

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Mounties Community Nursery
East Kilbride**

5 October 2005

**Mounties Community Nursery
c/o Mount Cameron Primary School
Blacklaw Drive
East Kilbride
G74 2EX**

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 head of service, staff and the education authority. Copies are also available on the Care Commission website: www.carecommission.com and HMIE website: www.hmie.gov.uk.

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Introduction

Mounties Community Nursery was inspected in June 2005 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. At the time of the inspection the roll was 23.

The environment

Standard 2

Mounties Community Nursery was situated in a classroom within Mount Cameron Primary School. The accommodation provided a safe, pleasant environment. The building and resources were clean and well maintained. Staff had good systems for carrying out and recording hygiene practice. All play workers were trained in food handling and first aid.

Regular fire drills took place and emergency evacuation procedures were displayed. There was a secure entry system at the main entrance to the school. Access by the nursery children and parents was managed by a member of staff. Toilets were of a good standard. Nursery staff always escorted the children as the toilets were shared by some of the school children.

The reception area included helpful information for parents and attractive displays of children's work promoted their achievements. The layout of the room provided children with the opportunity to learn and play both independently and in groups. The children had access twice weekly to the gym hall for physical play and the school playground was used for energetic outdoor play. Staff were vigilant at all times and parents were aware of the nursery's procedures to ensure the children's safety.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

All staff were friendly and caring, and used praise effectively to promote children's confidence. They had good relationships with children but did not always interact sufficiently well with them to support and extend their learning. Staff did not provide children with learning experiences which were of an appropriately high quality. Staff valued children's contributions and promoted positive behaviour.

Staff organised a range of play experiences. However, they needed to ensure that there was an appropriate balance between activities children could choose for themselves and those which adults directed. Staff planning took some account of children's interests. However, planning did not take account of individual children's needs and stages of development. The pace of

learning and the level of challenge was not always appropriate to meet the needs of all children. Staff observed and recorded children's progress but their observations lacked sufficient detail and did not provide an overview of individual progress. This did not help staff to make effective use of this information to plan next steps in children's learning. Staff informed parents about their children's progress through regular informal discussions and an annual written report.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was good. Most children were happy and confident. A few were forming strong friendships and were aware of the needs of others. They were learning to take turns and share resources during play and social activities. All children were developing good hygiene habits such as washing their hands before eating their snack and brushing their teeth afterwards. Most children responded well to simple rules of good behaviour. Staff encouraged children to take responsibility and be independent. This included tidying around the nursery and dressing themselves to go outdoors. Staff needed to encourage children to persevere more with activities.
- The programme for communication and language was good. Most children spoke confidently to each other and adults during play. However, they needed more opportunities to talk for a variety of purposes in more challenging situations. Children did not have enough opportunities to listen to stories in small groups. Most children listened attentively during group story time. Only a few children chose books independently from the book area. A few knew the roles of the author and illustrator. Staff promoted children's interests in reading through a home-link project which enabled children and parents to borrow story sacks. Staff provided good opportunities for children to experiment with writing through play. Children made their own story books showing the life cycle of a frog. All children recognised their name in print and some could write it.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was fair. Although children were learning to recognise colours and to count, they had too few opportunities to develop a sound knowledge of other aspects of early mathematics. Children enjoyed playing in the sand. Children had opportunities to learn about the seasons and celebrate festivals throughout the year. Due to a health and safety issue, children did not have an opportunity to access the computers. Staff did not provide a suitable range of activities for children to develop their skills of observation, investigation and solving simple problems.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was fair. Some children enjoyed inventing situations and using their imagination in role-play in the house area. Children had access to a variety of musical instruments but had not developed the skills to use them properly. Some children thoroughly enjoyed dressing up and dancing to a variety of music. They were developing skills in drawing and painting. However, staff did not provide children with

sufficient experience of individual creativity and self-expression in all art and craft areas.

- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Children were developing good control of their fingers and hands using brushes, puzzles, construction toys and pencils. Most used these resources well. Children took part in energetic physical play outdoors where they were learning to run, throw and catch, skip and jump. They particularly enjoyed chasing bubbles in the wind. Children also enjoyed two sessions a week in the school gym hall where they cooperated with others in energetic physical activity. However, opportunities for energetic physical play, indoors and out, were limited.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff knew children and their families well and responded appropriately and sensitively to individual needs. Links with parents were very good. Parents were actively encouraged to participate in the life of the playgroup. Staff organised opportunities for parents to help with activities. Staff shared information with parents through informal discussions and a very informative notice board. Parents' views and opinions were sought and responded to promptly. Transition arrangements for children starting primary school were being developed to ensure the smooth transition of children from nursery to P1. Most parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very happy with all aspects of the service.

Staff needed further support in identifying children with additional learning needs. Clearer guidelines were required to help staff understand and implement appropriate programmes for individual children. Closer liaison with the local authority partnership officer was needed to assist with training, advice and support for children with additional learning needs.

Management

Standard 14

The management of the nursery was fair. The service was managed by the voluntary parents' committee and the manager, who was responsible for ensuring the day-to-day running of the nursery. The role, responsibilities and job descriptions of the manager and play workers were not clearly defined. Good relationships had been fostered with parents, committee members, staff and children.

Staff worked effectively as a team and were committed to the further development of the service. A range of policies and procedures provided helpful guidance. Some staff had been trained in child protection procedures and all demonstrated a good understanding of their role and responsibilities. A staff review system for the play workers had been implemented, with training planned accordingly. However, there was no system in place for reviewing the role of the manager. Staff had access to training provided by the local authority. They were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and its role in registering and regulating the workforce, and their education and training.

Working with the play workers, the manager had begun to evaluate aspects of the work of the nursery. They sought

parents' views and play workers responded informally to children's views. The role of the management committee and lines of accountability need to be reviewed and discussed with staff. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery and reviewing playroom practice were not systematic enough to support further improvements.

Key strengths

- The friendly and caring staff.
- The good relationships between parents and staff.
- Children's good experiences in emotional, personal and social development, communication and language and physical development and movement.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

Three recommendations were made during the previous inspection. Two have been fully met. Permission to fit a high handle to the nursery door, which was recommended for additional security, was refused. Staff have ensured satisfactory action to supervise the security of the children at all times.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should improve their use of questioning and explanation to extend children's learning.
- Staff should take more account of children's ages and stages of development when planning activities and provide a greater level of challenge for some children.
- The local authority should assist staff with training in planning procedures and in identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world and expressive and aesthetic development should be improved.
- The management committee should review all job descriptions and define staff roles and responsibilities.
- The management committee and staff should develop a more systematic and rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the service.

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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