

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School
Kindergarten
Edinburgh**

14 January 2004

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 Chairman of College of Teachers, staff and the Board of Trustees. 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.

Complaints Co-ordinator
Headquarters
Care Commission
Compass House
Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Hazel Dewart
HM Inspectorate of Education
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
EDINBURGH
EH11 3XD

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Integrated Inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education of Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School Kindergarten Edinburgh

Introduction

Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School Kindergarten was inspected in September 2003 as part of the integrated inspection programme by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education. The kindergarten catered for children from age three to six years. At the time of the inspection the roll was 44.

The environment

The kindergarten was located in a purpose built two-storey building, with four separate playrooms. It offered a welcoming, safe and secure environment. The building was in a good state of repair and was well maintained. Within the principles of the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner philosophy each room was furnished and equipped appropriately and good use was made of available space. There was an extensive outdoor area which provided very good opportunities for physical play and for exploring and investigating the environment.

Quality of children's experience

Staff had established very good relationships with children. They interacted sensitively with them to build confidence and self-esteem. Staff informally assessed children's development and knew children well as individuals. It would help them in planning children's next steps in learning if they recorded their observations and assessments. Parents met with staff on request to discuss concerns about children's progress. Parents' evenings offered opportunities for parents to learn more about the work of the kindergarten.

In each of the rooms, children experienced an appropriate range of activities. Planning reflected the provision of a broad and balanced range of experiences but needed to indicate what children are expected to learn.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children were confident, and happy to undertake responsibility for carefully tidying the kindergarten. Older children led by example and involved younger ones in simple tasks. Some children had developed friendships and co-operated well in their use of natural materials. Staff had created a purposeful learning environment in which children were developing positive attitudes towards others.

- The programme for communication and language was very good. Many children engaged in lively descriptions of their experiences and listened well to other children and adults. They enjoyed rhymes and daily stories and could accurately recall detail. Many children recognised their own name and had regular opportunities to write and draw. The absence of books restricted opportunities for reading independently and finding information.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. There were many opportunities for children to recognise and investigate natural objects, both inside and outdoors. Very good use of the garden allowed children to grow herbs and rake fallen leaves to add to the compost heap. Many were developing a good awareness of colour, length and shape. Children learned to match and sort during play activities and some applied very good counting and measuring skills while preparing snack.
- The very good programme for expressive and aesthetic development included a range of appropriate opportunities. Children took part enthusiastically in simple dances and singing games. They used puppets to invent imaginary situations. Children co-operated well together to construct large sand and wood creations. They had regular opportunities for painting and drawing and used natural materials creatively.
- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Children enjoyed energetic play and devised their own running games. The large physical equipment provided very good opportunities to practise balancing, climbing and swinging. Many children were very skilled in using tools for sawing and hammering. They were developing finger and hand control through finger knitting and regular use of scissors and pencils.

Support for children and families

Staff had developed very good relationships with parents and were very sensitive to children's individual circumstances. Parents who responded to the pre inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with all aspects of the work of the kindergarten and were very appreciative of the staff who worked well to meet children's needs. Staff had begun to forge links with support agencies but needed to develop these links further to ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs.

The range of methods of communicating with parents and sharing information about children's progress was limited.

Management

The senior teacher and staff were strongly committed to the kindergarten and had a clear vision of its principles and philosophy. This was shared with parents. Staff were approachable and very enthusiastic. They supported each other well. All staff were encouraged to contribute to the life and work of the kindergarten. They were deployed effectively.

A range of good policies and procedures was in place. Approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the kindergarten were limited, however. The head teacher should now amend the complaints policy to include reference to the Care Commission. The kindergarten had an appropriate ratio of staff to children.

Key strengths

- The high quality of accommodation, including the stimulating outdoor area.
- The commitment of staff to encouraging children to develop their creativity and independence in line with the kindergarten's stated philosophy.
- The consistently high quality of the kindergarten's programmes.
- The very good relationships between parents, staff and children.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should improve procedures for observing and assessing children's progress.
- Planning should be improved to identify what children are expected to learn and to address individual needs.
- Methods of communication with parents should be further improved.
- Senior staff should develop more effective approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the kindergarten.

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.

Alison Precup
Care Commission

Moira McLaren
HM Inspectorate of Education