



Stepping Stones Playgroup (Dursley)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101730
Inspection date	23 June 2006
Inspector	Hilary Elizabeth Tierney
Setting Address	c/o Dursley C of E Primary School, Highfields, Dursley, Gloucestershire, GL11 4NZ
Telephone number	01453 544588
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Registered person	Stepping Stones Playgroup (Dursley)
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 Playgroup is a committee-run group that operates from a self-contained building in the grounds of Highfields Primary School in Dursley. The playgroup has the use of two large play rooms, kitchen, toilets and storage facilities. They have an enclosed outside area and are also able to use the school garden. The premise is also used by an out-of-school club.

The children attending the group are primarily from the local community and some

may also use the Early Years Centre that is based in the School. Playgroup sessions run term-time only, Monday to Thursday 09.30 until 12.00. A crèche facility is offered between 09.00 and 09.30 and on Tuesdays pre-school children may stay for a lunch club until 13.00 in preparation for school. From January to July a pre-school session takes place on Fridays from 11.30 until 14.30 and a parent/toddler group operates on Fridays between 09.00 and 11.00. Children are accepted from the age of two-years-nine-months to five years. There are currently 49 children on roll. Of these, 37 are in receipt of funding for early education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There is a team of six staff who all have relevant childcare experience. The leader and deputy both hold level three qualifications and assistants are also trained in childcare. A high percentage of staff are trained in first aid and child protection. Parents provide additional support by helping at the playgroup on a rota basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a suitable awareness about health and hygiene procedures through well established routines that include hand washing after being outside, using the toilet and messy play. Occasionally children are not always encouraged to wash hands before eating their lunch. Children's independence is encouraged, they are able to visit the toilets safely as and when they need with gentle reminders from staff to wash their hands when they have finished. All necessary accident and medication books are in place and shared with parents when necessary. All parental emergency numbers are easily available should a child become ill when at the group. Staff are confident in dealing with minor accidents.

Children are beginning to learn about healthy eating. They are offered a good selection of snacks during the week, that include bananas, pears, apples, cucumber, tomatoes. Children help themselves to the snacks from a plate on the table. Milk, water and juice are offered during snack time. Water is made available to children throughout the session. This is put in a large jug and placed with cups in the play room, as the jug is large it means the older and more-able children are not able pour their own drinks, therefore not helping them develop their independence further. Pre-school children are able to stay for lunch, parents provide lunch boxes. Staff and children then eat lunch together, this is a very social time with both children and staff talking together about what they have done that day. Staff are fully aware of individual children's dietary needs and requirements, working within these during snack time.

Children have regular opportunities to play outside where they may enjoy fresh air and physical activities. They can use the small tarmac area by the playgroup building for riding bikes, playing with balls and parachute games. The nearby school adventure playground is also used regularly by the children when they visit the school and teachers they are going to be with in their school year. Staff organise physical activities inside with children doing action songs, jumping, hopping and moving to

music. Children take part in these with enjoyment and excitement as they jump around to instructions by staff when playing the 'bean game'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a warm, friendly, happy and welcoming environment where they play safely. There is an excellent range of resources that are used well and which children access easily at all times. Resources are of good quality, well maintained and sufficient in quantity to ensure that all wishing to participate in an activity may do so. Toys offer children a chance to explore and investigate as they play. Children are well supervised by staff at all times, who take good measures in reducing potential risks around the building both inside and outside.

Written risk assessments are carried out by staff regularly. Detailed policies and procedures in place ensure that the staff are consistent in keeping children safe. There are clear outings procedures with parents attending when outings further away are undertaken. Visits to the local school are taken regularly with extra staff used especially for this trip and for subsequent use of the adventure playground. Detailed records are kept of fire drills completed, these are done at regular intervals through the year.

Children are well protected. Staff have completed child protection training. They have clear procedures in place and have a clear understanding and knowledge about what to do in the event of having a concern about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and happy as they leave their parents to play. All children enjoy themselves at playgroup and the activities offered are fun and enjoyable. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and free play. Children can select their own activities and staff have a good understanding about ensuring children complete their activity in their own time. For example as the majority of children help tidy up, two children are left to complete their free painting in their own time. Adults and children communicate well as they discuss what they are going to do and what they have done at previous sessions. Staff have recently introduced a key worker system and are developing this successfully. All children understand the playgroup policy of caring and sharing, and as a book is being read to them, one child says that caring means you look after someone when they are poorly. The child is praised by a member of staff and is told that this is correct. Children have excellent concentration skills which include sitting enthralled when being read a story by a member of staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching motivates the children, so they are keen to learn and make good progress. Activities and experiences are broad

and effective. Children's individual written assessments are clear, and staff have a clear understanding about what stage children are in their learning. However, children's individual stages are not reflected in planning, and plans do not make it clear how staff are to support and challenge individual children.

Activities offered are varied and appeal to the children. Children work well together as they play. They understand the concept of caring and sharing and as they play this is reinforced. Staff know the children well and use questioning effectively to promote children's language and thinking. Children have confidence and freely express how they feel. Children concentrate well and listen carefully to instructions given to them by staff. For example, during a music activity, children are divided into three groups; one group has drums, another triangles and the last one has rain sticks. The staff carefully and clearly explain to children what they are to do, the children sit and listen well. As staff and children recite 'Incy Wincy Spider', children play their instruments according to the noise they make, drums for the spider climbing up the spout, rain sticks for the rain and triangles for the sunshine. Children work well together and the activity is completed very successfully. Staff praise the children and congratulate them on getting all instruments played at the right time.

Children count confidently, calculate and use mathematical ideas within their play. For example, staff question children on how big their lego house is, and whether the play snake they have built it for will fit in. Children have good opportunities to design, construct and have regular use of the computer. Children are able to freely access the well resourced home corner where they may dress up and act out play based on their first-hand or imagined experiences. Children have a good understanding of the world around them and talk about what they have done during the session and on previous days.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident and happy coming to playgroup. Staff know the children and their families well, they value the children as individuals. They encourage and develop children self-esteem by helping them take pride in their achievements. For example, samples of every child's work is displayed in a special display within the school and the children are taken to see their work at the school. Staff ensure that each child realises their work is displayed.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children show excitement and wonder as they play, they interact with each other happily. Positive images are visible around the building and children participate in activities to help them gain an awareness of other cultures and the wider world in which they live. Behaviour of the children is excellent. They have a secure awareness of right and wrong and show respect for others. They show excellent levels of concentration, good levels of imagination and independence.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents and carers are welcomed into the group. They are encouraged to share what they know about their children to help staff meet children's individual needs. Ongoing two-way communication is encouraged. Policies

and procedures are shared with parents. All necessary parental permissions are in place and emergency contact numbers are easily available. Detailed information is shared with parents in the form of regular newsletters both from the staff and committee. Staff have developed a laminated book for each child with pictures of activity done at playgroup, parents take this home with them which enables them to talk about what their child has been doing during the session. Parents feel staff are approachable, understanding both towards their needs and those of their children. They are extremely happy with the care provided by staff for their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Documentation is well organised, with all legally required records well maintained and easily to hand for the inspection. Confidentiality is highly regarded concerning the personal details of children and adults. All necessary parental permissions are in place. The parents' notice board clearly displays the registration certificate and other necessary information. All the groups policies and procedures have been clearly written, however details of the complaints procedure and child protection policy are not easily available for parents. There are good systems in place for recruitment of staff with clear procedures in place.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The committee offer staff satisfactory support. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage, however, the committee do not review staff's training and development needs, for example, through an appraisal system. Systems are in place to ensure that staff plan a broad and effective curriculum, although planning currently lacks detail regarding individual children. Staff and the committee are committed to improvement. Whilst staff informally assess their own practice, there are no formal systems in place to systematically review the effectiveness of the education provision. Children benefit from the good levels of staffing and effective procedures to ensure the smooth running of the playgroup.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider had two recommendations from the last inspection. These were to share amended policies with parents and to improve the Special Educational Needs co-ordinators knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice (2002) for the identification and assessment of special educational needs.

All amended policies have been gathered in a folder which is made available to parents. The Special Educational Needs co-ordinators knowledge understanding of the Code of Practice has been improved and she is confident in the identification and assessment of special educational needs. The successful completion of these recommendations ensure that parents are fully aware of the groups procedures and children's needs are identified quickly and action taken to ensure their needs are met well.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- encourage children's awareness of good health and hygiene practices for example through regular hand washing procedures.

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):

- develop systems to monitor the quality of the nursery education provision.

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