

Rigside and Rural Communities Nursery, Lanark South Lanarkshire Council

27 April 2011

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects centres in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their centre provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with centre staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the head of centre and staff about the strengths of the centre, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into playrooms and join other activities which children are involved in. We also gather the views of parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the centre. We describe how well children are doing, how good the centre is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the centre. We also comment on how well the centre works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the centre is led and how all staff help the centre achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the centre, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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1. The centre

Rigside & Rural Communities Nursery was inspected in March 2011 by HMIE and the Care Commission on behalf of both HMIE and the Care Commission as part of the integrated inspection programme. Rigside nursery caters for preschool children aged six weeks to five years with Abington and Walston nurseries catering for pre-school children aged three to five years. The establishments are registered for 88 children in total attending at any one session. The total roll was 97 at the time of the inspection.

2. Particular strengths of the centre

- Children's positive attitudes, enthusiasm and behaviour.
- Strong relationships between staff, parents and children.
- The quality of help and care given to children and families requiring additional support.
- Effective partnerships across the rural communities.
- Effective teamwork, including the leadership of the head of provision, in taking forward aspects of provision in all three nurseries.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Across the settings, children are happy, settled and secure with routines. Babies and toddlers investigate and explore their environment. They are developing well through a range of multi-sensory experiences. Children aged three to five are motivated in the playroom and take increasing responsibility for selecting activities. They work well independently and in groups. They have formed friendships with others and have positive relationships with staff. Children are gaining confidence when evaluating their own and others' work.

Children confidently use a wide range of information and communications technology to support their learning. They are learning to contact their 'cyber buddies' through 'skype', and share information using email, fax and telephone. Across the settings, children are developing their skills in early science very well. They are developing an understanding of space and planets, materials and the human body. Children are aware of how to keep themselves safe and healthy through well-established safety and hygiene routines.

Almost all children aged three to five are making very good progress in their learning. Children listen well and follow simple instructions. Almost all are confident when speaking to staff and most contribute to group discussions. Children access a variety of books. They recognise the author, illustrator and title and create simple book reviews. Almost all children are confident in approaching early writing and are enthusiastic about mark making using a variety of resources. Almost all pre-school children can write their name and a few can copy words written by an adult. Children recognise and use numbers very well. Most recognise, count and sequence to ten and a few count beyond. They are developing an understanding and confidence in early mathematics. Almost all sort, match, sequence and measure appropriately during play. Children are learning about data handling and create simple bar charts. They are aware of the days of the week and daily time sequences.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff provide a broad and balanced curriculum based on play, active learning and enjoyment. They use local and national guidelines effectively to plan and support children's learning. Most staff working with children aged three to five have developed a very good understanding of Curriculum for Excellence. They use the experiences and outcomes and design principles to provide appropriate opportunities for children's learning. They are developing assessment approaches alongside primary school staff. A few staff now need to develop their understanding further of depth, progression and relevance in learning. Staff provide opportunities for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum. They plan outings and invite visitors to the nursery to enhance children's learning experiences. Children have regular opportunities to develop physical skills in the outdoor areas and in the school and community halls. They are consulted about their learning through mind maps, and plan snack menus, playroom layout and choose new resources with staff. Staff are keen to proceed with plans to develop further the Forest Schools initiative in Abington and Walston to improve children's outdoor learning experiences.

Staff know children very well. Through careful observation, staff provide appropriate learning materials and opportunities to promote individual children's learning. Tracking children's progress now needs to be strengthened to ensure all children are being suitably challenged in their learning. Staff identify early children who need additional support for their learning. They are committed to ensuring each child has the support they require. The nursery has established very good relationships with a large number of partner agencies, such as the educational psychologist and speech and language therapist. Staff and partner agencies are involved in setting and reviewing targets regularly and discussing progress in learning. The nursery realise there is scope to include parents further in this process. Specific transition arrangements are made for individual children requiring additional support in moving on to school.

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

The nurseries have established very positive relationships with parents. Parents are invited to discuss children's learning and development regularly and receive an annual report on progress. Mind map information is shared and parents are encouraged to contribute their ideas. Monthly newsletters, informative notice boards, curriculum workshops and presentations on new initiatives keep parents up to date with developments in the nursery. Staff have formed partnerships with a wide range of agencies to help children improve their learning. The nursery works well with other establishments in the local authority to share good practice and develop aspects of the curriculum. Staff help children make very successful transitions between nursery stages and on to primary school. They share appropriate information and documentation with local primary schools to ensure children have the best start in school.

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

There is a very positive ethos within each of the nurseries. Staff work very effectively as a team. They enthusiastically take on additional responsibilities, such as developing eco initiatives and the outdoor environment. Through regular appraisals, staff identify appropriate training which focuses on developing children's learning. Staff feel very well supported by the head of provision in their professional development. Approaches to self-evaluation are very well developed and focus on achieving best practice. Staff, children

and parents regularly contribute their ideas about the nursery and have helped to establish priorities for improvement. An improvement plan is in place and all staff are involved in reviewing progress and implement its priorities well. These priorities are having a positive impact on children's learning and development.

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

Most staff have high expectations for children's care, learning and development. There is scope for a few staff to improve their expectations of what children are capable of achieving. Staff are inclusive and actively encourage and promote equality and fairness. They treat children as individuals and with respect and dignity. Staff are motivated and enthusiastic. They use praise effectively to encourage children to learn and develop. They have appropriate child protection training, and measures are in place to ensure children are safe at all times. Equality and diversity are promoted through resources and festival activities throughout the year. The nursery promotes healthy eating and hygiene practices.

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

Across all three establishments, staff show a strong commitment to the life and work of the nursery and the rural communities they serve. The very capable head of provision and management team have a clear sense of direction. They ensure that all staff are clear about the nursery's aims and vision. There is a strong commitment to the quality and ongoing development of the staff team which is having a positive impact on children's experiences and learning. Staff are encouraged to take on responsibility and to be innovative in their approaches to children's learning. Together, with the guidance provided by the local authority, the nursery is very well placed to continue to further develop and improve.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the nursery, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The nursery and education authority will inform parents about the nursery's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education.

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

- Continue to improve the curriculum and staff approaches to learning and teaching to ensure children are offered a consistently high quality of education across all three establishments.
- Continue to develop assessment strategies in collaboration with local schools.

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 Rigside & Rural Communities Nursery.

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

Managing Inspector: Juliet Colquhoun

Care Commission Officer: Alison Tyson

27 April 2011

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

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

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You can also contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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Footnotes

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