

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

**29 June 2005**

**Thrumster Primary School Nursery Class**  
**Thrumster**  
**By Wick**  
**Caithness**  
**KW1 5TR**

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**

Thrumster Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in April 2005 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. HMIE carried out this inspection on behalf of both organisations and consulted the care commission about its findings. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was four.

## **The environment**

### **Standard 2**

The nursery class was accommodated within the main primary school building. It was separated from the school general purpose (GP) room by a sliding partition. Children had access to this room throughout each session for physical development and movement.

Children were cared for in a safe, hygienic and stimulating environment. The building was in a good state of repair. There were very good arrangements in place to ensure security for all users. Staff effectively displayed children's work and photographs around the playroom.

Staff used space well, allowing children opportunity to work individually or in groups. The only outside play area was the school playground. There was no fenced off area for use by the nursery children.

Equipment and resources were clean and well maintained. Staff took appropriate measures to control the risk of infection.

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

### **Standard 4 & 5**

Staff provided a very welcoming environment and had very positive relationships with children. The pace of the session was good. There was an appropriate balance between activities which children chose for themselves and those which were more structured. Staff displayed a good knowledge and understanding of how children develop and learn through play. They had high expectations of children's behaviour and learning and effectively used questions and dialogue to extend and support children's learning. Staff were aware of, and responded to, children's individual needs.

Staff planned together. They clearly identified what they expected children to learn and used assessment to plan next steps for individual children. Dated samples of children's work were available for parents to view regularly. Staff observed children's progress regularly and recorded each individual child's development. They had not yet brought together all the information about individual children to provide a detailed profile of observations, assessments, samples of work and information from parents to be regularly available for parents to view.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were happy, safe and secure. They were comfortable with simple rules and routines. Children were developing positive relationships with children and adults. They played cooperatively, shared resources and took turns. They were able to express feelings, needs and preferences appropriately. Children were becoming independent and taking on appropriate responsibility for their personal safety and hygiene. They helped with snack preparation and serving. They tidied up well when they finished with resources. Staff made very good use of praise to encourage children, but sometimes intervened too quickly when children needed time to solve problems and make decisions. Staff provided appropriate opportunities for children to develop understanding of the importance of celebrating religious and cultural festivals.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Children listened and talked well for a range of purposes, including asking questions, predicting endings of stories, sequencing ideas and stories, and negotiating what they wanted as an outcome. They were able to follow instructions and information from adults. They had fun with rhyming words and enjoyed making up stories. Staff provided a good range of books in the attractive book corner to enable children to find information and enjoy listening to and reading stories. Children were understanding some of the language and layout of books and beginning to recognise the link between the written and spoken word. Staff provided a very good range of writing utensils and papers to encourage children to scribble, make marks and write. Children used drawings and written marks to express their ideas and feelings.
- The very good programme for knowledge and understanding of the world provided opportunities for children to learn about technology, science, information and communications technology and mathematics. Children were developing powers of observation using their senses. Staff made very good use of the school wildlife garden and local environment to help children experience natural materials and develop an appreciation of the beauty and wonder of nature. Children had opportunities to plant seeds and bulbs and watch changes through growth. Staff made very good use of visitors into the nursery and visits out to help children learn about the local area. They had provided a very good range of activities to help children experiment with technology and how things worked. Children used computer programmes and a digital camera to record information about what they

were doing in nursery. They were developing understanding and knowledge of mathematical processes including counting, sorting, matching and measuring. A pictorial timetable encouraged children to be aware of daily time sequences.

- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Staff had provided a wide variety of art and craft materials and activities to encourage children to be creative and imaginative. Children were able to paint, print, make models and collages. They used puppets for role-play and to express themselves imaginatively and freely. Children enjoyed singing and listening to music. They knew a range of traditional and modern songs. Staff had provided percussion instruments for children to play and invent music. Children moved rhythmically to music. They enthusiastically took part in dancing and singing games.
- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Children had daily access to the GP room for energetic activity. They were able to explore different ways to move their bodies. They were developing skills on the climbing frame and in running, jumping, skipping, hopping and balancing. They were becoming aware of the importance of keeping themselves safe when using tools and equipment. They cooperated well during physical play and enjoyed being with the older children in the playground at school breaks. Staff provided a range of tools to develop children's hand and finger control including scissors, writing and drawing utensils, paintbrushes, computer mouse and construction toys.

## **Support for children and families**

### **Standard 6**

Staff had developed very good relationships with children and families. They knew the children well and responded to individual needs and circumstances. All parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and were very positive about all aspects of the service. Parents were welcomed into the nursery and spent time with staff at the end of each session. Staff provided a range of information on the nursery notice board, including children's work diaries, curriculum information and other items of interest. Parents attended a termly coffee morning, when they could view the work done in the nursery, speak with staff and see their children's development. Regular school and nursery newsletters and a nursery information booklet gave parents further information. Very good transition arrangements were in place for children transferring into P1. Children from the nursery class made regular visits to the P1 classroom and P1 pupils joined them for free play activities for the final term of the session. The nursery regularly joined in whole-school activities and events.

There were no children with additional support needs within the nursery but staff were well informed about individualised educational programmes and had good access to support agencies if they were required.

## Management

### Standard 14

The headteacher managed the nursery class very effectively. She was enthusiastic, and committed to the inclusion of the nursery within the whole school. She had a clear vision for the development of the service and motivated the nursery team very effectively. The nursery staff had developed very good teamwork. They were committed to continual improvement of the nursery.

A range of policies and procedures was in place to support the ongoing work of the nursery and to provide useful information to parents. Staff were aware of the procedures for child protection. Not all staff had been formally reviewed but informal discussions were held with staff to identify training needs and appropriate courses and training.

Staff involvement in self-evaluation informed the priorities on the nursery section of the school development plan. These were being taken forward appropriately. The headteacher had effective systems in place to monitor the quality of children's learning and the work of the nursery. The headteacher and staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and of its implications for them.

### Key strengths

- The very strong and supportive leadership provided by the headteacher.
- The very enthusiastic and motivated staff team committed to continual improvement of the nursery.
- Very high-quality interactions between staff and children supporting and extending children's learning.
- Very good programmes across the five key areas of the curriculum.
- Very supportive relationships between staff and children and their parents.
- Very effective transition arrangements for children moving into P1.

### Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

The requirements made at the previous inspection had been fully met.

## Recommendations for improvement

- The headteacher and staff should further develop children's profiles to include observations, information about development and progress and evidence from parents and make the profiles more accessible to parents.
- In consultation with the local authority, the outdoor area should be made more secure so that children could be outside at any time when the nursery was in session.

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 Stirling  
HM Inspectorate of Education