



Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY298689
Inspection date	07 December 2005
Inspector	Pamela Patricia Paisley
Setting Address	17 Whitehall Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 6AF
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Registered person	Quinary Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stepping Stones Day Nursery opened in 2004. It operates currently from 2 rooms on the ground floor in a converted house. A self contained baby unit at the rear of the outdoor play area will now be used, to accommodate children under 2 years. It is situated in a residential area of Thornton Heath. A maximum of 15 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 49 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed

outdoor play area.

There are currently 10 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 1 child receives funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are 5 members of staff, 4 of the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the importance of good hygiene practices through everyday routines. They know, for example, why they need to wash their hands before lunch and after going to the toilet. Children's awareness of healthy living is promoted because of staff's secure knowledge of the setting's policies and arrangements for health and hygiene.

Through adequate staff support, children gain a clear understanding of hygiene and become increasingly independent in their personal care. They are protected from cross-contamination because staff have a good understanding of the nursery's health and hygiene procedures, and follow them effectively. For instance, staff use gloves when they change nappies and they clean equipment thoroughly. Staff are proactive in recording and sharing information with parents about any accidents the children have or medicine they need, so that children's health needs are sufficiently met.

Children help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the day and enjoy fresh fruit and healthy sandwiches at tea time. Meals are well balanced and children's individual and cultural needs are taken into account. All children enjoy the opportunity to take part in outdoor play on a daily basis, which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy riding bikes and sit and ride toys. They move with control and co-ordination as they throw and catch balls. However children do not have access to climbing and balancing apparatus outdoors. This limits opportunities to develop their large motor skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. Risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff monitor safety arrangements regularly and take steps to reduce hazards. For instance, they complete risk assessments of the playrooms and outdoor area and children take part in regular fire practises. They play with good quality toys and play materials appropriate to their age and stage of development. Resources are well organised which means children can move around safely and freely to independently access them from tables and storage units at their height.

Children are adequately supervised. Staff explain safe practices, such as the need to pick up toys dropped on the floor, so that other children do not trip and hurt themselves. This helps children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Suitable systems are in place for managing access to the provision for the safe collection of children and when visitors are on the premises. Although, times children arrive and depart are not recorded. Children are protected because staff have a working knowledge of child protection issues. They are aware of what they should do if they have any concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled and enjoy coming to the nursery. They benefit from stable relationships with the consistent staff members who care for them. This fosters their emotional wellbeing and helps them to achieve. Toddlers receive lots of attention and cuddles, which help them settle quickly.

Staff make generally good use of the 'Birth to Three' matters framework to plan activities that takes young children's individual needs into account. Children under three are helped to make use of their senses. They enjoy the textures of materials, colours and sounds, which they explore with interest. They show pleasure when listening to songs and rhymes, moving their arms and bodies back and forward along with the actions, laughing and making sounds. Toddlers have regular opportunities to experiment with materials, such as sand, play dough and paints, although they have limited access to water play indoors. Children develop early communication skills as staff respond to their gestures and sounds, talk to them about what they are doing, ask questions and show an interest in their responses.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. They are offered a range of activities and experiences that cover the areas of learning. Children enjoy taking part in themed activities which staff present well, with positive learning intentions. However, activities are very often adult led, which limits opportunities for children to develop creativity. Individual observations are carried out to assess children's progress, however they are not consistently used effectively to plan the next steps of children's learning. This means that resources and activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for the more able and older children.

Children have developed positive relationships with staff and their peers. They come into the nursery confidently, linking up with their friends to play and settle quickly into their chosen activity, keen to tell staff about experiences outside the nursery. Children are confident when expressing themselves. They are beginning to link sounds to letters and recognise their own name in print. Older children are able to form recognisable letters but mark making is not included in all areas of play. Children enjoy listening to and responding to stories told by staff and select and use books and story tapes independently from a wide section.

Children recognise and use numbers in familiar contexts. They confidently count to ten and beyond and are developing concepts of full, empty, adding and matching. Children use language to recall past events and staff encourage them to learn about the natural world, for example, through planting and growing flower seeds. Although, there are limited opportunities to explore living things. Children have daily access to paint and malleable materials such as play dough and corn flour. They are beginning to understand the use of information and technology through using the computer and enjoy experimenting with programmable toys, which supports their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have good opportunities to learn about themselves and others in the wider community, through celebrating festivals and looking at different cultures and customs. Good access to play resources such as displays, books, dressing up clothes and small world people that reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability means children develop a positive attitude to others.

All children are valued as individuals and their needs are effectively met through gathering information from parents, when they first start the nursery. This positive approach means children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The setting has effective arrangements for caring for children with special needs to ensure all children take part at a level appropriate to their needs. Staff set clear and consistent boundaries, they talk to children about treating others with respect which helps children to take responsibility for their actions and helps them understand the effects of their behaviour on others.

Good partnership with parents contributes to children's well being in the nursery. Parents receive good information about 'Birth to Three' matters and the Foundation Stage. Staff are friendly and approachable, they ensure that all parents know how their child is progressing and developing, which enhances their development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel at home in a well organised provision. All children are supported by staff who know them well, helping them to feel secure and confident. Staff work well as a team and have a sound knowledge of child development. There are clear aims for the provision and staff are made aware of these during meetings, but no formal appraisals are carried out to identify individual staff training needs.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Children benefit because staff are suitably qualified. They are well supported by management and plan the curriculum together discussing how activities went during weekly meetings. However, the role of evaluating practice and children's achievements has yet fully developed. Systems are not robust enough to take into account where learning opportunities are missed.

Procedures to monitor the curriculum do not ensure all areas are sufficiently covered. As a result, some aspects of children's development are not fully promoted and insufficient challenges are provided for some children.

Most policies and procedures are in place which contributes to children's health and welfare, although registration systems do not show times children arrive and depart. Children's records are openly shared with parents and their contributions valued. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not Applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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 satisfactory.

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 an accurate record is kept of children's attendance, including arrival and departure times

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):

- develop staff's understanding of the use of assessments to inform planning for the next steps of children's learning, in order to build on what children already

know and can do and offer sufficient challenge

- improve systems for monitoring and evaluating the nursery education provision and provide individual staff supervision to assess and support professional development in order to improve the quality of teaching
- improve the range of climbing and balancing apparatus to develop children's large motor skills. Ensure they have access to water and resources so they can explore living things, experience mark making in all areas of play and have opportunities to initiate their own activities

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