

**Queens Cross Nursery
Aberdeen
24 June 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the centre. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the centre is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the centre does this. We describe how well the centre works with other groups in the community, including parents¹ and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the centre.

Our report describes the 'ethos' of the centre. By 'ethos' we mean the relationships in the centre, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of centre life. Finally, we comment on the centre's aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high-quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the centre's success in achieving these aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the centre, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Where applicable, the website contains analyses of questionnaire returns and descriptions of good practice in the centre.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers and carers who are relatives or friends.

Contents

1. The centre
2. Particular strengths of the centre
3. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their centre community?
6. Does the centre have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

1. The centre

Queens Cross Nursery was inspected in April 2009 by HMIE on behalf of both HMIE and the Care Commission as part of the integrated inspection programme. The centre caters for pre-school children aged three to five years. It is registered for 18 children attending at any one session. The total roll was 14 at the time of the inspection.

2. Particular strengths of the centre

- Children who are enthusiastic and motivated in their learning.
- Supportive and caring learning environment.
- Effective teamwork in developing the work of the nursery.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are enthusiastic and motivated in their learning. They interact well with each other, particularly in play and when sharing their learning experiences with others. They are making good progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Children are benefiting from well-planned literacy and numeracy activities in meaningful play situations. They listen well to simple instructions and carry them out successfully. They speak confidently to adults and to each other about what they are learning. They enjoy listening to stories and can recall their favourite ones along with the characters involved, giving good reasons why they enjoyed them. A few children can recognise and write their own names well. Children are learning about numbers and enjoy taking part in counting songs and rhymes. A few children can count and recognise numbers up to ten. Children can confidently sort by colour, shape, size and texture. They can also use early mathematical language appropriately in their play. Children's investigative and early science skills are developing well as they explore the natural world through planting and growing activities. Children have an awareness of different cultures and understand why we celebrate specific festivals. Children recognise the need for a healthy lifestyle through eating healthily, and enjoy taking part in energetic play. In all their learning experiences children are gaining a high level of success.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff plan the curriculum based on different types of play experiences. They are currently reviewing the curriculum and are at the early stages of implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Experiences in early literacy and numeracy are provided by a range of activities both inside and outdoors. Staff need to develop these further to provide more stimulating and appropriate challenges for children. The outdoor area is used freely by children for energetic play, some investigative learning and sand and water activities. This area could be used more to develop children's skills in early science. Children are developing their information and communications technology skills by using the computer, a camera and programmable toys. They have opportunities to experience different celebrations and other cultures. Children are learning to be creative through a good variety of art and design activities and role-play using a variety of dressing-up resources. Children have opportunities to explore the natural world outdoors and are finding out about changes brought about by the four seasons. Staff use the local environment well to extend children's learning experiences, for example shopping for snack, exploring the natural world in the park and at a local farm. Staff encourage children to make choices in their learning. They interact positively with them to help them learn more effectively.

Staff know children very well and are sensitive to their individual circumstances. This is reflected in the high quality of care children receive. Staff observe children each day as they engage in play activities and record what they are learning. This information is used to plan what children will learn next. For some children, however, activities are too easy and staff should provide more challenging learning experiences

4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

Staff have established very good partnerships with parents. They share information about children's learning and progress on a regular basis. Staff encourage parents and friends of the nursery to share their work experiences with children, for example visits by a dentist and a doctor. The nursery is currently planning how to make better use of people in the community to help support children's learning. There is a very good partnership with the management committee of the church which houses the nursery. This is having a positive impact by helping to provide appropriate resources. There are good transition arrangements in place to support children and inform parents when moving to primary school. Staff have links with appropriate professionals to support children's needs when required, for example the speech and language therapist and health visitor.

5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their centre community?

Staff are very clear about the need to continually improve their practice. Through very effective teamwork they regularly review the work of the nursery. This is impacting positively on children's learning. Previously identified areas for improvement have been addressed and have been successful in improving some aspects of the nursery. Children's views are taken into account when planning, for example what they would like for snack and how the outdoor area can be used.

6. Does the centre have high expectations of all children?

There is a very positive ethos within the nursery with staff providing a good environment for learning. Children are treated fairly and equally, Staff are respectful towards children and this is reflected in their very good behaviour. Children are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle through eating healthily and taking care of themselves. Staff

support children very well and use praise and encouragement appropriately.

7. Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?

The manager has a very clear vision for the nursery. She is successfully leading the nursery through a period of change. She is very well supported by a very good team. Together, they are focused and enthusiastic about their roles in improving the work of the nursery. They are in a very good position to improve the quality of learning experiences for children.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the good quality of education provided by the centre, we will make no further visits following this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the centre's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its pre-school centres.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the centre and education authority.

- Continue to develop challenges in children's learning experiences.
- Develop further early literacy and numeracy learning experiences in appropriate learning contexts.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the centre there were six recommendations. All have since been addressed.

Quality indicators help centres, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a centre. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each centre, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish centres are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Queens Cross Nursery.

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the centre.

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

Managing Inspector: Gordon Buchanan
24 June 2009

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If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively you should write in the first instance to BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can write to our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259 or the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY.

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 (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website at www.spsso.org.uk.

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses