

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102756
Inspection date	26 June 2007
Inspector	Nicola Jayne Pascoe
Setting Address	Newlyn CPS, Carne Road, Newlyn, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 5QA
Telephone number	01736 363050
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Registered person	Stepping Stones Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 Pre-school Group, Newlyn, is a committee run Day Nursery and Out of School Club that opened in 1991. It operates from its own premises in the grounds of Newlyn School and also uses the school hall for out of school care. The nursery and out of school club, which is named Kidzone, serve the surrounding towns and villages.

There are currently 45 children from two to four years on roll. This includes 29 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children who have learning difficulties/disabilities. Currently there are no children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all year round, except between Christmas and New Year. Opening hours are from 08:00 until 17:30. Funded education sessions for three and four year olds are from 09:00 until 12:00 and 12:45 until 15:15.

There are nine part time staff who work with the children. All members of staff hold relevant early years or play work qualifications. Two members of staff are currently attending further

training. The setting receives support from the local authority and has completed their quality assurance scheme. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing their awareness of the importance of following good health and hygiene practices. Daily hygiene routines are promoted well and as a result children wash their hands after messy play and before snack and lunch time. Staff prompt children at appropriate times and reward this good practice with plenty of praise and encouragement. The risk of cross-infection is effectively minimised by the use of paper towels for hand drying. Children place used hand towels in the bin provided, demonstrating an understanding of the value of cleanliness and a respect for their environment. Children's physical health is monitored and maintained through suitable procedures. Accident and medication records show that any injuries or illness are treated appropriately. Staff have completed paediatric first aid training and additional training in order to treat specific allergic reactions.

Children at the nursery are provided with healthy snacks of fresh fruit, milk, water or sugar free squash, which are made freely available throughout the day. They are particularly enthusiastic when encouraged to use all their senses to explore and enjoy a selection of more exotic fruits such as pineapple, kiwi and mango. All nursery children bring a packed lunch from home, which is stored appropriately in a designated fridge during the morning. Children are generally provided with a balanced and nutritious lunch. However, these are not always served appropriately and staff have agreed that in future they will provide plates when required. Children enjoy the benefit of free-flow access to the outdoor environment, where they are encouraged to develop their physical skills, through climbing, sliding and riding tricycles. This opportunity to benefit from fresh air is promoted well, staff ensure that children wear appropriate clothing for the weather and as a result children can enjoy outdoor play almost everyday. The outdoor area is particularly well equipped, it provides an enclosed activity area with a sand covered floor surface. Staff are diligent in raking and cleaning this area before children's use.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children attending the Kidzone out of school club have use of the school hall, which is child-centred and spacious. There is a suitable range of age appropriate resources for their use, which are stored safely. However, at the children's request a toddler slide is provided which creates a potential hazard as the older children jump off it, as it is too small for them to slide down. The school hall fire door and entrance door are left open and school children arrive one by one over a period of time, as they are left to make their own way to the club unsupervised. This practice presents a risk to children's security. All children regularly follow the written emergency evacuation procedures to practise fire drills. The details of these drills are recorded in order to monitor and evaluate the practice. Visitors to both the nursery and out of school club register their details in the 'visitor record book'.

All children are safeguarded by the ability of staff to follow appropriate child protection procedures if required. There are effective procedures in place to protect children from unvetted persons. Written risk assessments are implemented and daily visual checks are carried out on the premises and equipment by staff. However, outdoors there is an old plastic sand tray, which

is used to cover the compost area, this tray has deteriorated in the weather and has split. This presents a potential risk to children, as they may cut themselves. Also in the nursery a tray of hot tea is placed in the play room. This also presents a potential risk to children's safety. However, staff are generally vigilant and active in promoting children's awareness of safety issues. For example, they remind them not to run indoors as they may slip, fall or collide with others. They explain why they must play safely outdoors and advise them of the risks when climbing. There is a suitable range of age appropriate toys, resources and equipment to enable children to develop their skills, whilst maintaining their safety and staff are vigilant in their supervision of children at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children attending the nursery benefit from a wide range of good quality and age appropriate toys, resources and equipment. They are busy and occupied in worthwhile activities at all times. Staff plan a wide range of interesting activities to promote children's learning and development. Children follow a familiar daily routine which fosters a sense of familiarity and security. There is a balanced programme of both restful and active play opportunities throughout the day. Children are able to enjoy a snack whenever they feel hungry and snack time is used effectively to promote children's learning. Children's differing levels of ability and preferences are respected, as a result all children are fully included and their individual needs are identified and met.

Younger children enjoy supervised free play with coloured play dough. They use an appropriate range of tools to manipulate and shape the dough, before placing in empty chocolate box trays. This is an example of how children are participating in purposeful play with an end result, which they may achieve if they so wish. They move freely within the nursery environment, sorting shapes, initiating role play and completing wooden puzzles. Adults interact appropriately to provide support and encouragement. Staff include younger children in the nursery planning, adapting activities to make them sufficiently challenging for these younger children. Children's work is displayed attractively in the nursery rooms for all to value and admire. Children attending Kidzone out of school club are not able to display their work during term time, only during the school holidays when the school displays are removed. Although the older children have use of enjoyable materials to create den's and initiate role play, they also have use of a slide which is far too small and as a result children stand on top and run up and down it playing aimlessly. The hall is large and provides plenty of space to run, which children do to release built up energy from the day. However, there are no comfortable areas for rest and relaxation. These older children are not involved in planning activities for future sessions.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pre-school children participate in a wide range of enjoyable activities linked to a specific topic. Staff have identified learning intentions for most of these activities and have made laminated prompt cards to place on the tables, to remind them to extend children's learning in these areas. These specific learning intentions are linked directly to the stepping stones. As a result, children have good opportunities to make progress towards the early learning goals through their daily play. However, although the use of daily routine activities promote children's learning in most areas, it is not yet fully developed in order to provide sufficient opportunities for children to practise and extend their mathematical and mark making skills.

Adults are skilled in their use of interesting and effective methods of teaching. For example, children sit together to watch a video linked to the weekly topic, children follow this by acting out the story with role play. Children benefit from this active participation and relish the responsibility of taking part. Snack time is also used effectively to promote their learning and is also linked to the topic and the morning's activity. During snack time children explore a variety of exotic fruits from around the world. They are encouraged to use their senses to investigate the smell, appearance, texture and taste of these fruits. There are good levels of discussion with the members of staff and their peers, which effectively promotes their language development, as they use new words to describe what they are experiencing.

There is a balanced range of both planned and free play activities to promote children's learning and development. Staff develop long, medium and short term plans together and base the identified learning intentions on children's individual identified targets for development. Key workers make useful observations, which identify individual targets and influence future plans. As a result, there is a clear and effective cycle of assessment taking place. Children are happy and content to enjoy their favourite activities. Many demonstrate considerable levels of skill in their use of computer equipment. They use a range of suitable resources, materials and tools to achieve the desirable result during planned activities. However, should children wish to further develop their creativity with the use of scissors or glue sticks for example, these resources are not freely available. As a result, children are restricted in their ability to stretch and challenge themselves to achieve personally identified goals. Staff make effective use of the outdoors for learning and children enjoy the freedom of the free-flow from the indoor to the outdoor environment. In general, children are making good levels of progress in most areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual preferences and abilities are identified, respected and met by a team of suitably qualified and experienced staff. There are suitable procedures in place to ensure that new children are settled and well cared for. All children have a designated key worker who liaises with their parent or carer to ensure their specific needs are identified and met appropriately. Children receive good opportunities to explore their own cultures and beliefs and those of others, through both planned and free play activities. There are a suitable range of resources available to promote an understanding and awareness of people's differences. Children who have learning difficulties/disabilities are fully included and are well supported by all staff, who work in partnership with the nursery Special Needs Coordinator to provide high levels of support and encouragement. Parents and carers of such children are fully included and the nursery is committed to working closely with any professional involved, in order to provide appropriate opportunities for development. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children are generally well behaved. They are developing essential negotiation skills and are able to share, take turns, show consideration and respect and listen to others. They follow the appropriate examples set by adults, who are good role models. Staff use age related and positive strategies for behaviour management. The nursery have developed a suitable written behaviour management policy, which is shared appropriately with parents and carers. Older children are involved in developing a written 'code of conduct' which is soon to be reviewed and updated. The partnership with parents and carers is good. The setting provides parents and carers with high levels of written information, including a range of written policies and procedures, parental consent forms, regular newsletters and an attractive notice board which displays essential documentation and additional useful information. There is evidence that most of the children's

records are shared appropriately and regularly with parents and carers. Parents and carers are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning and development. Links with home are promoted effectively. For example, 'Ollie' the teddy-bear regularly takes 'holidays' at the children's homes and children help him to write his holiday diary to share with other children on his return. Verbal information takes place as children arrive and when they are collected. Key workers are available for one to one discussion at any time and regular formal meetings take place to discuss and share children's records of progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for by a committed and enthusiastic team of qualified and experienced staff. Students who are on placement at the setting display confidence and skill in their work with the younger children and are a valuable addition to the nursery. Children have developed strong and trusting relationships with all adults and their peers. All adults working unsupervised with children are checked for suitability. There are robust written recruitment and induction procedures for new staff. Staff are committed to further training and development, they actively seek suitable training opportunities and are encouraged and supported to achieve high standards in their practice. Annual staff appraisals are carried out and are regularly reviewed, in order to monitor and assess best practice and identify future training requirements. The setting actively seek and welcome support and advice from early years organisations.

The nursery is well organised to provide children with safe and comfortable areas in which to rest and play. The registration system clearly shows the times of arrival and departure of children and staff. There are effective systems in place to ensure there is sufficient cover in the event of staff holidays, sickness or an emergency. All the required documentation is readily available for inspection. Records are reviewed regularly and are stored securely. Confidentiality is respected and maintained. The manager is aware of the need to notify Ofsted of significant changes or events. She is planning to provide written details relating to the building of new Kidzone premises, which should be taking place over the summer. Maintaining the high standards demonstrated in the nursery in the associated Kidzone club is currently proving difficult. However, it is expected that by operating the Kidzone club from the new premises, which are to be situated closer to the nursery, will enable the setting to develop consistently high standards across both provisions.

The leadership and management are good. The committee are actively involved and supportive. The manager demonstrates considerable levels of skill in effectively organising the nursery and liaising with other practitioners, parents and carers. She has established a good working relationship with the school through an effective partnership with the head teacher and reception teacher. As a result they have implemented suitable strategies for the smooth transition of children moving from the nursery into school. For example, children leaving the nursery have the opportunity to visit the reception class each week in the term prior to them leaving and they also take part in a formal 'graduation ceremony' in the school hall. All staff demonstrate confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the National Standards and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. As a result, children are well cared for, secure and happy and staff make effective use of the stepping stones to provide appropriate opportunities for children to make good levels of progress. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was given a good judgement for both care and nursery education. There were several recommendations agreed for improvement. These were to ensure that good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing and drying. Children are now observed to wash their hands regularly and at appropriate times and are reminded to do so and why by staff. Individual paper towels are used for hand drying. As a result, children's health is maintained and good hygiene practices are actively promoted. Staff were also required to ensure that food is stored safely at the correct temperature and to ensure food is served hygienically. The fridge temperature is now monitored, but not all of the children's lunches are served appropriately as one child eats his packed lunch off the table. The manager has agreed that plates will be provided if required.

The nursery was required to improve staff's knowledge of the stepping stones. This has been achieved through all staff having an active involvement in the planning of future activities. They all have a copy of the curriculum guidance. The daily learning intention is printed and displayed on the activity table. Activities are linked to children's individual targets. They were also required to plan activities to provide extension in learning for the older and more able children. This has been addressed through careful planning and through staff knowledge and understanding of children's differing abilities, through observations and assessment and during regular team meetings. Staff also encourage parental involvement. As a result, all children have opportunities to make good levels of progress.

The setting were required to make greater use of daily routines to introduce and promote learning. There is evidence to show that daily routine activities are now used to promote children's learning to a certain degree, but more could be done to promote mathematical and mark-making skills. And finally, they were required to provide opportunities and encouragement for children to further develop their independence and self esteem as they select activities, tools and materials. There is a good range of tools and resources available, but children must ask for these. The manager has agreed to consider how they may be made more freely available and accessible to all children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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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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):

- develop and implement effective systems with which to maintain high standards of children's safety in the indoor and outdoor nursery environment
- maintain children's safety and security when they are attending the Kidzone out of school club, in particular through developing and implementing effective systems to ensure that the older 'school' children arrive safely at the setting and through the provision of age appropriate toys, equipment and resources

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):

- continue to develop daily routine activities to promote children's learning in all areas, in particular mathematical and mark making skills
- enable children to have appropriate access to all tools and resources as required, so they may extend learning and play opportunities to their full potential.

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