



# Stone Cross Independent Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109525
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 December 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Alison Weaver
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<b>Registered person</b>	Stone Cross Independent 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?

Stone Cross Independent Pre-School opened in 1999. It operates from a self contained unit attached to a primary school in a residential area of Stone Cross close to local shops. The unit consists of a large play room, toilets, and kitchen area. A maximum of 22 children may attend at any one time. The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45, and from 12:30 until 15:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 51 children from 3 to under 5 years on roll. All of these children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children with special educational needs, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs four childcare staff; three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a recognised qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through the effective everyday routines. The children can easily access the toilets and hand basins, which promotes their independence. The children manage well even though the actual operation of the taps makes it more difficult for them to learn to wash their hands properly. The procedures carried out by staff help prevent the spread of infection. Children receive good care if they become ill or have an accident as staff respond appropriately.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating through some planned topics such as 'Keeping Healthy'. This understanding is reinforced by the provision of generally healthy snacks. Drinks provided by the group are healthy but staff fail to restrict what children can bring from home. This results in some children having drinks which are less good for them.

Staff provide a varied range of activities, which effectively promote children's physical development. Children enjoy regular opportunities where they gain and develop their physical skills such as running, and playing with wheeled toys. They show good co-ordination, moving confidently and safely. Their fine motor skills develop well as they use a variety of tools and equipment.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a safe and generally well-organised environment. They move around and play safely in the group. The building is kept secure and the necessary safety precautions are taken. The outdoor area is checked daily to ensure that it is safe for children to use. Staff regularly assess risks and supervise the children well. They regularly practise fire evacuation together so that children learn what to do in an emergency.

Children enjoy playing with a range of toys and equipment that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff explain to children how to use the equipment safely so they do not hurt others. All resources are stored safely with some opportunities for children to access the storage themselves.

The provision has all the required procedures and documents in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. For example, all staff have a good knowledge of signs of child abuse and know how to act if they have a concern.

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

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle quickly into the routine. They put their coats onto named pegs. This gives them a sense of belonging. Staff create a welcoming environment for adults and children. There are interesting posters, informative displays and a selection of children's work. This shows that staff value children's contributions and efforts.

Children are confident and happily approach adults for support. Children enjoy good relationships with staff and peers.

#### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan a good range of first hand experiences that help children progress in all areas of learning. Good observations identify children's achievements but this does not clearly inform the planning. There is no clear differentiation to ensure all children are suitably challenged.

Children learn to appreciate each other's efforts. For example, during circle time children enjoy showing their homework to the group. The other children clap to show how they appreciate the pictures drawn at home. This makes children feel good and motivates them to do more work at home. Children understand the need to share toys and resources and staff encourage children to work together.

Children enjoy relaxing in the book area and spend time looking at books with friends. Stories captivate children as staff read with expression. The print rich environment helps children understand that written language carries meaning. Children recognise their names and enjoy writing their names inside greetings cards. During circle time children use good vocabulary, such as 'drizzling' and 'sleeting', when describing the weather. Children speak confidently in small and large groups. Staff ask open ended questions which encourages children to express their thoughts and ideas.

Children count confidently by rote and many children recognise numbers and know how to write double figures. Well planned activities help children learn about shapes. For example, children make collages of people using squares, circles and oblongs. Staff encourage children's understanding of calculation by asking questions such as 'How many more?' and 'How many altogether?'.

Children enjoy visits to the park, sheep centre and zoo. This develops an understanding of the world around them. They learn about people in the community who can help them. Visitors such as the lollipop person make children aware of how to cross the road safely. Children collect leaves to create collages and have many opportunities to design and make models. Children have regular access to a

computer and demonstrate good mouse control. Children learn about different cultures through dressing up and tasting food such as croissants, bagels and feta cheese. Children make lanterns and look at Chinese writing while learning about Chinese New Year.

Children enjoy a variety of art and craft activities. Some are often adult led which prevents children from expressing themselves creatively. Children have access to a variety of materials such as cotton wool, crepe paper and glitter. They enjoy singing traditional songs and nursery rhymes and move enthusiastically while singing. Children play imaginatively with small world toys and use these to act out a variety of well known scenarios.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff respect and value children as individuals and overall their needs are met. Children from a variety of backgrounds are welcome in the setting however, staff do not always take sufficient steps to include their home language and backgrounds in the setting. This means that there are some missed opportunities to show these children that their home lives are valued and respected. Staff ensure that children have access to many resources that represent the wider community although the range that shows disability is not as extensive. These resources and planned topics help children develop a positive attitude to others. Children also learn about being responsible about waste through the recycling projects.

Children behave well and respond positively to staff. They begin to understand acceptable behaviour through some effective staff interaction. Staff are good role models, helping children learn how to share and show concern for others. Children benefit from the praise and encouragement from staff. The setting has satisfactory arrangements in place to care for children with special educational needs although none currently attend. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from effective parent involvement in their learning and development. Parents receive a very informative leaflet about how to support their child's learning at home. They are also encouraged to help their child complete an activity of the child's choice in the 'homework books'. General information on the Foundation Stage, newsletters, parents' consultations, verbal feedback and notice boards enable staff and parents work closely together to help children make progress. The 'What's On Today' notices help keep parents informed about the planned activities and what their child is learning. Parents have the opportunity to contribute to children's ongoing records and assessments.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff generally organise space well to ensure children gain from the activities. Staff deployment is effective and ensures children are supervised appropriately. There is

an effective key worker system in place. Children benefit from being cared for by a high level of suitable, experienced, and qualified staff.

Overall, the recruitment procedure is good and the induction is satisfactory. Recently there have been several changes in the staff and management of the setting. They have failed to ensure that the manager completed the relevant checks as soon as she was promoted to the role. This potentially puts children at risk although in this instance the staff member was cleared to work in this group some years ago. Due to the changes, not all adults involved in the managing of the setting are secure in their roles and responsibilities. There is a lack of good communication in the management which results in important information, particularly relating to the National Standards, not being passed on to the relevant persons to help develop them in their differing roles.

Policies and procedures are in place but some are very general so do not always reflect current practices in the setting. The complaints policy is very out of date and does not have the correct procedure outlined. This lack of specific detail in some written policies is less effective at supporting staff and committee in the running of the setting. All of the legally required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being, is in place.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager leads the team well so they can provide a stimulating and well-balanced curriculum. The staff are committed to continuous improvement and development. The regular appraisals support staff in their roles and help them develop as individuals. Ongoing training is encouraged to increase their knowledge. Some monitoring and evaluating of the educational provision is carried out to ensure that children benefit from attending the setting. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection the group has improved the resources available to children. There is now a range of resources that show positive images of race, culture, and religion but there are only a few that show disability. Staff are extending their knowledge of child protection as they are all attending a course in the next few weeks.

Parents have opportunities to contribute to children's ongoing assessments. This helps support the children and meet their needs. Some evaluation of activities is carried out but these are not always fully used to assess children's progress. More focus is now placed on developing children's gross motor skills.

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

There are no complaints to report since the last inspection. 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):

- make sure that managers complete the relevant checks promptly to ensure they are suitable to work with children
- improve the communication to ensure that the staff and committee are secure in their roles and are kept up to date with current childcare issues, with particular regard to the National Standards
- update the policies to ensure they reflect the current practices of the group, particularly the complaints policy.

#### 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):

- use the assessments of children's achievements to inform the planning and include differentiation to ensure all children are appropriately challenged
- increase opportunities for children to express themselves creatively through their art and craft work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)