

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Pitreavie Playgroup
Dunfermline**

10 January 2007

**Pitreavie Playgroup
The Bungalow
Pitreavie Playingfields
Queensferry Road
Dunfermline KY11 8PP**

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

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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
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Riverside Drive	Almondvale Way
Dundee	Livingston
DD1 4NY	EH54 6GA

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Introduction

Pitreavie Playgroup was inspected in October 2006 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. HMIE carried out this inspection on behalf of both organisations and consulted the Care Commission about its findings. The playgroup catered for pre-school children aged two to five years. It was registered for 12 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 33.

The environment Standard 2

The playgroup was accommodated within a bungalow and had three playrooms. The environment was bright and welcoming. Staff had created attractive displays of children's work throughout the playgroup. Information, including photographs, was displayed in the hallway to explain the curriculum and children's learning through play activities to parents. The clearly-labelled and well-organised resources were easily accessed by children. The nursery made use of two secure outdoor areas to the front and rear of the building. Staff ensured the premises were clean and safe, and carried out useful risk assessments. They followed appropriate guidance in relation to health and safety matters, including food handling and the storage and administration of medicines.

Quality of children's experience Standard 4 & 5

Staff knew children well and were responsive to their individual needs. They valued children's efforts and contributions and used praise and encouragement effectively to develop children's confidence and self esteem. Children engaged enthusiastically in activities and were able to make choices. Staff made effective use of dialogue and questioning to develop children's ideas and encourage them to think and express themselves.

Daily activities were well organised and the planning was sufficiently flexible to meet children's needs. Staff were beginning to involve children in planning in order to develop their interests. Staff observed children at play and recorded their responses. This information was used well to compile assessment records for each child. Personal learning plans were being developed to record children's achievements, taking into account their individual interests. However, assessment information did not always clearly identify next steps in learning for individual children.

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

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were happy, secure and having fun. They were confidently choosing activities for themselves, and were settled and familiar with the routine and simple rules of the playgroup. They responded very well to the considerable praise and encouragement from staff. They were confident, and persevered to complete tasks. They were encouraged to contribute their ideas, make decisions and contribute to planning play activities. They worked well with one another and shared resources and took turns. All children were developing friendships, were kind and caring towards one another and were well behaved. Staff encouraged them to take responsibility for personal tasks and for tidying around the playroom. Good use was made of snack time to encourage children's social skills and the development of good hygiene practices.
- The programme for communication and language was very good. Children talked confidently to adults and each other in their chosen activities. They predicted what would happen in stories, and described events and experiences very well. They enjoyed listening to stories in a group. Some children chose to look at books independently for enjoyment and to find information. The well-resourced writing area was well used by children to make marks and develop early writing skills. At registration time, children were able to recognise their name in print and most were able to write it. They were gaining an understanding of the sounds of familiar letters. Staff used labels effectively around the playroom to help children make the link between the spoken and written word.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Staff planned an interesting range of topics, and celebrated festivals throughout the year. Children had grown their own potatoes and cooked and eaten them. They enjoyed exploring the properties of sand and water and were learning about floating and sinking. Staff had organised a visit to playgroup from the zoo lab and children were introduced to "Fang the Ferret" and "Eddy the Tarantula". Most children were developing very good skills in recognising colours, shapes and numbers. Staff helped develop children's understanding of aspects of early mathematics such as counting, sorting and matching using the computer. Children were confident when using a range of everyday technology and enjoyed looking after the cyber-pets.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Children had very good opportunities to express themselves in their paintings and drawings. They chose a variety of brushes and experimented with thick and thin paint. Children enjoyed painting their hands and making hand and finger prints. They modelled using play dough, and created drawings and pictures on the computer. They were able to self-select from an interesting range of materials and enthusiastically created a collage. They made interesting models from junk. Children enjoyed role-play in the home corner and dressing up. Staff intervened effectively to support and extend children's imaginative play. A good

range of musical instruments were available and children were singing and learning about rhythm and beat.

- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Children had daily access to the outdoor areas and staff responded positively to children's requests to play outdoors. They ran, hopped, skipped and jumped confidently. Some children used stilts and were developing very good balancing skills. Staff ensured that children made progress in the development of their individual physical skills. Children enjoyed using wheeled toys and were aware of the need to ride in one direction to avoid accidents. They were gaining an awareness of space and experimented with what their bodies were able to do. Staff encouraged children to take care of their bodies by exercising regularly and healthy eating. Staff provided very good opportunities for children to develop their hand and finger control through the use of scissors, writing tools, the computer, puzzles and construction toys.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff supported children and their families well. They had formed very good relationships with parents and responded very well to individual circumstances. A key worker system, where individual staff members had responsibility for small groups of children, was in place. Parents regularly participated in the life of the playgroup. Those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and those interviewed on the day, were very happy with the work of the playgroup. Some expressed concern about the limited space available.

Staff had made very good links with various nursery classes which the children would subsequently attend. Children had opportunities to visit and meet staff. Likewise, staff from nursery visited the children at the playgroup.

Staff were sensitive to the needs of children requiring additional support with their learning. They liaised well with a number of support agencies and developed individualised educational plans, working closely with parents. They had not yet been updated on the current legislation around the Support for Learning Act.

Management

Standard 14

The playgroup committee changed annually. They held regular meetings to discuss curricular issues, resources, fund raising and environmental developments. Committee members frequently acted as parent helpers within the playgroup. They had a strong commitment to the improvement programme, and were very supportive of the senior playleader and staff. They delegated the day-to-day management of the playgroup to the senior playleader.

The leadership of the playgroup was very good. The senior playleader had a clear understanding of child development and the process of planning. She had a clear vision of continuous improvement for the playgroup. She valued the work and support of the team and the parents' committee.

The playgroup had an appropriate range of policies, and procedures were in place to review them on a rolling basis. Child protection guidelines were in place and staff were aware of their responsibilities in protecting children. All staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and their implications.

Along with the committee, the senior playleader, staff and parents had evaluated the work of the playgroup and highlighted key areas in the improvement plan. The playleader regularly monitored playroom practices and provided useful feedback to staff. The committee had set up a working group to look at administration and staff remits and responsibilities. They undertook staff reviews and development with the support of the local Scottish Playgroup Association representative. Staff had an effective programme of training which supported their personal development, and further improved the work of the playgroup.

Key strengths

- The very high quality of interaction between staff and children to support children's learning.
- Motivated, happy children who were independent and able to make choices in their play.
- The commitment of parents and the committee to the work of the playgroup.
- The hardworking, conscientious senior playleader.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

At the last singleton Care Commission inspection there were five recommendations, all of which had been addressed. There were no requirements.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should use assessment information more effectively to identify next steps in learning for individual children.
- The senior playleader and staff should develop their knowledge in relation to legislation regarding children who require additional support with their learning.

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. 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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