

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

15 June 2005

**Strathdearn Primary School Nursery Class
Tomatin
Inverness
IV13 7YN**

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.

Complaints Coordinator
Headquarters
Care Commission
Compass House
Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Hazel Dewart
HM Inspectorate of Education
Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston
EH54 6GA

Crown Copyright 2005

Care Commission
HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

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

Introduction

Strathdearn Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in March 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 17.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located in a large playroom within the primary school. The premises were bright, attractive and welcoming. Children's art work was displayed to promote children's achievements. Staff organised space to provide good opportunities for children to play individually or in small groups. There was a good selection of materials and activities for children to access freely.

Children had some access to the school gym hall. There was a small enclosed garden area which could be accessed directly from the playroom. Staff needed to consider further how outdoor areas could be better used to facilitate children's use of large equipment and wheeled toys.

There was appropriate provision for disabled access and toilet facilities. Children's toilet facilities were located within the playroom. Staff needed to monitor children more effectively to ensure the development of good hygiene habits to maintain appropriate standards for the control of infection and ensure children's privacy and dignity.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had good relationships with children. They generally interacted well with children as they played. However, they did not always make effective use of questioning to support or extend children's learning. Staff needed to improve their overall management of the playroom to meet children's needs more effectively. They were caring and made good use of praise to promote children's confidence and self esteem. Most children cooperated well with adults and one another.

Staff organised a range of activities which interested most children. They were improving their approaches to observing and assessing children's progress. Staff should now make more effective use of assessment information to plan the next steps in children's learning. Staff kept parents regularly informed about their children's progress through informal discussions, meetings, children's folios and a written report.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Staff encouraged children to take some responsibilities, to understand simple rules and to be aware of the needs of others. Most children were happy, relaxed and familiar with nursery routines. They were developing good social skills and most showed an awareness of safety and hygiene needs. Staff did not yet fully involve children in planning and making decisions.
- In communication and language, the programme was good. Staff provided good opportunities for children to develop early writing skills through play. Most children could recognise their name in print and some could write it. Staff provided regular opportunities for children to listen and enjoy stories and rhymes. Most children listened carefully and responded appropriately to questions. Some talked readily to staff and one another but needed more experience in talking for a wider range of purposes.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children had opportunities to learn about the weather, festivals, such as the Chinese New Year, and to plant bulbs. Staff provided interesting displays to encourage children's curiosity. Children had access to the computer to support their learning but other aspects of information and communications technology were at an early stage of development. Children were developing appropriate skills in matching colours and shapes and counting. However, staff did not provide enough opportunities for children to experiment and solve simple problems.
- Staff provided a good programme for expressive and aesthetic development. Children played imaginatively in the nursery's 'post office' and the 'construction site' within the sand pit. They had good opportunities in art and craft and were developing appropriate skills in drawing, painting and gluing. Children enjoyed singing songs and rhymes. However, the location of the musical instruments limited some children's access and opportunities to dance.
- In physical development and movement, the programme was good. Children used a range of toys and equipment, such as scissors, puzzles and play dough, to develop good control of their fingers and hands. Staff encouraged healthy eating at snack time. They were developing children's opportunities for energetic play indoors and outside. Children were making progress in jumping, running, throwing and catching balls.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff provided good support to children and families. They knew them well and responded appropriately to individual family circumstances. Staff communicated regularly with parents through daily conversations, notices and newsletters. Parents were satisfied with most aspects of the nursery. However, some parents wanted more regular information about their children's progress and on how they could support their children's learning at home.

A planned programme was in place to ensure the smooth transition of children from nursery into the school. Information was shared with parents and the receiving P1 teacher. Staff were aware of procedures for supporting children with additional needs. Links had been established with other agencies. However, individualised educational programmes to support some children's learning were not yet in place.

Management

Standard 14

The headteacher had responsibility for the nursery class and a teaching commitment within the primary school. She had a clear vision for the future of the nursery and had established very good relationships with staff and children. The headteacher was very well supported by the visiting nursery coordinator teacher and the nursery staff worked well together.

Leadership of the nursery however, was fair. The headteacher's knowledge of nursery practice and its monitoring and evaluation were developing. She needed to implement fully regular and systematic approaches to monitoring and evaluating the nursery's work. The headteacher should include staff, parents and children in this, to identify clear priorities for improvement.

A comprehensive range of policies and procedures was in place and these were easily accessible to all parents. However, the headteacher needed to ensure that staff practice was consistent with stated policies and procedures. Staff had not yet had the opportunity to discuss their professional progress. They had some opportunities for further training. The headteacher had not yet developed formal systems to identify staff training, particularly in areas of risk assessment, and provision for children with additional needs. Staff were aware of their role and the procedures for protecting children and the work of the Scottish Social Services Council and its codes of practice.

Key strengths

- Attractive accommodation and a good range of resources.
- Positive relationships between and amongst staff, parents and children.

- The very good support provided by the nursery coordinator teacher.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

It was recommended that steps be taken to see how the noise levels from the extractor fan could be reduced to more appropriate levels. This issue is ongoing.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should improve the overall management of the playroom to meet children's needs effectively.
- Staff should, as planned, further improve their approaches to the observation and assessment of children's learning.
- Staff should improve children's learning experiences as highlighted within this report.
- The headteacher and staff should improve links with parents.
- The headteacher should liaise with other agencies to develop individualised educational programmes for children with additional support needs.
- The headteacher, in consultation with staff and parents, should rigorously and systematically monitor and evaluate the quality of the nursery's work.

Requirements

- It is required that staff undertake risk assessment training. Scottish Statutory Instrument 114 Regulation 13 Staffing.

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.

Elano Ross
Care Commission

Sheena McGhee
HM Inspectorate of Education