

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

28 June 2006

**Portgordon Primary School Nursery Class
Richmond Terrace
Portgordon
Buckie
AB56 5RA**

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

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 and HMIE website: 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. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk.

A copy of the HMIE complaints procedure is available from the HMIE website at www.hmie.gov.uk or by telephoning 01506 600 258.

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Introduction

Portgordon Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in February 2006 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. HMIE carried out this inspection on behalf of both organisations and consulted the Care Commission about its findings. 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. It was registered for 20 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 16.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located within Portgordon Primary School. There was a secure entry system. Staff had worked effectively to provide a stimulating, bright and welcoming environment. Helpful information was displayed on the parents' notice board. Activities in the playroom were attractively laid out and gave children opportunities to work independently or together.

Staff used the school hall regularly to extend children's play opportunities. The children had access to an enclosed outdoor play area adjacent to the school building. Staff could also make use of different areas of the school grounds for outdoor play. However, they had not carried out a risk assessment for staff working outdoors with children.

Staff implemented appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of children and control the spread of infection. Play equipment was stored in the kitchen area, which was inappropriate. Nursery children used the same toilets as P1 pupils. Staff needed to ensure that these toilets were clean for the afternoon session.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had good relationships with the children and knew them well. They provided a good range of activities in which children readily engaged. Staff interacted very well with children to promote thinking and develop their learning. They did not make sufficient use of children's interests to influence the programme.

Staff maintained folios of children's work and recorded their achievements. They were developing new procedures for

planning and assessment. They observed children at play and the teacher recorded their progress. Staff did not make sufficient use of this information to plan the next steps in children's learning and development. They needed to track individual children's progress more clearly. Reports were shared with parents, and the primary school, when pupils were about to move to P1.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Staff had created a warm and purposeful environment for children. They made appropriate use of praise. Children were developing friendships and the majority showed caring attitudes towards each other. Children were happy, and secure with the nursery routines. Staff encouraged them to be independent at snack time and when changing to go outside. Children were learning nursery rules, but staff needed to ensure that children followed these rules consistently.
- The programme for communication and language was fair. Children talked effectively for a range of purposes during activities. They listened well to adults when in small groups, but many found it difficult to listen in a large group. Staff promoted children's interest in books by making tapes of stories for children. Children did not handle books independently in the book corner. They used the drawing table to make marks and scribble. Children were able to recognise letters and wrote their own names. Staff needed to provide more opportunities for children to develop early reading and writing skills during play activities.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children were learning about the changing seasons through regular outdoor play. They were becoming aware of the growth of plants through the bulbs they had planted. They had good opportunities to solve problems and to investigate and explore. Staff provided a very wide range of activities for children to develop early mathematical skills such as sorting, counting and measuring. Children needed to see more visitors to enhance their learning and promote understanding of peoples' roles in society. Children used the computer effectively. However, staff did not make sufficient use of information and communications technology to extend children's learning.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children expressed their thoughts and feelings effectively through a range of media. They enjoyed painting. Staff valued children's work and displayed it attractively. Children were inventive in their role-play, but staff needed to be more involved in this to enhance children's learning. Children enjoyed and responded well to singing together. They had weekly lessons with a music specialist to develop learning. They did not have enough opportunities to play instruments and make music independently.
- The programme for children's physical development and movement was good. Children had access to good opportunities for energetic physical play. They enjoyed outdoor play and were becoming confident on the climbing

frame. Children had regular use of the school hall for energetic play and they were developing a good range of physical skills. However, some children were not sufficiently aware of safe practices. Children were developing good control of their fingers and hands using a wide range of equipment such as pens, play dough, jigsaws and construction toys.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff had established good relationships with children and their families. They provided formal and informal opportunities to discuss children's progress with parents. Good communication was also promoted through regular newsletters and the notice board. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were, overall, satisfied with the work of the nursery. Some would have liked more information on their child's progress.

Staff had a good knowledge of the children. They had a policy to support children with additional learning needs and the nursery teacher had a good working knowledge of this. She had developed good links with other agencies to help her meet children's needs. There was a good induction programme to ensure a smooth transition from the nursery class to P1. Staff gave the pre-school children good opportunities to meet their next teacher. They had also developed a buddy system, where P6 pupils supported children in the nursery and through to P1.

Management

Standard 14

Leadership of the nursery was fair. The headteacher was approachable and staff found her informal visits supportive. She had regular meetings with the nursery teacher to discuss nursery issues. However, the headteacher needed to develop regular meetings to include all nursery staff. The nursery teacher had responsibility for the day-to-day running of the nursery. Together, the teacher and nursery nurse worked effectively as a team to ensure the smooth running of the nursery.

Aims and objectives for the service were clearly laid out and comprehensive policies and procedures had been developed, including child protection. Staff were aware of the child protection procedures.

The primary school's development plan did not effectively support developments in the nursery. Neither the headteacher nor nursery staff had evaluated the work of the nursery or produced a development plan to take account of nursery improvement priorities. The headteacher had discussed nursery practice with staff. However, she had just begun to introduce formal procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of the nursery with a view to improving children's experiences. Parents had not been involved in evaluating the nursery and its work. A staff development and review process was being implemented and opportunities were available for staff to take part in further training. Staff needed to reorganise their individual records of training. They all had copies of the Codes of Practice of the Scottish Social Services Council and some knowledge of its implications for practice.

Key strengths

- Happy, relaxed children.
- The quality of staff interaction.
- The good relationships between staff, parents and children.
- The teamwork of the nursery staff.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

All previous requirements and recommendations from the last Care Commission report had been actioned.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should improve the programme for developing children's communication and language.
- Staff should develop their planning and assessment procedures further and include the next steps in individual children's learning.
- The headteacher should establish regular communication to ensure effective leadership and guide staff in identifying priorities for improvement.
- The headteacher should implement systematic and rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the nursery.
- Risk assessments should be put in place for working with small groups of children outdoors.

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.

Gail Simcox
HM Inspectorate of Education