

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Strathblane Primary School
Nursery Class
Stirling Council**

8 June 2005

**Strathblane Primary School Nursery Class
Southview Road
Blanefield
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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

Strathblane 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 40.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery class was situated in a classroom within Strathblane Primary School. Nursery and P1 children shared the same entrance which had a secure video entry system in place. Staff had organised space effectively, enabling children to work independently and participate in small or in larger groups. Children benefited from natural light, good ventilation and a well-heated classroom. The classroom décor was in need of some minor remedial work. Some fittings and fixtures were not well maintained and paint was peeling from the walls. The nursery children shared the toilet areas with older primary pupils. The taps in the boys' toilets were difficult to operate. There was no hot water and only a cold water supply was available in both toilet areas. The hot water supply to staff toilets was too hot.

Nursery children shared the outdoor play areas within the school grounds. A nursery garden area and play area had been identified within the school grounds but needed further development before children could safely access these areas. The headteacher and nursery staff had a good understanding of relevant health and safety legislation and all required records were in place.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had very good relationships with children and welcomed them individually on arrival at nursery. They knew children very well and made effective use of praise to develop their confidence and self esteem. Children made choices about their own learning and decided upon the activities they wished to follow. Staff interacted very well to extend and support this learning. They effectively recorded children's achievements using the digital camera. Staff noted down children's conversations and made good use of these when supporting children to make their own books.

Long-, medium- and short-term planning was in place which effectively supported children's development and learning. Children chose from a good balance of self-selected activities and those directed by an adult. Staff organised activities to promote independence and challenge children. They regularly observed children and discussed and reviewed their progress on a daily basis. Staff used this information effectively to respond to children's next steps in learning and adjusted activities as a result to ensure their progress.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were happy and secure with nursery routines. They were learning to be independent and were beginning to make friends. Staff effectively encouraged children to develop positive relationships by caring for each other, sharing and taking turns. Children made appropriate choices and persevered well in their learning through staff providing good opportunities.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Children spoke confidently to adults and each other and were keen to initiate conversations and share their own experiences. They listened well to stories and used the story corner frequently to look at books. Staff provided a good range of fiction and non-fiction books to enhance displays and develop children's interests. They made very effective use of labels on pictures and print on displays to develop children's early reading skills. Children were developing their early writing skills through often accessing the well-resourced writing area. A number of children wrote their name correctly and were interested in adding words to their pictures.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Children had been learning about frost and ice. They used the digital camera and video well to record their findings. Staff provided effective support. They made good use of interesting photographs which children had taken to make a book for them to recount their experiences. Children planted flowers for the nursery garden. They recalled previous activities when they had planted bulbs in autumn. They had observed their growth and were learning to care for them. Children effectively extended their number skills through a good range of activities, including games and suitable computer programmes.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children enjoyed using coloured pastels to draw spring flowers. They decided by themselves where to place their work on a large frieze and chose from an interesting range of collage materials. In particular, they enjoyed painting, cutting and gluing. Children participated with enthusiasm in moving to music. They effectively used instruments which they had made by themselves to accompany their singing. Staff provided a home corner but did not interact sufficiently to encourage and develop children's role play.

- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Staff provided regular opportunities for children to take part in energetic play in the school playground. They used a general purpose room in the school for ring games and creative dance. Through this, children were developing a good awareness of space. Staff did not plan well enough to ensure that children's physical skills developed sufficiently as they had more limited opportunities to use large equipment and apparatus. Children were developing effective control of their hands and fingers through using a range of construction toys, games and puzzles.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff had established positive relationships with children and their families. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with the work of the nursery. Some wanted more information about their children's progress and the work of the nursery in general. Staff regularly reviewed children's progress records and detailed folios of children's work were well maintained. However, staff did not provide enough opportunities for parents to access these folios and records to share children's achievements with them.

Children who needed additional help for their learning were very well supported. Staff had established good links with external agencies and regular review meetings were in place to ensure that children's needs were being met. Staff had good arrangements in place for children transferring to primary school. Visits from primary school staff to the nursery were already established, allowing children to develop relationships with these staff.

Management

Standard 14

The headteacher had a very good vision for the development and improvement of the nursery. Her management of the nursery was very good. She was open and approachable. She had developed effective team work and communicated well. The headteacher had clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of the nursery staff who carried these out well.

The headteacher and staff made good use of nursery and local authority policies and procedures to support them in their work. She ensured that nursery staff had a sound knowledge of child protection guidelines. All staff had completed child protection training. They were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and the implications for their practice.

The headteacher used self-evaluation procedures effectively to regularly review nursery work with staff. She observed nursery practice and sampled children's work. The headteacher held regular staff meetings and provided good feedback to them about the nursery planning process. Information gathered from this focused system contributed to the nursery development plan which clearly identified points for action. As a result, children's experiences were improving in a number of areas. For example, they were having more choices and their interests were being further developed and taken more account of.

Key strengths

- Quality of staff and child interaction.
- Opportunities for children to influence their own interests and make suitable choices about their own learning.
- Ways in which staff used information from observations to support children's progress.
- Children's knowledge and skills which were being effectively developed through high-quality curricular experiences in emotional, personal and social development, communication and language and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The clear vision and commitment of the headteacher and staff team to the continuous improvement of the work of the nursery.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The recommendation to remove drinking fountains in the children's toilet areas was still outstanding from last year's Care Commission inspection. The headteacher confirmed that this work was due to begin in May 2005.

Recommendations for improvement

- Plans for the development of the outdoor play area should be progressed to allow children more opportunities for this aspect of their learning.
- Staff should further develop more effective means of communication with parents to share information about children's progress and achievements.
- The headteacher, involving the local authority, should provide thermostatically controlled hot water for hand-washing purposes.

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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Care Commission

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