



Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY314799
Inspection date	28 March 2006
Inspector	Sarah Taylor
Setting Address	168 Bramhall Moor Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 5BA
Telephone number	01706 849 144
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Registered person	Domalo Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stepping Stones Day Nursery is one of four nurseries run by Domalo Ltd. It was re-registered in 2005. It operates from three main rooms in a converted house in Hazel Grove. All children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08.00 until 18.00. The nursery serves the local area. There are currently 46 children on roll of whom 15 are

in receipt of funding for nursery education.

There are 11 part and full-time staff work with the children. All of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children access a range of outdoor activities, which contributes to their good health. They run and play in the fresh air and practice physical skills on equipment, such as the climbing frame, wheeled vehicles and swing. They understand that exercise is important, as staff promote physical activity on a daily basis through dancing sessions and outdoor play. They enjoy stretch and grow sessions where they learn about healthy eating and exercise.

The children are well protected from infection through good hygiene routines, which include wiping tables before and after snack time and the cleaning of toys and equipment. Staff knowledge of food hygiene practices contributes to the prevention of contamination. Children know the importance of personal hygiene before snack time when they wash their hands and confidently share the reasons why. They independently wipe their noses and throw the tissues in the bin with little adult input. Younger children have their own cot and clean bedding, which further promotes their good health. They are protected from cross infection as the provider has a very good sick child policy, which is shared with parents.

Children's health is fostered through the provision of a very good choice of healthy meals. The menu shows a varied and healthy diet and includes choices, such as fish pie, which are cooked from scratch. Dietary requirements are well catered for and are recorded in the children's records. Children have an understanding of a healthy lifestyle as staff promote healthy living through topics on healthy food and exercise. Their good health is further promoted as they have access to fresh drinking water.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in well maintained premises. Spacious and welcoming facilities are provided, which help children to feel settled. Displays of children's work are bright and attractive and include pictures of the children therefore helping to develop children's sense of belonging. Children are able to move around safely in the well organised environment. Recent refurbishments are being managed very well and risks to children are being minimised.

Rooms are arranged well to provide different areas for play and for rest. Children benefit from enough space and suitable facilities indoors and out of doors. Risk assessments take place regularly and any issues are noted and addressed immediately. For example, staff check outdoors and clear the area before play and

this helps to protect children from harm. The children are well safeguarded within the setting as doors are kept locked with a secure entry system.

Toys and equipment conform to required safety standards and are checked for their suitability. This ensures that children have a sound selection of toys and equipment to choose from. Safety equipment is in place, such as smoke alarms. This effectively maintains children's well-being.

The welfare of children is well maintained as staff have a very clear understanding of the area child protection committee guidance. They know how to safeguard the child and understand that their first responsibility is with the child. A nominated member of staff takes responsibility for the handling of concerns and staff are clear about monitoring and who to contact for advice and with concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children happily greet the staff and each other on arrival and eagerly join a group activity or choose their own game. They are all relaxed and confident in the secure, caring environment. Children with additional needs are offered one to one support so that they feel happy and secure in the group. Children chatter excitedly and converse easily with their friends and with all adults. Good settling in procedures are in place and are adapted to each child's individual needs to ensure a smooth transition from home to nursery.

The group have recently acquired the Birth to three matters framework and the staff are implementing the framework effectively. This enhances their existing good practice. Evaluations do not clearly predict the next steps in children's development.

Younger children express their imagination during the musical instrument session where they delight in singing and banging and shaking the instruments. They are exploring and experimenting during well thought out sensory opportunities. For example, children explore baskets filled with natural and contrasting materials. Children feel well supported by the staff who play down on their level and offer choices and opportunities whilst taking account of individual needs. The children are well cared for and are allowed to follow their own routines, including being rocked to sleep with comforters from home.

Children benefit from the strong emphasis on the enrichment of language and communication that is promoted throughout the setting. Staff skilfully extend vocabulary and support early speech development by echoing children's speech and interpreting gestures and facial expressions, such as nodding and smiling. They encourage the use of different words as they talk to the children about daffodils while the children free paint the flowers. Children are skilfully introduced to poetry about the daffodils.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have a positive attitude and

are strongly motivated to learn in an inviting play environment. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of early learning goals, which provides a firm foundation for the whole curriculum. A variety of teaching styles is used from individual, groups and whole class. Consequently, children make good progress in relation to the stepping stones. Every child is involved in the inclusive setting where good planning systems are in place and activities are adapted to include younger children and those with special needs. Staff have a good awareness of each child's ability level as they successfully identify ways to extend their learning. Written observations and assessments do not yet successfully link with planning to predict the next steps in development for each child and to provide relevant information for parents.

Children are attentive and responsive to the staff's good use of questioning and explanation, which is pitched at the right level for each child. Language is effectively reinforced and extended in many play situations, such as in the construction activity the staff ask children to problem solve and to fit dolls inside and on top of the house. Small groups of children invent and develop imaginative play situations with exciting role play as they weight, measure and change the baby dolls. Staff skilfully join in children's games and sensitively extend play or introduce new ideas, such as asking children to prepare a pretend meal to serve to them. Children enjoy looking at books and sharing stories in the book corner. Every child's attention is maintained throughout a lively story session where children are encouraged to be involved in predicting what happens next or joining in with well known lines.

The children learn basic concepts and solve problems, as staff skilfully include mathematical language and calculations at every opportunity, such as in the role play baby clinic where children use measures and scales. They enjoy counting back through interactive songs. Children learn to sort, classify and compare shapes and sizes as they explore with the construction or help to tidy away.

Children learn to predict and investigate and to extend learning about the world. For example, they learn about the seasons, weather and days of the week and about parts of their bodies, while singing. They have access to basic information and communication technology.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children make free choices from all toys. Their experience of the wider world is promoted through topics and the celebration of different festivals and on people in the community. There are positive images of race, culture, religion, gender and disability and there are plans in place to promote anti-discriminatory practice.

Children are extremely well behaved. They know what is expected of them because staff skilfully use consistent methods of behaviour management. Staff are excellent role models of behaviour and manners. There is a clear policy of dealing with behaviour and bullying issues and this helps to promote children's self-esteem. Children show concern for each other and help each other during activities. For example, during lunch the child is very concerned that another child may not be

eating as her meal may be hot. She promptly tells a member of staff.

This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents is good. Continuity of care for the children is promoted as the group operate an open door policy. Parents know they can discuss any issues about their child and any issue that concerns them. Staff discuss necessary issues with parents when appropriate. Parents say that, 'the care offered is very good,' and that, 'the staff are friendly and available.'

There is a range of good quality information available to parents about what is on offer at the group. The group send newsletters home with the children to keep parents informed of developments. Staff complete communication sheets to ensure continuity between home and nursery. Parents receive information about how to make a complaint. The effective communication between parents and staff helps to promote children's welfare, safety and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the smooth running of the group and the clear routines, which make them feel secure. The managers use good induction procedures and ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. Staff are aware of their role within the group and they work well together to promote the effective running of the nursery.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from the good leadership of the nursery. The manager and staff work well together to ensure that children are provided with good quality care and education. They work to promote the group's aims of offering good quality care. This ethos is reflected in all areas of the nursery and is visibly promoted by staff. This means that children are cared for in a positive and supportive environment, which effectively promotes their social and moral development. The strong commitment to improvement is reflected in the programme for staff appraisal and training. Staff are happy and the majority of staff are long serving. These steps maintain and improve the quality of care and learning for all children.

Records detail the individual requirements of each child and policies and procedures are in place to promote the safety and well-being of the children present in the group.

The provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that observations and evaluations clearly point to the next steps in children's development (also applies to Nursery education).

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk