



Stepping Stones Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY302404
Inspection date	11 July 2005
Inspector	Maureen Croxford
Setting Address	Gossops Green Community Primary, Kidborough Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 8HW
Telephone number	01293 525449
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Registered person	Jacqueline Suzanne Tubb
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 Playschool opened in 2002 and moved to its present premises in 2005. It operates from a large classroom, set in the local primary school, in Gossops Green, Crawley. The playschool serves the local area.

There are currently 49 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 19 educationally funded 3 year-olds and 16 educationally funded 4 year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children

with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:30 and 12:00 until 14:45. There are 6 staff working with the children. Over half the staff hold early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification level 2 or 3.

The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a clean and very welcoming environment, which helps to ensure their well being and comfort. Children's health within the setting is consistently supported by staff who have an excellent understanding of the nursery's health and hygiene procedures. Children are encouraged to be fully independent in self-care skills and understand the importance of washing their hands and taking regular drinks as a way to maintain their health. They learn about the importance of activity in a healthy lifestyle as they join in free-play and well organised, challenging activities. They thoroughly enjoy physical exercise, both inside and outside, including balancing, using sit and ride toys and playing games such as tennis.

Children select their own snacks from a wide range of healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables, and learn about the need for a healthy and well balanced diet. This is reinforced through a extensive range of topics and activities, planned by staff, which ensures that they gain a sound understanding of good nutrition.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very confident and secure in the extremely well organised environment. The premises offer excellent space and have access to the necessary facilities for the very wide range of activities provided for the children who attend. Staff organise space very well and provide an excellent range of safe storage, which allows children to access their own resources easily, both inside and outside.

The provision has a wide range of safe and well-maintained furniture, equipment and toys that meet the needs of the children, including child sized tables and chairs and soft furnishings. The resources provide a well-balanced range of activities that promote children's learning in all areas. Children are able to move freely, safely and confidently between areas, yet staff are able to see them at all times.

Staff ensure that risks and hazards are minimised, through regular risks assessments. They follow the provision's well-written health and safety policies and procedures, to ensure that children thrive and learn in safety. The provision has

excellent systems in place to assure the safe arrival and collection of children, such as greeting all children and parents at the gate, a double registration system and a password system for collection of children. Children learn how to keep themselves safe in the provision, for example they recognise why they should not run in the classroom.

Staff update their knowledge of child protection issues regularly, ensuring the children are well protected and have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are enthusiastic and self-assured in the provision's warm and welcoming environment. Staff are well-qualified and have a strong understanding of child development which ensures the exciting range of activities and experiences provided are suitable for the age and stage of the children attending. As a result, children are motivated and make many good links in their learning. They use their imagination very well during role play activities, for example, when playing in the home corner which is laid out as a doctors surgery. The provider has not introduced the Birth to three matters framework into the planning to enhance the quality of experiences offered for children under three years.

Children quickly settle into their activities and are becoming competent learners as they confidently use equipment such as tape recorders, computers and books. Younger children are able to resource their own activities such as puzzles, dough, water play, sand, small world and role play.

Staff are well-qualified and have a strong understanding of child development which ensures the exciting range of activities and experiences provided are suitable for the age and stage of most of the children attending. As a result, children are motivated and make many good links in their learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals and engage in a broad range of activities and experiences covering all areas of learning. The staff have extensive knowledge of the foundation stage and have a sound understanding of curriculum planning which impacts on the learning opportunities offered. Staff plan activities which are clearly linked to the stepping-stones. They monitor children's progress, take into account what children can do and what they need to do next to plan the next stage of their learning. Staff support children with special educational needs well and adapt activities and experiences, enabling them to make good progress towards individual targets.

Children play very well together and develop strong relationships with staff and their peers. They co-operate with one another at the dough table, sharing equipment, listening to, and valuing each other's ideas. They practice early reading and writing

skills, for example through self-registration and emergent writing in role-play situations such as the hairdressers.

Children count confidently and are able to solve simple problems in everyday routines and activities, for example how many beakers are required for the number of children at the snack bar. They explore and investigate showing great excitement as they talk about butterflies that they have seen develop and grow.

Children's manipulative skills are well developed and they enjoy using a wide range of tools and materials to explore media, such as papier-mache and have access to many opportunities to use their imagination in creative activities. Children are interested in their activities and show very good levels of perseverance and concentration. They are able to make choices about their play as staff make excellent use of space. They are able to move freely between activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff plan and provide a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a very positive view of the wider world and increase the children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. Children talk confidently about different activities they have been involved in with regard to other cultures and festivals.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Staff meet their individual needs well as they follow their normal daily routine, as discussed with parents. Children show care and concern for each other and play together harmoniously. They behave very well and staff help them to understand why some behaviour is unacceptable, such as throwing sand. Children know what is expected of them, learn to value one another and show high levels of confidence and self-esteem. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

All children benefit from the very strong partnership between staff and parents. Children settle well because staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their individual routines. Parents receive very clear, well-written information and have many very good opportunities to contribute to their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff deployment and knowledge of child development is very good and staff have a clear understanding of what is expected of them on a daily basis, helping to promote positive outcomes for children. Children benefit and make good progress in their learning due to the very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum of the staff. As a result, overall the needs of all children who attend are met.

The induction programme, ongoing training and the implantation of policies and procedures contribute to children's health, safety and well-being. Children benefit from a consistent key worker system, which helps to ensure that they are secure,

safe, and develop good relationships. Some informal systems are in place to monitor teaching. Staff use information gained from the children's assessments to plan their next stage in their learning. Staff monitor children's learning across the provision which ensures that all children are sufficiently challenged.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. Most staff are appropriately qualified and the provider has ensured that all those working with the children in receipt of funding for nursery education have sufficient knowledge of the stepping stones and the curriculum guidance. Staff ensure that planning meets the children's individual needs.

Improvements since the last inspection

Staff have implemented an action plan to improve the provision for children and good progress has been made. The last Children Act inspection asked the nursery to update contents of the first aid box. A member of staff checks all first aid equipment fortnightly and replaces items as required.

The previous nursery education inspection recommended that the nursery increase opportunities for children to self-select resources to increase and develop their independence.

Because of the move of premises all resources are available and children have many opportunities to self-select. All equipment is stored in low-level storage units and children are free to choose their own equipment and resources. They are developing their independence, as they are encouraged to tidy away one activity before using another.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of Birth to three matters

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):

- further develop monitoring system of teaching and learning

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