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.

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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 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
Langlee Primary School
Nursery Class
Scottish Borders Council

Introduction

Langlee Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in February 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 children from age three to five years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 59.

The environment

Langlee Primary School nursery class was based in spacious accommodation within the school. The nursery consisted of three playrooms, one of which was specially equipped to offer appropriate experiences to children with additional support needs. The nursery was well equipped with a good range of resources and equipment. Staff provided a warm and caring environment for children.

The environment was pleasant, hygienic and in a good state of repair. Appropriate attention was given to the cleanliness of the equipment but procedures for the disposal of clinical waste needed to be improved. Equipment in the corridor posed a trip hazard to children and needed to be removed.

A minimum of two members of staff needed to be present in each nursery room at all times. Issues relating to the security of the nursery needed to be addressed. No smoke detection was in place in two of the nursery rooms. Fire drills and smoke detector tests were to be carried out monthly and the outcomes recorded. Children were supervised at all times when the cooker was in use.

Written risk assessments were carried out for all outings from the nursery and parental consent obtained. The outside play area directly beside the nursery was unsuitable for children’s use. Consideration needed to be given to using a more appropriate play area within the school grounds.

Quality of children’s experience

Staff had created a pleasant environment for children and had formed good relationships with them. However, they needed to intervene more effectively to extend children’s learning. The structure and pace of the session should be improved to provide a more purposeful learning environment and a better balance between free play and adult-led activities for all children. Staff
needed to ensure that activities provided appropriate stimulation and challenge to meet the needs of all children. Staff plans should be linked to the five key aspects of the curriculum and show clearly what children were to learn. Staff made insufficient use of observation and assessment information to identify next steps in learning. Report booklets and samples of children’s work were shared with parents twice a year and the transition document was discussed with parents prior to children entering primary school.

The quality of experience for children in the Special Resource Nursery (SRN) was very good. The nursery teacher had developed a very good system for observing and recording individual children and planning next steps in their learning. Parents were fully involved in setting learning targets for their children. Staff in this room worked very effectively as a team to provide a broad range of learning experiences for the children in their care.

Features of the curriculum provided included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Children were settled and confident within the nursery. Staff encouraged children to play co-operatively. Children did not have enough opportunities to develop independence and accept responsibility. Staff in the SRN should continue to develop the inclusion of their children with the mainstream nursery in order to further enrich their social, personal and emotional experience.

- The programme for communication and language was fair. Children had good opportunities to talk and listen to each other and adults for a variety of purposes. Most children listened attentively to stories. However, staff did not provide a wide enough range of activities to foster an interest in print nor to develop early reading and writing skills through play. In the SRN, staff provided a very good programme with a wide variety of good approaches to learning and development.

- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was fair. Staff organised visits to the local area, including a recent visit to the cinema. However, there were insufficient opportunities for children to develop skills of observation, investigation and problem solving. Staff should now plan themes using the five areas of the curriculum to ensure that the needs of all children are met. All children needed more challenge. In the SRN provision, staff were providing challenging experiences suitable to the needs of their children and the understanding of their world.

- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was fair. Children had regular opportunities to paint, draw and make models. They enjoyed playing in the pirate ship. However, staff needed to provide more activities to encourage children to express their own ideas and feelings in art and craft. Children enjoyed singing but staff needed to encourage more independent use of musical instruments to explore sound. The children in the SRN enjoyed a wide variety of stimulating opportunities through which to express themselves.
The programme for physical development and movement was fair. Children were developing effective hand control through the use of a good range of small tools. However, staff needed to provide more opportunities for daily energetic play for all children both indoors and outside. The SRN staff made use of an extensive range of suitable equipment to cover the needs of the children in their care.

Support for children and families

Staff in the nursery knew children very well and provided effective support for them and their families. A key worker system, where staff had responsibility for small groups of children, worked well. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with most aspects of the work of the nursery. Parents and carers had regular opportunities to talk informally with staff. Staff liaised effectively with outside agencies to meet children’s needs.

Staff in the SRN offered very good support to children and their families, responding to their individual needs and circumstances. Staff had very good relationships with parents and children and were sensitive in their approach. The teacher had a sound understanding of procedures for supporting children with additional support needs. There was a planned programme for each child and regular meetings between parents and staff. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with all aspects of the work of this nursery.

All specialists, professionals and staff involved in the children’s care and education met regularly to discuss the needs of individual children, when appropriate.

Management

The headteacher had overall responsibility for the nursery. Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the nursery and special resource nursery was delegated to the depute head.

The nursery had a number of policies and procedures. A complaints procedure and a whistle-blowing procedure were yet to be developed. The system for recording accidents and incidents should be improved to include more detail and to ensure confidentiality. Staff should ensure that they are familiar with the local authority child protection guidelines. All staff were trained in education and childcare. Managers should review staffing arrangements in line with national guidelines. A draft statement of the aims and objectives of the service had been produced. However, no clear vision for the development of the nursery was evident. A process of regular self-evaluation needed to be established, involving all staff. An appropriate development plan needed to be drawn up and priorities implemented.

Managers needed to take a more direct lead in improving, monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision in the nursery. Communication between managers and staff required to be improved.
Key strengths

- The very good quality of provision for children with additional support needs.
- The caring and supportive atmosphere throughout the nursery.
- The nursery’s positive relationships with parents and other agencies.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should improve the programmes for learning as outlined in this report.
- Managers should develop a system for effective monitoring and evaluation of the work of the nursery and improve communication with staff.
- The nursery should develop effective procedures for planning, observing, assessing and recording children’s progress, based on clear links to the five key aspects of the curriculum.
- The nursery should improve safety and security within the premises as outlined in this report.

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.

Alison Jamieson  Anne-Marie P. Grove
Care Commission  HM Inspectorate of Education