

REPORT TO: Council Committee for Education

MEETING DATE: 16 March 2010

BY: Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

SUBJECT: Integrated Inspection of Argyle Bridge Nursery by HMle and the Care Commission

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to the Committee on the integrated inspection of Argyle Bridge Nursery by HMle and the Care Commission.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to: -
- (i) Note the contents of the HMle Integrated Inspection report (Appendix 1).
 - (ii) Note that, as a result of the good quality of pre-school education provided by the nursery, HMle will make no further inspections.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Argyle Bridge Nursery in Tranent caters for pre-school children aged three months to five years.
- 3.2 It has a total roll of 54 children with 35 attending at any one session.
- 3.3 Argyle Bridge Nursery was inspected in December 2009 and the report was published in February 2010.
- 3.4 The report noted the following particular strengths of the centre:
- The caring and supportive ethos.
 - The quality of relationships between staff and children.
 - The strong and productive partnership with parents.

- The commitment of the manager and staff to improve the nursery.

3.5 HMle agreed the following areas for improvement:

- Continue to improve children's learning experiences.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan learning which meets each child's needs.
- Arrange staff training on legislation for children with additional support needs.
- Implement more formal ways of gathering evidence on the centre's performance, and use this evidence to improve children's learning.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - none

6.2 Personnel - none

6.3 Other - none

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Argyle Bridge Nursery Integrated Inspection Report February 2010 (Appendix 1).

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DATE	23 February 2010



A report by
HM Inspectorate of Education
and the Care Commission

Argyle Bridge Nursery
Tranent
East Lothian
10 February 2010



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. Where applicable, you will also be able to find 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

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1. The centre

Argyle Bridge Nursery was inspected in December 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 months to five years. It is registered for 35 children attending at any one session. The total roll was 54 at the time of the inspection.

2. Particular strengths of the centre

- The caring and supportive ethos.
- The quality of relationships between staff and children.
- The strong and productive partnership with parents:
- The commitment of the manager and staff to improving the nursery.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In all playrooms children are happy, settled and familiar with their daily routines. They have formed close and affectionate relationships with staff. Children are confident in moving around the playrooms and in accessing toys and equipment. They are interested and enthusiastic about their play experiences, and share and cooperate very well. Most older children concentrate well on their chosen activities and many show perseverance.

Children under three years of age are learning to share their toys and play alongside other children. They enjoy making sounds with percussion instruments and a few can use pens and paint to make marks. They explore different types of material, for example, play dough and crinkly paper. Older toddlers are learning how to use the computer and a few can recognise colours. Children need more natural materials to develop their skills in observing and investigating.

Children aged three to five years are making very good progress in their learning. They share and cooperate very well. Most listen carefully and can follow simple instructions. They enjoy looking at books and had recently made a home-made book with their own

photographs. Many children use the writing area regularly to write notes and letters and most children recognise their own name and their friends' names in print. All children are keen to talk, and share their experiences confidently with staff and with other children. In early mathematics, most children can sort, match, count, identify shapes and recognise numbers to ten. They are learning about capacity as they pour water into different sized containers. Children enjoy taking part in role-play activities and they use props and costumes imaginatively. They are able to follow picture instructions and sequences on the interactive whiteboard. They are developing very good control of their fingers and hands and many can use scissors and small tools skilfully. Children had learned about people in the community who help them and all could discuss the roles of the policeman, the doctor and the fireman. Some children had talked about their journeys to nursery and had drawn maps to show their route. They are involved in an enterprise project and had made calendars to sell at the Christmas Fair.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff working with children under three, take good account of local guidance to plan activities. However, some staff need to be more aware of how local guidance links with guidance developed nationally on *Birth to Three*. Staff provide some activities which take very good account of children's ages and stages of development. They try to take account of children's interests when planning learning, but some activities are too adult directed, particularly in art and craft. Staff working with children aged three to five provide a varied and interesting range of activities. Children have very good opportunities to direct some of their own learning. Staff have begun to implement *Curriculum for Excellence* and are beginning to involve children more in the planning of playroom activities. Staff in the pre-school room need to provide more investigations and problem-solving activities, and more challenging activities outdoors.

Staff know children very well and are sensitive to their needs and those of their families. They have developed very good 'Learning Stories' for each child which contain photographs and comments on each child's progress. However, staff are not making full use of this very good information to plan the next steps in learning for children. Staff need to develop better ways of linking children's learning needs to the daily programme. Activities are often too easy for higher attaining children and a few need more challenge in their learning. Staff meet children's emotional needs very well. They have good procedures to support children who need additional help in settling at nursery or in relating to others. This includes developing individual plans for those children who require them. Staff are not familiar with legislation covering children who need additional support with their learning.

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

Staff make parents and carers very welcome and provide many opportunities for them to be involved. Parents serve on the 'Support and Social Committee' and work closely with staff on fund raising and nursery improvements. Parents are very happy with the nursery and speak highly of the quality of relationships that staff have with them and their children. They particularly appreciate the homely ethos created by the staff. Parents are kept very well informed at parents' evenings, by e-mail contact, through daily discussions and by regular newsletters. Recently parents have worked closely with staff to develop their children's 'Learning Stories'. The nursery works very well with others to support children's care and learning. Staff have developed strong and productive links with local nurseries and primary schools. This ensures a smooth transition for children transferring to other centres or when they move to primary school. The manager works closely with staff from the education authority and values their regular support. The nursery provides valuable placements for students, and short, work-experience placements for local secondary school pupils.

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

The manager and staff are very committed to improving the nursery. Staff have used questionnaires with children to seek their views on nursery activities, and taken action on their suggestions. The nursery improvement plan has appropriate priorities and staff are making good progress in taking these forward. However, a stronger focus on the curriculum and on children under three would improve the quality of children's experiences further. The manager and staff gather evidence on the work of the nursery through informal discussions, playroom visits and staff meetings. They now need to be more systematic and ensure that improvements have an observable impact on the quality of children's learning. All staff should be more involved in planning for improvement in their playrooms.

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

Staff have created a warm and welcoming atmosphere. They have developed positive and trusting relationships with children. They use praise and encouragement very effectively to support children's self esteem, confidence and good behaviour. Children are treated fairly and with respect. They have good opportunities to learn about other cultures and lifestyles. Health and wellbeing is well promoted in the day-to-day work of the nursery. This includes daily fruit, home-cooked meals, regular hand washing and daily tooth brushing. Staff have a very clear understanding of their responsibilities in protecting children. The manager has appropriate procedures in place for responding to any concerns or comments.

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

The owner and manager is hardworking and very committed to the nursery. She has a clear vision of how she wants the nursery to develop and is undertaking further training to update her knowledge

and skills. Parents and staff find her approachable and she has established good teamwork among staff. She supports staff, children and families very well. The depute manager provides very good support to the manager and is a very good role model for staff. The manager now needs to implement more formal ways of gathering evidence on the centre's performance, and use this evidence to improve children's learning.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the centre will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The centre and the education authority will inform parents about the centre's progress in improving the quality of education.

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

- Continue to improve children's learning experiences.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan learning which meets each child's needs.
- Arrange staff training on legislation for children with additional support needs.
- Implement more formal ways of gathering evidence on the centre's performance, and use this evidence to improve children's learning.

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 Argyle Bridge Nursery.

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: May Geddes
10 February 2010

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 find our complaints procedure on our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

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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HMIE reports on the quality of education in pre-school centres, schools, teacher education, learning in the community, colleges and local authorities. We also report on the effectiveness of services for children and child protection. We base the advice we give to Scottish Ministers, educational organisations and the general public on the evidence we have gathered during inspections and reviews.

You can find information about our work and examples of the good practice we find in educational establishments and services on our website, www.hmie.gov.uk. This website also has links to *The Journey to Excellence* website where you can find videos of excellent practice in pre-school centres, schools, services for children and community learning and development.

Want to join us?

In addition to HMI, inspection teams often include people who are not HMI but who are involved directly in education. They are called associate assessors and most are practising teachers. Most inspection teams also include a member of the public called a lay member who looks at the school from the point of view of the children, young people and parents. More information about how you can become an associate assessor or lay member is available at www.hmie.gov.uk.

www.hmie.gov.uk

www.carecommission.com

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