



# STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	200779
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 May 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Paula Hunt
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<b>Registered person</b>	Stepping Stones Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Pre-School opened in 1968. It operates from a church hall in the village of Claverdon, in Warwickshire. The pre-school has access to an enclosed outdoor play area and serves both the local and surrounding area.

The pre-school cares for a maximum of 24 children aged from 2 to under 5 years at any session. There are currently 24 children on roll. This includes 13 funded three year olds and 10 funded four year olds. Children can attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery is able to support children with special needs.

The nursery opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12:00. A lunch club operates during the summer term where the children are able to bring a packed lunch and remain until 13:00.

Four part-time staff work with the children. Half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The nursery receives support from an advisory teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and has good links with the local school.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Good adult support and guidance helps children gain a good understanding of hygiene and they are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care.

Children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise. They explore, test and develop physical control either when playing in the garden or when walking around the village. They enthusiastically tackle a good range of activities, such as obstacle courses and building their own houses.

Children are able to help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the session and enjoy a variety of fresh fruit, own grown vegetables, biscuits and toast at snack time. Older children are able to talk about 'good' and 'bad' foods. Snack menus are shared with parents and staff take into account parental wishes and children's dietary needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Staff are committed to creating a safe environment. Children benefit from a balance of freedom and safe limits, such as discussing road safety issues and agreed boundaries as they walk around the local area. Staff skilfully explain safe practices, such as why children must not run, so that they or other children do not hurt themselves. This helps children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Staff are vigilant and use risk assessments to reduce potential hazards minimising the risks of accidental injury to children.

Children have access to good quality safe resources and equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures and give priority to the children's welfare.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children settle well and enjoy their time at the pre-school. They arrive happy, confident and are eager to spend their time purposefully. They become increasingly independent as they make choices about their play and enjoy a wide range of activities, which contribute to their creativity, such as dancing, listening and moving to music, playing instruments, painting, baking and model making. They make good relationships with each other and achieve well because staff are skilful and use their good understanding of the foundation stage, to provide good quality care and education.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are enthused by the good range of stimulating, relevant activities related to their needs. They access a variety of good resources, which support their development across all six areas. All children are eager to learn and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to stories and can recount favourites such as 'Handa's Surprise'. Occasionally, children lose interest when large group activities go on for too long, such as at registration and snack times.

Children use marks readily to represent their ideas and older children are skilful at writing their own names. Good use of visual symbols enables children with special educational needs to participate fully in the activities and make good progress. Children are very imaginative. They make sense of the world around them in the stimulating outdoor area and create individual art work. They are curious about how things work such as magnets, binoculars and wonder at the changes they observe in growing vegetables in the garden.

Children work well together. For example, younger children learn how to operate computer equipment following the guidance of the older children. Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. Their physical skills develop and improve through a wide variety of experiences, including dance.

From admission, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help children achieve their potential. A flexible approach to planning and a balance between adult and child led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff give clear instructions, good explanations and use effective questioning to challenge children's thinking and language skills. They use effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences in areas where they need more practice and support.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the pre-school because staff value and respect the individuals and their families. Staff support younger children in sharing and taking turns and most behaviour is good. Staff have high expectations and set consistent boundaries for the three to five year olds, which helps them to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff increase children's understanding of right and wrong, they respond to reminders to care for their environment, resources and each other.

The children have many opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, visitors to the pre-school and outings to local places of interest. A recently formed link with a school in Gambia provides many learning opportunities for the children about what life is like in Africa. This very positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

A good partnership with parents contributes well to the children's well being in the pre-school. Staff seek parents' views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts the setting and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Staff ensure that parents are aware of how their child is progressing and developing.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Staff enhance children's care by the good quality of organisation and the good leadership and management of nursery education.

The premises are well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is set out to maximise play opportunities for children. Most legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well being is in place although some are in need of updating.

Children benefit from qualified, experienced staff who are effectively inducted. A newly implemented appraisal system will contribute further to ensure that the pre-schools policies and procedures are consistently applied. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve their care and education such as, recently reviewing and re-organising snack time to cafeteria style to encourage self selection and independence. The good quality of the provision means that the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children who attend well.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Children's safety has been improved by the introduction of a more secure perimeter fence. The reviewing and updating of the pre-schools policies and procedures has improved children's care and arrangements to share them with parents is now in place. However, some further improvements need to be made.

Under the leadership of the supervisor, the staff have improved visual displays of

both letters and numbers with most resources now being clearly labelled. More opportunities are provided for children to make choices and self selection is actively encouraged in all areas. Children's learning further benefits from the addition of mark making equipment in all areas to promote writing for a purpose and there are many planned opportunities to link sounds to letters.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report.

## **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 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):

- review and update policies and procedures including complaints and the operational plan.

#### **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):

- review and re-organise large group times to ensure children's interest is sustained

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