

Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY348836
Inspection date	12 June 2008
Inspector	Sylvia Cornock
Setting Address	Stepping Stones Nursery, Main Road, Weston, Crewe, CW2 5LD
Telephone number	01270 252299
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Registered person	Stepping Stones Nursery (Weston) Limited
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 Nursery is one of two provisions run by Stepping Stones Nursery (Weston) Limited. It opened in 2007 and operates from an old school building in Weston, Crewe. A maximum of 95 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round excluding public holidays. There are a number of secure outdoor play areas around the building.

There are currently a total of 192 children on roll, of these, 44 children receive funding for early years education. The nursery currently have no children with learning difficulties or disabilities, or children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 29 staff who work directly with children. Of these, 23 hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from a local authority pedagogue.

The setting is a member of the National Day Nursery Association (NDNA), Cheshire Private Day Nurseries Association (CPDNA) and the '4children' group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's physical development is promoted well throughout the nursery provision. Children have daily access to a good range of outdoor play equipment to develop skills. For example, the older children climb and balance on the apparatus and equipment. Younger children show confidence in exploring their physical capabilities using the broad variety of both indoor and outdoor equipment provided.

Good health and hygiene procedures help to prevent infection and cross contamination. Staff have clearly established routines for cleaning surfaces, toys and equipment. The clear nappy changing routine is followed appropriately by staff. These measures help to protect children's good health. Older children are developing a good awareness of simple hygiene procedures, such as hand washing at appropriate times. They show awareness of the purpose of hand washing in removing germs.

Children are well protected due to good sickness, medication, accident and emergency procedures. A clear sickness policy helps protect children from the spread of infection. Staff are careful to ensure that medicines are appropriately administered, so that children's health is protected. Many staff hold up to date first aid qualifications, helping to meet children's needs in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children are well nourished and are developing an awareness of the importance of healthy eating. Menus are carefully devised, taking into account dietary requirements. Children's particular dietary needs and preferences are well catered for. As a result, children benefit from the provision of excellent quality menus, offering children a balanced and nutritious diet. Children learn to develop a healthy lifestyle through daily outdoor play. They are offered regular drinking water, further promoting their good health and development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery provides facilities which are very welcoming. Displays of children's work are bright and attractive, helping to develop children's sense of belonging. Children are able to move around safely in the well organised environment. Rooms are arranged well to provide different areas for play, rest and having meals. However, there are no comfortable chairs for staff who may spend a lot of time holding or feeding babies to use. Children have access to a very good range of clean, safe and well organised equipment in each room. Toys and equipment are suitable for different ages and abilities, meeting children's needs effectively. Children develop independence as they select from the easily accessible equipment.

Very good safety procedures are in place to protect children from hazards and dangers. Regular evacuation practises are undertaken with the children, this helps them understand the procedure to follow in an emergency. Staff understand their responsibilities to maintain a safe environment and complete risk assessments and daily safety checks. Babies and young children are well monitored when sleeping and placed safely in cots. This helps to ensure that children are well protected. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion with staff, for example, about the importance of not running indoors because of the danger of hurting themselves or

others. Children display an awareness of safety in the outdoor play areas as they carefully negotiate space and show consideration to others.

All staff are aware of the named nominated person responsible for child protection. They have an understanding of the procedures to be followed in the absence of the nominated person, and the telephone numbers for the local social services and police are recorded in the policy and procedure document. This enhances children's safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff establish positive relationships with children, helping them to feel settled and secure. Children benefit from a broad range of activities which promote their all-round development. Skilful intervention from staff encourages children to think and make connections. Children learn to explore and investigate using their senses as they feel the textures of different materials and listen to the different sounds they can make with musical instruments. They enjoy being creative and experimenting with writing and mark making. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to inform their planning and practice; this has a positive effect on the quality of children's learning. Babies and children are settled and happy as they enjoy the many varied topics and activities provided. They share and take turns as they develop their own play both indoors and outside. Their creative and artistic work is displayed around the rooms, giving them a sense of belonging. Staff engage and interact well with the children, promoting children's development and interests.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals, which is reflected in the wide range of varied and interesting activities planned. As a result, children make very good progress.

Staff have a good awareness of children's capabilities and in their day to day teaching they build on this to develop learning well. The system for recording observations of children's learning is used consistently and effectively in the planning to reflect and build on what individual children know. All children are included in all activities and are given a good level of attention. As a result, their learning is developed well. The well planned routines of the day help meet the needs of all children present, giving them time and opportunities to instigate their own play and learning and to enjoy some adult directed activities.

Children are settled and happy due to the calm, positive interaction from staff. They are interested and involved in the activities provided and respond well as staff question them effectively to develop learning. Children are secure in the routines of the nursery and cooperate well together as they take turns and share as they enjoy completing jigsaws in a learning environment. They are becoming confident to talk and express ideas at news sharing time. Children show the ability to communicate meaning through mark making as they happily 'write' in various role play activities. They enjoy stories read to them, however, the quantity of easily accessible books is limited and not presented well to invite children to freely and independently select books for themselves.

Children learn to count and are competent in counting the number of children present. Some are confident as they count numbers in French. They use their mathematical knowledge to solve simple problems, such as which matching two numbers, when using the computer. They

show excellent skill as they manipulate the mouse and use other electronic equipment to support their learning. Their physical skills are developed well through regular use of an excellent range of outdoor and indoor equipment. Many children look forward to and enjoy the planned weekly sessions of 'stretch and grow' and 'soca tots' through extra visitors to the group. They play imaginatively in the role play area and express themselves using a variety of media and musical instruments. They are proud to show their creative pictures and art work, which are displayed around the room, enabling them to revisit their contribution.

Children enjoy gardening and learning about living things, they water their seeds and plants and watch them grow. They have many varied opportunities to celebrate cultural festivals and learn about diversity through well planned activities. Children learn about differences and about people who help us as they welcome visitors into the setting, such as, a dentist, police and the Librarian who reads them stories and helps them select books. Children bring in items for the celebration of the harvest festival and deliver their goods to the local church to be distributed amongst others in the community. This gives children an understanding of sharing and caring for others.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Babies, toddlers and older children behave exceptionally well as staff give them plenty of praise and support for their efforts and achievements. Staff act as good role models, showing respect and consideration for children and each other. Staff meet individual needs well with regard to behaviour management, offering a clear and consistent approach which takes into account children's stages of development. Children respond well and as a result show a growing awareness of right and wrong.

All children are included in the activities provided and individual needs are well met. This helps to develop children's confidence, self-esteem and to promote their all-round development. Children gain awareness of their local environment and the diversity of the wider world through a very good selection of resources and activities that promote positive images and cultural differences. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the very good partnership with parents and carers. A very good settling in policy helps children to be reassured and feel that they belong. Parents receive a good level of information about the nursery and its provision. The entrance area and foyer are used well to provide information about day to day events and how children's learning is developed. Photographs of children's involvement in various exciting activities help parents to see how their child spends their day. Parents are encouraged to share information about their child when they join the nursery, and continue to share information through regular informal talks with staff. Staff complete daily sheets of their child's day for the younger children, which are given to parents. Children enjoy other activities brought into the setting by external visitors, they share their experiences with their parents and carers by taking home written information on their involvement and progress. This effective communication between parents and staff helps to promote children's welfare, safety and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager and staff work well together to ensure that children are provided with good quality education. The manager

ensures that there are good systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the educational provision. Staff promote the nursery's aims in relation to behaviour, caring and sharing, and respect for all. This ethos is reflected in all areas of the nursery and is visibly promoted by staff. This means that children are cared for in a positive and supportive environment, which effectively promotes their social and moral development. The nursery's strong commitment to improvement is reflected in the programme for staff training and the number of measures planned to further raise the quality of provision. This commitment helps to maintain and improve the quality of care and learning for children.

A high percentage of staff are well qualified and have relevant experience. This has a positive effect on children's learning and welfare. Staffing levels are organised to ensure that they are within the required ratios at all times and that children have a good level of attention and support.

Children are safeguarded as the provider makes rigorous checks to ensure staff suitability before they are employed. Good, well written policies and procedures are effectively in place and contribute to positive outcomes for children. Space and resources are organised well to promote children's safety, care and learning.

Children's daily attendance is recorded in each individual room, where parents are requested to sign their children in and out of the premises. However, in some instances this does not happen and this means that the record of children's attendance is not accurate at all times.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

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.

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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):

- ensure the system for recording children's daily attendance is accurate at all times
- provide comfortable chairs for staff who may spend a lot of time holding and feeding babies.

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):

- reorganise the book area and increase the selection of good quality books to invite children's independent use and enjoyment.

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