

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Abernethy Primary School
Nursery Class
Perth and Kinross Council**

23 March 2005

Abernethy Primary School Nursery Class
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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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Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of Abernethy Primary School Nursery Class Perth and Kinross Council

Introduction

Abernethy Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in November 2004 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. An inspection of the primary school was carried out at the same time by HMIE and is the subject of a separate report. The nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 39.

The environment

Standard 2

The accommodation, situated within the primary school, was safe and secure. The building was in a very good state of repair. Attractive wall displays were in place. However, more use should be made of displays to promote children's own work.

Staff made appropriate use of the available space and children were able to choose from a good range of well-maintained toys and equipment. Children were able to play independently and in small groups. Opportunities to play in larger groups, however, were limited due to the size and design of the nursery playroom. There were no opportunities for energetic physical play in the nursery playroom.

The adjacent, safe, secure and attractive outdoor play area provided interesting and stimulating play opportunities. Staff now needed to provide more opportunities for outdoor play within the daily programme.

Effective systems were in place for health, safety and security. Children's admission to, and collection from, nursery were carefully supervised by staff. However, due to limited space available in the nursery reception and cloakroom area, most parents were required to leave their children at the nursery door.

Appropriate procedures were in place to control the spread of infection and designated staff were trained in first aid and food hygiene. There was no hot water in the nursery playroom for the washing of dishes and cutlery. This issue needed to be addressed.

The nursery promoted a healthy eating policy and had recently reviewed the content of the snack to reflect parents' wishes.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had good relationships with children and were responsive to their individual needs. They had created a warm, caring environment where good use was made of praise to encourage effort.

Play and structured learning opportunities were organised across each morning and afternoon session. A more formal teaching programme in early mathematics and language was also in place for all nursery children. The mathematics programme had been introduced as part of a local authority pilot. Children needed more opportunities to make choices, take responsibility for their own learning and access a wider range of activities independently through play experiences.

Staff planned a range of themes, topics and festivals. Activities were organised across the course of every week. However, staff did not consistently take account of children's interests and needs when planning the curriculum. They needed to offer a wider range and balance of learning opportunities across each daily session. They needed to ensure that the curriculum for children was broad and well-balanced across each of the five areas. Activities to promote children's learning did not always provide appropriate challenge and stimulation.

Assessment information, which focused on individual learning outcomes for groups of children, was used to inform each child's transition record. Each individual child had a target-setting plan, which focused on learning outcomes in early mathematics and language, and was regularly shared with parents. Staff needed to make more use of individual, personal observations for each child, take more account of children's interests and link this assessment information more closely to planning.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Staff provided a happy and settled environment. They encouraged children to become familiar with daily routines and simple rules. Children were developing friendships and most cooperated well with each other. They showed consideration for others by sharing and taking turns. Many were able to take responsibility for personal hygiene and for tidying away materials. Opportunities for children to develop skills of independence, concentration and perseverance were not fully developed.
- Overall, the programme for communication and language was good. Children talked and listened readily during social activities, free play and in small group situations. Most listened attentively to stories and were eager to involve adults and each other in conversation. The majority of children could recognise their name in print and a few could write it. Children needed further opportunities to extend their skills in early reading and early writing through play experiences. There was scope for more appropriate use of print, signs, captions and displays to develop children's skills in early reading through play.

- The programme for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world was good overall. There were opportunities to learn about the routines and jobs of familiar people through regular visits from the dental hygienist, police and fire safety officers. Most children were making good progress in naming basic colours, shapes and simple number. They could match, group and sort well. Regular use of the computer was offered to enhance skills in early mathematics. Children were developing their skills of observation through planting bulbs in the local environment. Opportunities for children to observe, investigate and solve simple problems, both inside and outside, were not fully exploited. Children needed more opportunities to develop skills in early mathematics through play experiences.
- Overall, the programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children were developing some skills in painting, gluing and using play dough. Although children took part in some art and craft activities, their opportunities for free choice and self-expression were too limited. Children took part enthusiastically in role-play both inside and outside and had regular opportunities to sing. Staff needed to provide more regular opportunities for children to make music using percussion instruments and extend the range of daily experiences in art and craft.
- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Staff gave attention to developing good hand control through activities including painting, drawing, cutting, rolling, hammering and using the computer mouse. Weekly use was made of the primary school gym to develop energetic activities. The extensive outdoor area provided good opportunities for children to enjoy regular physical activity, including daily use of large-scale climbing equipment. However, children had insufficient opportunities to use large-scale apparatus inside due to the size and design of the playroom.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

The nursery offered good support to children and families. There was an effective range of services to support children and their families. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with most aspects of the nursery. Some wanted more regular information about their child's progress and development. Others commented about the need to have regular healthy snacks and the unsuitability of personal targets in language and mathematics in target-setting plans for three-year-olds. Parents were kept well informed about the work of the nursery through a nursery booklet, attractive notice boards, regular newsletters, meetings and informal discussions.

There was a well-planned programme of induction in place to support children when they moved from nursery to P1. Nursery children had regular opportunities to visit P1. Information on children's progress was regularly shared with parents and the education authority's transition record was used when children transferred to P1.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children with additional support needs enrolled in the nursery. The headteacher and staff liaised with outside agencies and other pre-five establishments to help children and their families, as appropriate.

Management

Standard 14

The headteacher provided good leadership. She was very approachable and promoted effective teamwork. She had established good relationships with staff and valued their commitment and work highly. The headteacher was working to improve her knowledge of the pre-school curriculum.

The friendly and approachable nursery staff team worked well together and displayed a strong commitment to the nursery.

Staff had been recruited in line with education authority procedures and held appropriate qualifications in education and childcare. Staff training and development was ongoing and systems were in place to ensure appropriate staff review practices.

A comprehensive set of policies and procedures was in place and shared with staff and parents. The nursery class had a child protection policy in place. Staff were due to update their training in child protection policy and procedures in the near future.

The headteacher led the whole primary school staff in self-evaluation procedures. A development plan was in place for the whole school and although the nursery teacher had been involved in audit procedures using national priorities, no specific priorities for the nursery had been identified. The headteacher should now make use of relevant nursery self-evaluation procedures to audit nursery provision and identify appropriate nursery priorities for improvement. Nursery staff should contribute to evaluating the quality of the nursery and identify priorities for improvement.

The service was aware of the Scottish Social Services Council's codes of practice and demonstrated knowledge of the future implications.

Key strengths

- The attractive and stimulating outdoor play area.
- The good interaction of staff with children.
- The friendly, approachable staff team.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should revise the daily programme to ensure that children had more opportunities to make choices, take responsibility for their own learning and access a wider range of activities independently.

- Staff should improve approaches to planning and assessment as outlined in this report.
- The headteacher and staff should improve curricular programmes as identified in this report.
- The headteacher should review procedures for self-evaluation to ensure that appropriate nursery priorities are identified in the school development plan.
- Training in child protection policy and procedures should be extended to all nursery staff.

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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