

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Great Western Pre-school
Portlethen**

11 January 2006

**Great Western Pre-school
7 Muirend Court
Portlethen
AB12 4UU**

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

If you would like an additional copy of this report

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.

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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Introduction

Great Western Pre-school was inspected in September 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 from birth to five years. The nursery is registered to provide out-of-school care for a maximum of 15 children of statutory school age. It was registered for 77 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 74.

The environment Standard 2

The nursery was located in new, purpose-built premises which provided a very high standard of accommodation for children, parents and staff. Photographs, children's work and helpful information for parents were displayed effectively throughout the building. The playrooms were welcoming, well organised and the quality of resources to support children's development and learning were very good. All children moved freely within their playrooms and were able to play independently and in small or large groups.

A designated changing room ensured children's dignity and privacy, and a large, well-supervised sleep room was provided for babies and toddlers. All children had direct access to the recently-finished garden area that provided daily opportunities for outdoor play. There was a positive approach to healthy eating, and a varied diet was offered to children.

All equipment was well maintained and appropriate procedures to control the spread of infection were in place.

Quality of children's experience Standard 4 & 5

Staff within the baby and toddler areas displayed warm, caring relationships with the children. Effective planning was in place to support the younger children's learning and development. Younger children experienced a wide range of stimulating activities that met their developmental needs, and their progress was monitored. Praise and encouragement were used effectively to encourage self-confidence and promote independence.

Children attending after-school care were welcomed by staff on arrival and settled in to the group. They had developed good relationships with the staff and younger children and had access to the full range of resources within the centre including the outside play area.

Staff working with the older children had developed very good relationships. They interacted well, encouraging children and effectively supporting their learning. Children were confident and motivated. They had good opportunities to make choices, and many concentrated for extended periods. There was a good balance between adult-led activities and free play. However, the small number of children in the pre-school room did not have many opportunities to be part of a larger group.

Staff made good use of planning procedures to identify what children were expected to learn. They planned weekly programmes which supported individual children's development needs. Staff had developed individual folders to gather children's work, record progress and share information with parents.

Features of the programmes for children aged three to five included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were happy in the nursery and played well together. They were confident in their relationships with adults and were learning to share and take turns. Staff provided good opportunities for children to develop independence and take responsibility for their learning. They made very good use of praise helping to build children's self esteem. Staff planned circle time activities, supporting children to talk about feelings and emotions. Staff had supported the pre-school children to devise their own class rules which they talked about and followed well.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Staff supported children's learning and enjoyment of books through a good range of quality fiction and non-fiction books. Children recognised their own name in print and some children could write it. Staff provided a wide range of interesting materials for children to experiment with writing and mark making. Staff encouraged children to develop conversations and talk to express a variety of thoughts and ideas. Many children displayed very good talking and thinking skills. They listened well to adults during activities and followed instructions well.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Children had regular opportunities to design and make and to solve problems. Staff encouraged them to adjust the height of the water tray and organise the house area. They were confident using the digital camera and printing their photographs from the computer. Staff provided a good range of resources to support children's knowledge of information and communications technology (ICT). They gathered natural materials with the children for displays. Children had many opportunities to explore and investigate both inside and out-of-doors. Staff provided very good opportunities for children to develop early mathematics skills. Some children were learning about measurement using a tape measure, estimating and planning at the block play area.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Staff provided a wide range of art and craft materials which children could access easily. They were

using paint, glue and junk to create their own models. Children's work was valued and attractively displayed. Children enjoyed a variety of opportunities for role-play. Staff had created an attractive 'jungle' area where children used puppets to express themselves imaginatively. Staff supported children to use a range of percussion instruments. Children enjoyed singing and clapping to familiar rhymes and action songs.

- The programme for physical development and movement was good. Children were developing good control of their fingers and hands through the use of scissors, pencils, pens and brushes and a range of construction materials. Some children were competent using felt pens to draw on a whiteboard. Staff supported children to learn how to fasten their coats and shoes. There was limited space for physical activity in the playrooms. All children had open access to a large, grassed outside area. Staff needed to improve the quality of children's physical experience indoors and outside.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff provided a high level of care for children and met their needs well. They had established very good relationships with parents and carers. Staff communicated verbally with parents on a daily basis about their children's progress and good information was provided on notice boards. During the inspection, parents spoke highly of the service provided by staff and one parent spoke of the exceptional support provided. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with almost all aspects of the nursery. A few wanted more information on their child's progress and the work of the nursery.

The nursery provided wraparound care, transporting children to and from local primary schools. Good links had been established with local primary schools. Effective procedures were in place to support children's transition from nursery to P1. Staff organised visits for children to attend their local school and arranged for school staff to meet children in the nursery setting during the summer term. The local authority transition document was completed for all children to support the exchange of information between settings.

Staff had a good knowledge of support agencies and had developed links with relevant childcare professionals. They had a good understanding of their responsibility towards children with additional needs. Staff planned appropriate programmes to support development and learning and had developed individualised educational programmes for identified children, which they shared with parents. Staff needed to improve further their methods for recording information about reviews.

Management

Standard 14

The nursery was very well managed. The manager, supported by an external management team, provided strong direction and guidance for staff, and had a clear vision for the nursery's future development. The roles and responsibilities of the management team were clearly defined and displayed within the nursery. The manager provided effective leadership. She was organised, approachable, and had developed positive relationships with

staff, parents and children. The nursery was very well staffed. They were well deployed, highly committed and supported one another effectively as a team.

A comprehensive range of detailed and helpful policies and procedures was in place. These were regularly reviewed and made available to parents. A child protection policy was in place and understood by all staff. Very effective systems were in place to support the ongoing professional and personal development of staff. The manager had ensured all staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and understood the implications for her service.

The manager monitored planning throughout the nursery. She had regular support from a development officer. The development officer monitored and evaluated planning, provision and practice in the three- and four-year-old playrooms and identified areas for development and staff training needs.

An effective system for self-evaluation and monitoring of the service was in place. All staff were involved in planning and clear development plans were in place. The manager monitored progress towards current priorities and collated evidence on a regular basis. She was undertaking an additional management qualification to help her continue to improve the quality of the service.

Key strengths

- The high quality of the premises and resources creating an attractive, welcoming environment for children and families.
- Very good programmes for emotional, personal and social development, communication and language, expressive and aesthetic development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The very good teamwork from highly-committed staff.
- Quality of support for children and their families.
- The open, effective and supportive management team.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

There were no recommendations made at the previous inspection.

Recommendations for improvement

- The manager should continue to improve the facilities for outside play to support and extend children's learning across the curriculum.

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.

Elaine Cazaly
Care Commission

Jane Mason
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