

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
St Mary's Primary School
Nursery Class
Dundee City Council**

25 May 2005

St Mary's Primary School Nursery Class
St Mary's Lane
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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

St Mary's Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in February 2005 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. At the time of the inspection the roll was 46.

The environment

Standard 2

The playroom on the upper floor of the building was spacious, bright and secure, and in a good state of decoration and repair. The nursery had a well-developed garden and outdoor play area, although the use of these areas was limited by difficulties in gaining safe access. Staff planned the playroom layout well and provided an attractive and stimulating environment. This allowed children to play independently or in small groups. Children's work was well presented to provide sources of interest and promote self worth. An extensive range of labelled photographs provided parents with information on the work of the nursery.

Staff paid good attention to hygiene but needed to carry out and record risk assessment for the nursery and for outings on a regular basis. There was a good range of well-maintained and organised resources but more multicultural resources were needed.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff knew the children very well. They interacted very positively with children, asking good questions and extending learning. Staff were very responsive to children's needs and valued individual children's contributions. Children were relaxed and happy in the playroom.

Weekly planning clearly identified learning outcomes. Staff needed to develop longer-term planning to identify a broad set of learning opportunities throughout the year. Staff recorded helpful assessments and observations. They made good use of the digital camera to record children's development, but needed to further monitor children's progress.

Staff provided a wide range of appropriately challenging activities. There was a good balance of activities which the children could choose and those directed by adults. Most children were motivated and enthusiastic.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were confident and staff used praise and encouragement to raise their self esteem. Children were very well behaved and considerate to each other. They were developing independence and were aware of personal safety.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Children listened well to adults and other children. They communicated effectively with each other, for example in the home corner and the 'hospital'. Children had access to an attractive book corner and some chose books independently. Children were developing early writing skills and some were writing their names. They used information and communications technology (ICT) to develop listening skills and letter recognition.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Staff provided very good opportunities for children to learn about the seasons and growth of plants. Children had investigated the changes in matter through baking activities and experimenting with ice. They had very good experiences of ICT in their play through, for example, using overlays for the key board, the roller ball mouse and a cash register. Most children were developing early mathematics skills through a wide range of activities which included matching, sorting, playing games and counting.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Children had very good opportunities to express their ideas and feelings creatively. Their art work was valued by staff and attractively displayed. Children took part in imaginative role-play and were absorbed in their play in the 'hospital' corner. Children enjoyed creating their own music at the music table and could keep a beat.
- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Children had very good opportunities to develop hand control through painting, drawing, spreading and cutting. Some children enjoyed the climbing frame in the playroom. Staff needed to develop a programme to ensure that all the children had daily energetic play.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff knew children and their families very well. They responded well to individual needs and circumstances. They made good use of assessment information to identify needs. Parents had access to an attractive and helpful information sheet telling them about weekly activities. Displays of photographs let parents know about the types of activities their children could do. Most parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with the work of the centre overall.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children with additional needs. A policy for working with children requiring additional support was in place and staff knew the procedures. Staff had worked with support agencies in the past and retained contacts with them.

Management

Standard 14

The headteacher and his depute, who had delegated responsibility for the nursery, worked very effectively together to provide strong leadership of the nursery. Their openness and approachability had enabled very good relationships with staff and parents to be established. They knew staff very well and valued and used their individual skills and interests. The nursery staff were a long-established team who worked very well together. They were enthusiastic and dedicated. Their contributions to the nursery were enhanced by good opportunities for professional and personal development.

The headteacher and depute monitored playroom activities regularly through informal visits, and the depute provided written feedback to staff on planning. However, teaching commitments as a result of staff shortages limited opportunities for monitoring and delayed the implementation of formal self-evaluation processes. The headteacher and the depute needed to involve staff, parents and children more in monitoring the provision to ensure that quality is maintained.

The depute headteacher had some knowledge of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and the implications of these for managers and staff. An appropriate range of policies and procedures provided effective guidance and support for staff, parents and students.

Key strengths

- The warm, caring ethos of the nursery.
- Relaxed, happy, confident and enthusiastic children.
- The very good programmes for learning and development.
- Dedicated, skilled staff and effective teamwork.
- The strong leadership of the approachable and supportive management team.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

All requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection had been addressed.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should further monitor children's progress in their development and learning.
- Staff should improve the programme of physical development and movement by ensuring children have opportunities for daily physical play.
- Staff should develop longer-term planning to identify a broad set of learning opportunities throughout the year.
- The management and staff should develop systematic and rigorous procedures to evaluate the work of the nursery.
- Risk assessments for the premises and for outings should be carried out and reviewed regularly.

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.

Lesley Toner
Care Commission

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HM Inspectorate of Education