

Inspection of pre-school centres and nursery classes

Notes for Parents

This section aims to help parents and carers to understand the inspection of a pre-school centre or nursery class.

What happens in an integrated inspection of your child's pre-school centre or nursery class?

Your child's pre-school centre or nursery class is to have an inspection to find out how well your child is being educated and looked after. Inspectors will take account of the type and nature of the centre or nursery class and its children's needs.

This inspection will be carried out on behalf of both HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the Care Commission by an HM Inspector (HMI) or Associate Assessor (AA) working for HMIE.

In large pre-school centres, the team will include a second team member who may be a Care Commission Officer.

The inspection report will highlight what the centre or nursery class does well and where it needs to improve. It will answer the following questions.

- How well do children learn and achieve?
- Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?
- How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
- Are staff and children actively involved in their community?
- Does the centre have high expectations of all children?

Any Care Commission requirements noted in the report refer to action which must be taken by the pre-school provider to comply with relevant legislation.

Before the inspection

- You will receive a confidential questionnaire so that we can see what you think about the centre/nursery class. We will also ask staff to complete a confidential questionnaire. All the replies we receive will be treated in confidence unless they raise issues about the safety and welfare of children or staff in the centre or nursery class.
- Prior to the inspection the head of centre will receive a small supply of the DVD *A Guide to School Inspection*. If you wish to receive a copy you should contact the centre or the relevant HMIE office.

During the inspection

- We will visit playrooms, observe activities, and talk to staff and children about their learning.
- We may spend some time looking at your child's work and reading his/her reports of progress and learning experiences.
- We may engage with your child as part of a small group or in the playroom.

After the inspection

- We will publish a report and send it to the education authority, to the centre or nursery class staff, parents and the general public. It will also be published on the HMIE website.
- If necessary, the centre or nursery class, with the support of the education authority, will amend its development plan to bring about any improvements that the report says are needed.
- In some cases, we will carry out follow-through inspections to support the centre or nursery class to make improvements.

When will another inspection take place?

HMIE normally inspects each primary school and nursery class in Scotland approximately every seven years and more often when there are reasons to do so. The Care Commission inspects a nursery class every two years or every year if there are children younger than three years.