Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
St Kenneth’s RC Primary School
Nursery Class
Fife Council

19 January 2005
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 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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St Kenneth’s RC Primary School Nursery Class was inspected in October 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 from age three to commencing primary school. At the time of the inspection the roll was 24.

The nursery class was situated in the primary school. The accommodation consisted of one playroom with the use of an additional, separate room for larger physical play. Toilet facilities, which were situated some distance from the nursery, were shared between all pupils at nursery and those in P1 and P2. No outdoor play area was available for nursery children. The lack of a safe, secure and dedicated outdoor play area impacted on all areas of the curriculum.

Children were cared for in a welcoming and pleasant environment. Staff had attractively displayed children’s work using photographs, labels and captions to promote their successes.

Both playrooms were laid out suitably to allow children the opportunity to work and play independently or in groups.

The service conformed to other relevant legislation relating to accommodation and facilities. However, no disabled access, toilet or nappy changing facilities were available for service users. Overall, changing facilities were inadequate.

The nursery playroom had one sink unit, used for food preparation and hand washing. At the time of inspection, the nursery children were not involved in tooth brushing due to the lack of separate sink facilities.

Nursery children had supervised access to the infant class toilets which impacted on the adult:child ratios within the nursery. However, occasionally, children were not escorted by staff to the toilets which were located at the infant entrance. This had implications for children’s health and safety.

Play equipment was clean and well maintained and staff made sure that children did not have access to inappropriate materials.
Relationships between staff and children were good. Staff used praise effectively to create a caring and supportive environment. Most children were well motivated and cooperated with each other during free play and structured group activities. Play and learning opportunities included some planned group sessions and free play. However, the programme provided too much emphasis on adult-directed activities. There were insufficient opportunities for children to choose their own activities and develop independence and perseverance.

Staff planned their work well. They met together regularly to plan programmes of work, topics, seasonal events and festivals which were developing children’s knowledge and understanding of their environment. Assessment information was used to plan appropriate activities for children’s learning and to inform each child’s transition record.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Children were happy, secure and familiar with nursery routines. They were developing friendships, understood simple rules and cooperated well with one another and adults. They were beginning to develop self confidence and were aware of the needs of others. Staff needed to extend opportunities for children to concentrate, persevere and develop independence.

- The programme for communication and language was good. Children talked and listened readily during social activities and play, both in small and larger groups. Most children listened attentively to stories. Staff made appropriate use of print on displays to encourage discussion and children’s interest in early reading. Most children could recognise their name in print and some could write it. However, children did not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in early writing through play experiences.

- The programme for developing children’s knowledge and understanding of the world was good. Children were learning about their local environment through visits to local places of interest. Most children had a good understanding of simple number, were able to recognise basic colours and shapes and could match well. They were developing some skills of observation through the use of magnifying glasses and binoculars in the playroom. However, children had insufficient opportunities for observation, investigation and enquiry due to the lack of a designated outside play area.

- In expressive and aesthetic development the programme was good. Children were developing some skills in painting and gluing. Although they took part in some art and craft activities, their opportunities for free choice across each morning session were too limited. Children enjoyed taking part in role-play. They sang songs with enthusiasm but there were insufficient opportunities for children to make music using percussion instruments.
Overall, the programme for physical development and movement was good. While children were developing hand control through drawing, threading, painting, using constructional games and the computer mouse, they needed to use scissors more regularly. Weekly use was made of the primary school gym to develop energetic activities. Children had timetabled, daily access to large-scale climbing equipment in a separate classroom. However, they had insufficient opportunities for outside energetic play.

Support for children and families
Standard 6

Staff knew children well and intervened sensitively in play activities to support their learning. Relationships with parents were good. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with almost all aspects of the nursery. Some had concerns about the lack of a safe and secure, designated outside play area for the nursery class. Parents and carers had regular opportunities to talk informally with staff. They were well informed about the work of the nursery through regular newsletters, informal discussions and attractive notice boards.

There was a planned programme of induction for children from nursery to P1. Information on children’s progress was shared both verbally and formally with parents through the use of the education authority transition record for children in their pre-school year. Staff were in the process of commencing a personal learning plan for each child in their ante pre-school year. Parents had been closely involved in this project which was encouraging effective links between home and nursery.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children with designated special educational needs. The senior management team liaised with outside agencies to provide appropriate support for children with additional needs.

The senior management team and nursery staff were aware of, and had received recent training in, child protection policy and procedures.

Management
Standard 14

The nursery was well led by the headteacher and the depute who had delegated responsibility for the nursery. The depute headteacher was approachable, communicated regularly with nursery staff and had developed good relationships with the experienced and committed nursery staff team. She used her professional skills to support staff and monitor the provision on an informal basis.

Staff had been recruited in line with local authority procedures and held appropriate education and childcare qualifications. A system of staff review had been implemented for almost all staff. The headteacher should ensure that the process of review is extended to all nursery staff. Staff had access to a range of training courses provided by the local authority to enhance their practice.
An appropriate range of policies and procedures was in place. These were made available to parents and carers along with other written information about the nursery. This ensured that parents and carers were kept fully informed about all aspects of the nursery.

During the inspection there was discussion about the Scottish Social Services Council and its role in registering and regulating the workforce and their education and training. Copies of the Codes of Practice had not yet been received, but would be obtained for all nursery staff. The senior management team would ensure that all staff familiarised themselves with the document.

The senior management team and nursery staff had developed effective procedures for evaluating the overall quality of the provision. An appropriate nursery development plan was in place and the priorities which were being addressed were improving nursery practice.

Key strengths

- The good interaction of staff with children.
- Positive relationships with children and effective support for children and their families.
- The experienced and committed nursery staff team.
- The leadership of the senior management team.

Other Issues

Three recommendations from the previous Care Commission inspection had not been actioned. A separate sink facility for tooth brushing purposes had yet to be put in place within the nursery classroom. Radiators were too hot and those in the hall from the main nursery entrance to the toilet areas had yet to have guards fitted. Nappy changing facilities for young children and children who had additional needs, had not been put in place.

Recommendations for improvement

- The education authority should work with the school to ensure that appropriate staff:child ratios are maintained when children are accompanied to toilet facilities.
- Staff should ensure a balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves.
- Staff should improve aspects of the curriculum as detailed in this report.

Requirements

- Ensure an accessible, safe, secure and dedicated outdoor play area is made available for the nursery which meets the needs of all nursery children. SSI 2002 114 regulation 10.
- Ensure that radiators are set at a safe temperature and fitted with appropriate guards. SSI 2002 114 regulation 4.
- Provide appropriate nappy changing facilities to meet the needs of all children. SSI 2002 114 regulation 4.

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.

Sharon Stocks  Gill McKinnon
Care Commission  HM Inspectorate of Education