Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of Claypotts Castle Primary School Nursery Class Dundee City Council

14 June 2006
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Care Standard</th>
<th>Child at the Centre Quality Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2 – A Safe Environment</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4 – Engaging with Children</td>
<td>Development and learning through play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5 – Quality of Experience</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s development and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 6 – Support and Development</td>
<td>Support for children and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 14 – Well-managed Service</td>
<td>Management, Leadership and Quality Assurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

If you would like an additional copy of this report

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.

If you wish to comment about integrated pre-school inspections

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of integrated pre-school inspections, you should write in the first instance to Kenneth Muir, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to either:

Complaints Coordinator  Hazel Dewart
Headquarters             HM Inspectorate of Education
Care Commission          Denholm House
Compass House            Almondvale Business Park
Riverside Drive          Almondvale Way
Dundee                   Livingston
DD1 4NY                  EH54 6GA

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You can write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman’s office can be obtained from the website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk.

A copy of the HMIE complaints procedure is available from the HMIE website at www.hmie.gov.uk or by telephoning 01506 600 258.

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Care Commission
HM Inspectorate of Education

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Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of Claypotts Castle Primary School Nursery Class Dundee City Council

Introduction

Claypotts Castle Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in March 2006 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. It was registered for 40 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 80.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery operated from a portacabin building situated within the grounds of the primary school. The nursery building was secure, bright and welcoming, having much natural light. Accommodation included a small entrance and cloakroom area, toilets and two playrooms, one of which had a small kitchen area. Staff made very good use of space to provide an inviting environment with opportunities for individual and group play. The writing area provided only limited opportunities for emergent writing and creativity. Staff should also review the use of space and resources in the art area.

There was opportunity for physical play to take place inside. The nursery had access to an enclosed outside play area that was a short distance from the nursery building. Two sheds stored a wide range of additional outdoor equipment.

There were many appealing displays throughout the playrooms which children could see and touch. These linked into current themes in the nursery. Children’s own art work was well displayed. There was a wide range of well-maintained, stimulating resources to support learning.

Staff paid good attention to health and safety issues and good infection control measures were in place. However, there was a limited hot water supply to the playrooms, which impacted on nursery practice. Disposable cups and serviettes were used at snack time to reduce the amount of washing up. The inadequate water supply must be addressed to ensure that there is sufficient hot water to meet the nursery’s needs.

The present nursery accommodation is temporary. The whole school will move to a new building which is due for completion in August 2007. It will provide much improved nursery accommodation and enable the nursery to be a more integral part of the school. When this nursery class, which has been merged and expanded from two existing local schools, moves to its
permanent site, it will offer extended day-care provision for children from birth to five years.

Quality of children’s experience
Standard 4 & 5

Staff had created a warm and caring learning environment. They made effective use of praise to encourage and motivate children. Staff had very good relationships with children and interacted very well to extend their learning. Children responded positively to the high expectations of staff and readily approached them for help when necessary. There was a good balance between free play and small group activities. Children were encouraged to select freely from the range of learning opportunities available.

Staff planned their work well. They had developed effective procedures for observing, assessing and recording children's progress. They met regularly to plan programmes of work, seasonal events, festivals and topics, which were effectively developing children’s knowledge and understanding of their environment. They made good use of assessment information to plan learning activities and to complete each child’s profile. This information was also shared with parents to ease the transition process between nursery and P1. The nursery teacher should continue to develop and implement the good systems in place for planning and assessment and involve nursery staff more fully in the written assessment process.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Staff provided consistent and caring support to each child. Children were respected and encouraged to develop confidence and independence. They were happy and familiar with daily routines and simple rules. They were developing friendships, cooperated well with each other and were aware of the needs of others. Children were beginning to take responsibility for some of their learning and were developing self esteem. Most children were able to take responsibility for personal hygiene and for tidying away materials. They participated enthusiastically in a tooth-brushing programme and enjoyed helping to prepare and serve snack.

- The programme for communication and language was good. Staff provided good opportunities for children to develop their talking and listening skills. Most children talked readily to one another and to adults. They listened and talked well during play experiences and in small groups. Children enjoyed using books independently in the story corner. Staff made effective use of labels and signs to develop children’s awareness of print. Most children recognised their name in print and the majority could write it. Children needed more opportunities to extend their skills in early writing through play.

- The programme for developing children’s knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Regular outings in the local environment included visits to the library, Science Centre and to Balcarres Sheltered Housing to sing to the residents. Most children had a good understanding of simple numbers, were able to recognise colours and basic shapes,
and could sort, match and group well. They made effective use of the computer to develop their skills in early mathematics. Children were developing their skills of observation through activities such as planting and growing both inside and out-of-doors. They enjoyed observing snails and looking for worms in the garden. Children had very good opportunities to develop their skills of observation, investigation and enquiry.

- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was good. Children participated enthusiastically in imaginative play and had regular opportunities to sing and make music using percussion instruments. Staff were developing children’s skills using a range of art and craft techniques. Children enjoyed printing, collage making as well as modelling with play dough. However, they would benefit from further opportunities to experience a wider variety of learning experiences in art and craft on a daily basis. Opportunities for children to express themselves freely and imaginatively in art and craft were too limited.

- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Children were developing good hand control through activities such as cutting, gluing, writing and using the computer mouse. Children had daily access to large-scale climbing equipment in the playroom. They made weekly use of the primary school gym for energetic activities. Children needed further opportunities to independently access energetic play both inside and outdoors on a daily basis.

Support for children and families
Standard 6

The nursery class offered very good support to children and their families. There was a very effective and inclusive range of services to support all children and their families. Relationships with parents and carers were very positive. Parents were kept well informed about the work of the nursery through attractive notice boards, regular newsletters, parents’ meetings and informal discussions. These procedures ensured that parents had regular knowledge of their child’s development and learning. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very happy with the nursery.

There was a well-planned induction programme for children transferring to primary school. Nursery children had regular opportunities to visit P1 on an informal basis. They regularly attended primary assemblies in the school and took part in whole-school celebrations. These procedures eased the transition for children moving between nursery and P1. Information on children’s progress was shared with parents and the receiving P1 teacher using the nursery class’s pre-school profile.

The senior management team and nursery staff provided very good support for children who needed extra support in their learning. Staff worked very closely with relevant support agencies and other professionals. Where appropriate, specialists, professionals and staff met regularly to discuss the needs of individual children.
Management
Standard 14

The nursery was well managed by the headteacher and depute, who had delegated responsibility for the nursery. Both showed effective leadership skills. They were approachable, communicated regularly with nursery staff and had developed good relationships with the highly-committed and conscientious staff team. Nursery staff worked effectively together, having clearly identified responsibilities and tasks.

A comprehensive range of specific nursery policies and procedures provided effective guidance and support for staff, parents and students.

The headteacher, depute and staff were developing systematic procedures for evaluating the overall quality of the provision. The depute regularly monitored nursery provision on a formal and informal basis. She involved staff in evaluating nursery practice and provided regular opportunities for them to contribute to all aspects of the nursery. Priorities for the nursery had been identified within the nursery development plan. These were being effectively addressed and implemented to improve nursery practice.

Staff had been recruited in line with local authority procedures and held appropriate education and childcare qualifications. They had good opportunities for appropriate, continuous professional development and a range of relevant training had been accessed by staff in the past year. Staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice.

Key strengths

- The very good interaction of staff with children.
- The very good programmes in emotional, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world, which were effectively supporting children’s learning.
- Very good links with families and the wider community.
- The conscientious and motivated nursery teacher and staff team.
- The very approachable and committed senior management team.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

Standard 11 Access to resources.
Staff stated that sand was regularly available to the children.
Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should continue to develop and implement the good systems in place for planning and assessment.
- Staff should continue to develop aspects of the curriculum as identified in the report.

Requirements

The hot water supply to the playrooms is limited. The nursery are required to address this problem to ensure that there is sufficient hot water supplied to meet the nursery’s needs. This is to comply with Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002 Number 114 Regulation 4(1) (a) - Welfare of users.

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.

Karen Lock          Gill McKinnon
Care Commission     HM Inspectorate of Education