the full range of activities, both inside and outdoors.
- Staff should improve their interaction with children to ensure that all children are appropriately challenged.
- Staff should improve procedures for planning, assessing and recording children's progress, link assessment information more closely to planning and identify clearly next steps in children's learning.

- Staff should improve curricular programmes.
- The headteacher should further develop more rigorous and systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery.

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
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