

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

**22 December 2004**

**South Primary School Nursery Class  
Roxburgh Road  
Wick  
Caithness  
KW1 5HP**

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

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).

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## **Introduction**

South Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in September 2004 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. The nursery, which provided afternoon sessions, catered only for pre-school children in their pre-school year. At the time of the inspection the roll was 15.

## **The environment**

### **Standard 2**

The nursery was located within the main school building. The accommodation provided a comfortable, safe, bright and stimulating environment, attractively decorated with children's work. The premises were in a good state of repair and well maintained. Children had regular indoor and outdoor energetic play. The nursery had access to the school hall on a weekly basis and a secure outdoor play area was also available. The outdoor hard surfaces were uneven and should be improved. Outside storage facilities should also be considered.

Staff made use of the available space to allow children to play independently or in small groups. However, staff should make better use of the facilities to provide increased play opportunities for children. There was a good range of play equipment and resources.

Appropriate procedures were in place to ensure the safety of children. Staff should continue to carry out risk assessments and ensure that resources are regularly cleaned and records are kept.

There was suitable toilet provision located near the entrance to the playroom.

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

### **Standard 4 & 5**

Staff had created a warm, caring environment where good use was made of praise to encourage effort and to make children feel valued. Key workers, who each had responsibility for a group of children, knew their children well and were sensitive to their needs.

Play and adult-led activities, including structured story and singing times, were organised across each afternoon session. Children needed more opportunities to exercise choice, take responsibility for their own learning and access a wider range of learning opportunities across the whole of each afternoon session.

Staff planned a range of themes, seasonal events and festivals using the education authority planning format. They used a daily planning sheet to plan for children's progress and development. However, staff required to take more account of children's interests and needs when planning the curriculum and offer a wider range of learning opportunities across each afternoon session. They needed to extend children's learning and make it more challenging and stimulating for all children.

Staff made use of the information provided by the associated playgroup when children joined the nursery. They should continue to develop their procedures for planning and assessment and focus more on supporting children's next steps in learning.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Children were happy, secure and familiar with nursery routines. They understood simple rules and cooperated well with one another and adults. They were beginning to develop self confidence and were aware of the needs of others. Staff required to provide more opportunities for children to choose their own activities and become independent, including helping to prepare and serve their own snack.
- The programme for communication and language was fair. Most children listened carefully and were beginning to talk well to one another during play and snack time. However, they required more opportunities to listen carefully in small groups and to develop talking and listening in appropriately challenging activities. Some children could recognise their name in print and a few could write it. Children required further opportunities to extend their skills in early reading and writing through play. Staff did not always make enough use of appropriate print on signs, captions and displays to develop children's skills in early reading.
- The programme for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world was fair. Children were learning about their local environment through outings to the library, post office and Caithness General Hospital. Some children could recognise basic colour, count and recite simple number rhymes well. Children required more opportunities to develop a wider range of skills in early mathematics, especially sorting, matching and learning about simple shape. There were insufficient opportunities for children to observe, investigate and solve simple problems.
- Overall, the programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children were developing some skills in painting, gluing and junk modelling. Although children took part in a limited range of art and craft activities, their opportunities for free choice across the whole of each afternoon session were too limited. Children enjoyed taking part in role-play, but would benefit from a wider range of contexts for imaginative play. They enjoyed daily singing, but required more regular opportunities to make music using percussion instruments.
- The programme for physical development and movement was good. While children were developing hand control through

activities such as painting, drawing, hammering and using the computer mouse, they needed to use more tools and equipment, including scissors, on a daily basis. There were good opportunities for energetic physical play both inside and outside. Weekly use was made of the primary school gym to develop energetic activities. Children enjoyed regular energetic activity and had daily opportunities to use large-scale climbing equipment.

## **Support for children and families**

### **Standard 6**

Staff knew children well and intervened sensitively in play activities to support their learning. Relationships with parents were good. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very happy with all aspects of the nursery. They had regular opportunities to talk informally with staff. They were well informed about the work of the nursery through regular newsletters, informal discussions and appropriate information displayed on notice boards.

There was a well-planned programme of induction for children transferring from playgroup to nursery and from nursery to P1. Nursery children had regular opportunities to visit P1. The P1 classroom assistant worked in the school in the morning and the nursery in the afternoon. Information on children's progress was regularly shared with parents and the education authority's transition record was used when children transferred to P1.

The headteacher and staff liaised with outside agencies and other pre-5 establishments to help children with additional needs. In addition, regular visits from support agencies provided effective support for children with additional needs.

Nursery staff had received recent training in child protection policy and procedures.

## **Management**

### **Standard 14**

The nursery assistant was responsible for the day-to-day management of the nursery and was supported in its development by the nursery coordinator teacher and headteacher.

The headteacher was open, approachable and supportive and maintained regular informal contact with the nursery. She had developed very supportive relationships with staff, parents and children. The headteacher and the nursery coordinator teacher were committed to the further development of the nursery. The headteacher should continue to develop more systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring the quality of the nursery.

The headteacher was aware of the Scottish Social Services Council and its role in registering and regulating the workforce and their education and training. Staff had received copies of the Codes of Practice.

Staff worked well together. They should now be deployed in ways which further support children's learning. Staff were recruited in line with local authority procedures and most were qualified, or attaining qualifications, in childcare and education. Staff participated in training courses to update their knowledge

and skills. However, a formal system for staff review and development needed to be put in place.

The nursery had a range of policies and procedures to support the care and welfare of the children and these were available to parents and carers. Accident records were maintained and staff should ensure that parents and carers receive a copy of each recorded incident. Staff should ensure that medication for children is stored securely in their original containers.

## **Key strengths**

- The good interaction of staff with children.
- The caring and approachable nursery staff team.
- Positive relationships with parents.
- The effective transition procedures between the playgroup and nursery and nursery and P1.
- The enthusiastic and committed headteacher.

## **Other Issues**

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

There were no recommendations or requirements made in the last inspection report.

## **Recommendations for improvement**

- The education authority should improve the provision for outdoor play.
- The headteacher and staff should change the programme to ensure that all children are able to choose from the full range of activities independently.
- Staff should extend children's learning more effectively and provide more challenge for all children.
- Staff should continue to develop procedures for planning and assessing children's progress. They should make more use of assessment information to plan next steps in children's learning.
- The headteacher and staff should improve the curriculum programmes identified in this report.
- The headteacher should develop more systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery.
- The headteacher should ensure that formal staff review is extended to all of the nursery staff.

## Requirements

SSI 2002/114 Regulation 4(1) (a) Welfare of Users.

Medication should be held within the original containers and securely stored.

Timescale: Immediate, on receipt of report.

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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