



Stepping Stones at Northbourne PFSU

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337507
Inspection date	05 February 2007
Inspector	Sheila Collins
Setting Address	Northbourne C of E Primary School, 1-3 Cockcroft Road, DIDCOT, Oxfordshire, OX11 8LJ
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Registered person	Stepping Stones at Northbourne PFSU
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 at Northbourne Partnership Foundation Stage Unit opened in 2006 and is run by its own governing body. It operates from a classroom in Northbourne Church of England Primary School in Didcot. The children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 27 children aged two to five years may attend the provision at any one time. There are currently 41 children on roll. Of these, there are 35 children in receipt of nursery education funding. The provision supports children with learning difficulties and children for whom English is a second language.

The provision is open Monday to Friday during term time. Morning sessions are from 09.00 to 11.30. A lunch club is offered on a Tuesday from 11.35 to 12.30. Afternoon sessions are on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12.20 to 14.50.

The provision employs six staff, of whom three hold appropriate early years qualifications. In addition, two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine. Older children are independent in their self-care skills, blowing their own noses, disposing of the tissues appropriately and washing their hands after messy play and using the toilet. There are visual reminders in the bathroom area to remind the children and staff give gentle reminders to those who forget. The children use a gel to clean their hands, before snack and know the right amount to squeeze out. They know why they should wash their hands when asked as they 'might get germs which sting your tummy.' The children learn good hygiene procedures from the staff during every day routines, for example, cleaning the tables before snack and mopping up spillages.

There are five staff members who hold a current first aid qualification. This benefits the children because any minor problems such as bumps and falls are dealt with appropriately by competent staff. Staff know children's individual medical and dietary needs. All relevant documentation is in place to support children's well-being, however the recording of some of the accident records is faint.

Children are able to access drinks of water at any time, if they wish. The children are learning to make healthy choices in their eating. Fruit is offered at snack times and staff are aware of children who have allergies to certain types of fruit. The fruit is peeled and cut up at the table in front of the children which gives the children the opportunity to discuss healthy eating and to do simple maths such as counting. Children know that they only pick up the pieces of fruit which they are going to eat but 'not if it has been on the floor.' Older children pour their own drinks from a choice of milk or juice.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities both inside and out, which promotes all round healthy development. They take part in recreational play activities outside, for example riding bikes, climbing, pegging out the washing, rolling balls down lengths of drainpipe and playing in the sand. They benefit from planned physical sessions indoors on a weekly basis in the school hall.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in an environment that is welcoming. They settle quickly and enthusiastically to the activities on offer. They know the rules which are in place for their safety, such as not tipping their chairs on to two legs and not running in the play room. The children remind each other of the rules for example not riding their bikes in the sensory garden area during outside play. Staff are vigilant to ensure all aspects of the children's safety. They undertake daily checks, both inside and out and regular risk assessments to ensure that the

children can play freely and safely. The staff and children take part in evacuation drills and staff record the date of these in the register but not in detail in a specific log.

Children benefit from a good wide range of resources, which promote all areas of their development. They self select from items during free play time from lower levels of the shelving unit or use the toys already out in the room. They play an active part in keeping the room safe, for example, taking part in tidy up time. The overall layout of the playroom allows the children freedom to play safely. However, at arrival times the room is congested with parents and children crossing the play areas in order to hang up coats and bags.

Staff are very well deployed in all areas ensuring the children are protected and safe at all times. Staff have a good working knowledge of safeguarding the children, which further ensures the children's welfare. All the required procedures and documents are in place and routes of referral are known.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children separate from their parents and carers with confidence and enter the pre-school happily. The staff are on hand to support the younger, not so confident children. Staff welcome the children individually when they arrive, which makes them feel valued and important.

The children are making friends and developing good relationships with the staff. The staff set out the room with activities so that the children can have ready access to items when they arrive. Children can then independently select the toys they wish to use, directing their own play. The staff allow them to play without constant supervision, but are on hand to support if needed. Children naturally include adults in their play and invite them to join in for example when going on a trip in their rocket during outside play or offering pretend food and drinks when playing with the sand.

The younger children have the same opportunities as the older children. They are encouraged to take part in all activities but are not pressurised into taking part if they do not wish to.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have very good knowledge of the individual needs of the children and are able to identify the next steps for their learning, although these are not formerly recorded. The staff are enthusiastic which motivates the children. They interact well with the children and support them, which contributes positively to their learning and development. The planning in place covers all areas of learning, however the format is under review.

The children are learning to listen to each other and adults. They confidently initiate conversations with their peers and adults. They listen well at group time and whisper their names back to the staff member calling out the register. They use language they know to describe things, for example 'wheels' for circles, when making collages of rockets. The children have good opportunities to mark make on a daily basis and enjoy practising their emergent

writing when writing out tickets and train times in the role play area. However, there is no expectation of them to try to write their own names on their work. The children enjoy looking up information in the time tables and listening to stories in small groups. They are confident when predicting what will happen next in the story and answering questions about what they have heard. They have good opportunities to see their names in print as they self register, find their names at snack time and look for their names as they put their work in labelled trays.

The children count confidently in a variety of situations. They count the number of children and the number of pieces of fruit at snack time, the number of circles and squares on their rocket pictures and how many cups of tea are needed for the grown ups when playing in the sand. They are beginning to do simple calculations, for example during discussions about how many children had been in an aeroplane and how many had not. They use a good range of mathematical language appropriately in their play. They are beginning to explore mathematical concepts such as bigger and smaller when discussing countries on the world globe and map. They discuss and identify basic shapes and primary colours, with ease. They are learning to make simple mathematical records having completed a graph of how they come to pre-school with symbols showing cars, bikes and walkers.

The children have opportunities to explore and investigate both in and out of doors, for example when playing with lengths of drain pipe and a ball, they discover that if they lift the drainpipe higher one end, the ball will roll faster. They are able to design their own villages with the small world play. They learn about different forms of transport and are enthusiastic about discussing the map of the world and how to get from country to country recalling their own experiences. They use resources such as phones and the computer confidently, turning the screen off when it is tidy up time.

The children move confidently and freely around the playroom and the outdoor area. They have a good understanding of spatial awareness. They take part in physical play on a daily basis out of doors, enjoying activities such as riding bikes and climbing. Indoors, they use a range of tools such as glue spreaders, paint brushes and pencils which helps them to develop their co-ordination.

The children have daily opportunities to use different mediums during craft work and natural materials such as dough and sand. They have few choices of different resources when creating their collages and pictures. They enjoy singing a variety of songs and rhymes from memory and using musical instruments. The children use their imaginations and draw on their own experiences in role-play. They hold telephone conversations with each other, calling out that they cannot answer the door as they are on the phone. They plan outings to the seaside on the train, writing out the tickets and checking they have everything, with one child reminding the other, 'Don't forget your mobile phone.'

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The staff know the children well and their individual needs. Although a key worker system is in place, all staff work with all of the children. The children have a sense of belonging and are happy and settled. They are given time to say good bye to their parent or care, with staff

available to support as needed. The individual care and individual requirements of all children are taken into consideration during the sessions and children who have learning difficulties or disabilities are integrated well within the group by both staff and other children.

The children are becoming aware of the wider society through activities such as transport and people who help us. They enjoy visits from members of the community in particular, Police and Fire personnel. They see positive images of other lifestyles in books, topics and projects are able to use a variety of resources which promote equality and diversity, for example in small world play.

The children benefit from the basic routine which is in place which makes them feel secure. They cooperate and take turns, for example on the computer and the bikes. They enjoy monitoring the time until their turn by using the sand timer, telling others that they are 'the timer'. They help one another when putting on and taking off aprons and generally show concern for others.

The children behave well and understand responsible behaviour. The staff allow the children to negotiate with one another and support them if necessary, if problems arise. The staff praise and encourage the children for their efforts and achievements throughout the sessions, which builds on their self esteem and confidence.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive comprehensive written information in which there is good information about the pre-school including the Foundation Stage curriculum and early learning goals covering the six areas of learning. Parents have not yet had a formal session with the staff about their child's progress since the group moved premises but are confident that if they needed to, they could discuss with their child's key worker at any mutually convenient time. However, they are unsure about how they can contribute to their child's records, other than verbally. The parents take part in a parent rota, fundraising events and socials. They receive regular newsletters and notice boards provide parents with current and up to date information. The policies and procedures are available for parents to see.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. The recruitment procedure is effective and staff are cleared to work with the children, so safeguarding their welfare. The staff deployment in the playroom and the outdoor play area is good. They make effective use of the available space within the playroom to provide children with a range of play opportunities. The ratio of staff to children ensures that in all areas of the playroom and the outdoor area children receive support.

All the required documentation is in place to promote the health and welfare of the children. The registration certificate is clearly displayed so parents are aware of the conditions of operation. An effective registration system is in place. However the actual hours of attendance of each child are not recorded.

The staff work well as a team and have good knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. The leadership and management is good. The manager is aware of the need to complete her professional qualification. She is aware of the weaker areas of practice in the pre-school and is working with staff to improve this and the monitoring of the children's care and education.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- implement a log book to record details of evacuation drills
- review the registration system in place to ensure that the times of children's arrival and departure are recorded
- continue to explore ways in which to encourage parents to be involved in their child's record keeping
- put in place an action plan with time scales to ensure that the manager completes a professional qualification

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):

- extend the opportunities for children to choose their own resources when taking part in creative activities

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk