

**Integrated Inspection by the
Care Commission and
HM Inspectorate of Education of
The Glasgow Academy (Atholl)
Glasgow**

16 May 2007



The Glasgow Academy (Atholl)
Mugdock Road
Milngavie
Glasgow
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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.

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Introduction

The Glasgow Academy (Atholl) was inspected in January 2007 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 nursery catered for pre-school children aged three to five years. It was registered for 48 children attending at any one session. At the time of the inspection the total roll was 31.

The environment

Standard 2

The nursery was located within the main school building. A separate, secure entry system opened into a cloakroom area with displays of helpful information and photographs regarding all aspects of the nursery. The children were accommodated within one spacious, stimulating playroom which was attractively displayed with a variety of children's work. Staff had thoughtfully organised areas for children to come together or play individually. A kitchen area provided appropriate storage for food. Children had lunch and took part in regular energetic physical play in the school hall. Resources for children were plentiful and well maintained. They were stored appropriately to enable children to make independent choices.

All children had daily access to two secure outdoor play areas. One enabled children to be involved in investigative activities, the other was for energetic play using a range of equipment. Staff implemented health and safety policies effectively to ensure children's well-being. Appropriate risk assessments had been carried out and recorded.

Quality of children's experience

Standard 4 & 5

Staff had created a warm and welcoming ethos within the playroom. They had high expectations of children's achievements and behaviour. Staff valued children's play and provided a suitable balance of adult-led and free-play activities. They interacted skilfully to extend the complexity of play and develop children's thinking skills. The learning environment offered a wide range of choices which motivated children. They were able to sustain play at their chosen activity and participated enthusiastically in planned learning experiences.

Overall, staff provided a very effective range of experiences throughout the year. Planning for children's learning was good. Staff consulted regularly with children and took account of their interests. They systematically gathered information regarding

children's responses to experiences and planned activities. However, this information needed to be used more effectively to plan individual next steps in learning. Staff presented a record of children's work in attractive yellow books. Parents had regular access to these and were encouraged to record comments in them. Further organisation was needed to reflect children's progress within the curriculum more effectively.

Features of the programmes for children included the following.

- The programme for emotional, personal and social development was very good. Children benefited from high-quality relationships with staff. They were comfortable with routines and confidently made use of all areas of the playroom. They had developed friendships and cooperated very well with each other, especially when playing with the toy railway. Children demonstrated very good independence skills. They organised their own healthy snack and were able to dress themselves for outdoor play. Staff provided stimulating experiences for children who were enthusiastic to learn more about Scottish culture. They successfully encouraged children to take part in a whole-school celebration with confidence.
- The programme for language and communication was good. Children engaged in valuable talking and listening experiences where they shared their ideas with others, confidently described their own experiences and were able to follow instructions from an adult. Staff had created a comfortable book area where children had displayed their own books about their autumn walk. Children made good use of Scottish leaflets to find out more information about castles. Staff had provided resources to encourage children's interest in early writing. However, spontaneous writing from children was not evident around the playroom and was not yet fully embedded in practice.
- The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world was very good. Children were aware of seasonal change through local walks. They investigated nature by growing bulbs within the playroom. Children used their senses, for example through exploring sand play and by making their own shortbread. Children engaged enthusiastically with information and communications technology. They solved simple problems using a programmable toy and used a digital camera with confidence. Staff ensured early maths concepts were embedded throughout the playroom. Children identified magnetic shapes and counted confidently whilst choosing musical instruments.
- The programme for expressive and aesthetic development was very good. Children expressed their thoughts and feelings independently through drawing, painting and collage. They displayed their work within the wider school to demonstrate their achievements. Children made imaginative use of the homemade castle area, where they were absorbed in role-play, keeping a look-out for pirates with telescopes. Staff ensured that children experienced a well-planned programme of musical activities. Children enthusiastically played percussion instruments while keeping a beat to

Scottish music. They enjoyed performing a song for their parents.

- The programme for physical development and movement was very good. Children had daily opportunities for energetic play in- and out-of-doors. They used wheeled toys skilfully to move around the outdoor space and enjoyed the fresh air. Children practised skills with small equipment including balls which they were able to throw and catch. In the playroom, they were able to play with a see-saw and bean bags at all times. Children took part in a well-planned programme of physical activity which was closely monitored by specialist staff. Staff provided a range of experiences to enable children to develop the fine movements of their fingers. They encouraged children to use scissors and build with small toys.

Support for children and families

Standard 6

Staff knew children and their families very well. They provided daily opportunities for the informal sharing of information regarding children's progress and well-being. Staff encouraged parents to become regularly involved in their child's learning through 'Learning at home' sheets which provided ideas for developing the current playroom interests at home. Parents received informative newsletters and were actively encouraged to attend events within the wider school. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with all aspects of the provision, although there was a concern regarding one aspect of school policy for admission. Well-planned arrangements were in place to support children as they moved on to preparatory one. These included visits to the nursery by school staff throughout the year and opportunities for children to become familiar with their new surroundings.

Staff were familiar with recent legislation regarding children with additional support needs. They had well-established procedures in place and had formed appropriate relationships with outside agencies. Additionally, specialist support was readily available within the wider school for children experiencing difficulties with their learning.

Management

Standard 14

The recently appointed assistant headteacher provided very good leadership. She worked alongside the management of the wider school and had close relationships with The Glasgow Academy pre-five provisions. She communicated clearly and had established positive relationships with parents, staff and visiting specialists. She had established a productive programme of meetings to support continuous improvement within the nursery. The assistant headteacher valued the work of the nursery highly and actively included it within the wider school.

The nursery teacher provided very good support within the playroom. She provided appropriate guidance to staff on supporting children's learning and made effective use of resources to develop the quality of children's experiences. She had established relationships with other nurseries in the area and attended local meetings. The nursery teacher worked alongside the skilled staff who were committed to the continued development of the nursery. All had participated in training to

enhance their knowledge. They were well informed about their responsibilities regarding the protection of children. They were aware of The Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and the requirements for registration.

All staff had recently become involved in evaluating the work of the nursery on a systematic basis. They met regularly to discuss and record their evidence. The assistant headteacher carried out formal monitoring of playroom practice and gave feedback to staff. Her support had a positive impact on how staff interacted with the children. A current improvement plan was in place. However, its timing and priorities were under review.

Key strengths

- The warm, attractive and stimulating playroom.
- Enthusiastic learners supported by very good staff interaction.
- The overall quality of children's experiences.
- Effective staff teamwork and the positive relationships with parents.
- The strong leadership of the assistant headteacher.

Other Issues

Response to recommendations or to requirements made at previous inspection

At the last Care Commission singleton inspection, there was one recommendation regarding roles and responsibilities and one requirement regarding recruitment. Both have been met.

Recommendations for improvement

- Staff should further improve how they meet the learning needs of children through continued development of planning and assessment practices.
- The management and staff should further develop monitoring and evaluation activities in order to establish future priorities for improvement.

Care Commission Officers and HM Inspectors have asked the pre-school centre, Board of Governors and the 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, Board of Governors 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.

Shona E S Taylor
HM Inspectorate of Education

HOW TO CONTACT US

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher, staff, Board of Governors and the education authority. Copies are also available on the Care Commission website: www.carecommission.com and HMIE website: www.hmie.gov.uk.

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.

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