

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

**3 May 2006**

**St Gerardine Primary School Nursery Class  
St Gerardine Road  
Lossiemouth  
IV31 6JX**

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<br>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 St Gerardine Primary School Nursery Class The Moray Council**

## **Introduction**

St Gerardine Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in January 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 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 29.

## **The environment**

### **Standard 2**

The nursery, which had its own entrance, was accommodated within St Gerardine's Primary School. It offered a safe, secure and stimulating environment for children. The nursery had access to two large self-contained playrooms and integral kitchen. The cloakroom and toilet facilities were located a short distance away in the nearby corridor. The building was generally in a good state of repair and was well maintained. Children's work was attractively displayed throughout. The nursery was equipped to a high standard, and resources and activities were easily accessible to the children. Staff had made very good use of the space to enable children to play together in small or larger groups, or independently. Staff and children also had timetabled access to the gym hall on a weekly basis and these arrangements could be flexible at other times.

Staff implemented good hygiene practices and carried out daily risk assessments of the premises both indoors and outside. Staff ensured children were supervised in both rooms at all times.

The nursery benefited from a large and secure outdoor play area with direct access from the playroom. Children could participate in energetic physical activities and extend their knowledge and understanding of the natural environment.

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

### **Standard 4 & 5**

Staff had developed very good relationships with children. They were enthusiastic and highly motivated. Staff welcomed children cheerfully in to the very well-presented playrooms. They encouraged children to choose from an extensive range of well-planned activities which offered appropriately challenging learning opportunities. Children became absorbed in their chosen activities and took time to explore and investigate, particularly at the construction and the water play. Staff praised

children for their efforts and made very good use of questioning and dialogue to support and extend their learning.

Staff were developing good systems for planning children's learning and assessing their progress. Staff regularly assessed children's developing skills and kept notes of their achievements. They now needed to track progress across all learning outcomes and plan children's next steps in learning.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Staff had created a warm, purposeful, learning environment. All children were well settled, happy and were developing positive relationships with adults and other children. Children were kind and caring towards each other. They talked together and helped each other as they played. Almost all children chose activities confidently and most concentrated for extended periods of time. Staff had simple rules and routines in place which children understood and followed well. Staff encouraged children's independence by helping them to make choices such as agreeing fruit snack menus and by labelling their own work.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Children listened very well and talked confidently to adults and to each other during group activities. They were eager to share their news and listened and responded well to a story read by adults. Staff provided two very attractive and well-resourced book corners. All children were developing an awareness of print. Children were having fun learning about rhyming words and most were able to recognise familiar letters. Staff ensured children had a range of opportunities to practice early writing at a well-resourced writing table and in the role-play area. Most children were making marks and the majority were beginning to write letters.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Staff provided interesting experiences for children to investigate ice melting in the water tray. They planted seeds and bulbs indoors and observed the changes as they grew in to plants. Outside, they noted the birds' interest in the food they had prepared for them. Staff provided resources to extend children's interests in planning and building using construction materials. Staff made very good use of a computer and a digital camera to support children's learning. They planned activities to raise children's awareness of their own culture and religious festivals such as Diwali. Staff ensured children's experiences of early mathematical activities were firmly embedded in play. Most children were familiar with colours and shapes. They could count and identify numbers up to ten.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Staff planned a stimulating range of opportunities for children to be creative. They made models with junk materials and play dough. They used paint and pens to produce colourful pictures. Children's work was valued and displayed throughout the room. Staff ensured the role-play area was thoughtfully resourced. The good

attention to detail motivated children to participate in sustained, imaginative play in the café and the construction area. Staff supported children well in developing their interest and skills in music. Children made very good use of musical instruments to accompany their friends in tuneful singing.

- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Staff used the extensive outdoor area to provide children with regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Children were developing confidence to climb and slide on the safe, enclosed climbing frame. They enjoyed running and playing games on the grass. Staff planned a further range of activities to develop children's physical skills during a weekly visit to the school gym. They were developing very good control of their fingers and hands by using a variety of equipment such as the computer mouse, pencils, crayons, scissors, play dough and construction toys.

## **Support for children and families**

### **Standard 6**

Staff knew children and their families well and responded appropriately and sensitively to individual needs. Links with parents were very good. Prior to starting nursery, they received an informative welcome pack. They were actively encouraged to participate in the life of the nursery, and staff organised opportunities for parents to help with activities. Staff also operated a home link with 'Huggy and Pickles' throughout the year. This involved taking the toys home for a visit and telling their friends about their adventures on return to nursery.

Most parents responded positively to the pre-inspection questionnaire and were satisfied with almost all aspects of the nursery. A few wanted more information about their children's progress. Parents were kept informed about the ongoing work of the nursery through informal daily feedback, displays of information on the notice board and regular newsletters. More formal meetings were organised to allow parents the opportunity to discuss their children's progress.

Staff liaised very effectively with teachers in the primary school to ensure the smooth transition of children from nursery to P1. Children became familiar with the school facilities and were able to meet the staff and their 'buddy' from P6. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were also regular visitors to the nursery.

Staff were aware of procedures for accessing support for children with additional learning needs. The school had established effective links with a range of professional support agencies including the neighbouring developmental playgroup.

## **Management**

### **Standard 14**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher shared the overall responsibility for the nursery. They provided very effective leadership demonstrating a high level of professional competence. They had a clear vision for the future of the nursery. Staffing in the nursery had recently undergone changes, with the nursery nurses taking on the day-to-day running of the group. The deputy headteacher provided very good support to

the staff team. She had developed positive relationships with staff and promoted effective teamwork. Staff worked hard to develop the quality of the service. Both staff members were well organised, enthusiastic, committed and highly respected by parents.

There was a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place providing useful guidance for staff and parents. These were available and accessible to parents. All staff had been trained on child protection policy and procedures and they followed the NESPC (North East of Scotland Child Protection Committee) guidelines.

Staff were recruited in line with local authority procedures and held appropriate qualifications. All staff were clearly committed to attending further training courses.

Staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council and the registration process. They had all been issued with a copy of the Codes of Practice.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher had established a programme to monitor and evaluate the quality of the nursery's work and had identified a few areas for improvement. These were identified within the school development plan. They now needed to build on this good start and involve staff in a more formal approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of the service as a whole.

## **Key strengths**

- The happy, confident children.
- The stimulating experiences for children to learn through play.
- The effective interactions of staff to support and extend children's learning.
- The very good programmes across the five key aspects of children's development and learning.
- The hardworking and committed staff team.
- The very good support of management for children, staff and parents.

## **Recommendations for improvement**

- Staff should continue to develop systems for planning children's learning and assessing and recording their progress.
- Management should continue with plans to formalise systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the service.

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

Kathleen Robertson  
HM Inspectorate of Education