



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY282708

DfES Number: 516474

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 05/10/2004
Inspector Name Jan Leo

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones Pre-School
Setting Address North Hinksey C of E School
North Hinksey Lane
Oxford
Oxfordshire
OX2 0LZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Management Committee

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name The Management Committee
Address Stepping Stones Pre-school
Elms Road
Oxford
Oxfordshire
OX2 9JZ

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-school was originally registered in 1972 and it registered at its present setting in 2004. It operates from a modular building in the grounds of North Hinksey Church of England School and children join with the school's reception class at certain times of the day.

The Pre-School is also registered to operate a breakfast and after school club during term time and an out of school play scheme in the holidays.

Sessions are from 07.30 to 08.45 for the breakfast club, 15.15 to 18.00 for the after school club, 07.30 to 18.00 for the out of school holiday play scheme and 09.00 to 15.00 for the pre-school. Children may attend for one or more sessions at the discretion of the staff and committee.

There are currently 31 children on the pre-school roll of whom 20 are in receipt of government nursery education funding. This includes 16 three year olds and the remainder of children are four years old.

Seven staff work with the children on a full or part time basis and four have a relevant early years qualification to level two or above. The group receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Pre-School provides high quality nursery education overall which enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Personal, social and emotional, and mathematical development are particularly good.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff form strong bonds with children to ensure they are well settled and confident. They set clear boundaries to promote good behaviour and children are sociable and cooperative. Staff deploy themselves well to support children as necessary, without inhibiting their individuality. They make activities interesting, encourage children to participate, and children join in eagerly. Learning is linked across the curriculum and developed through meaningful, practical tasks, and resources are used well. Children's progress is monitored closely and observations are used to plan for children's next steps. All staff are involved in planning and the programme is varied and interesting, but some areas are not covered evenly to give all children the same opportunities.

The leadership and management are very good. The staff and committee work closely together to develop suitable operating procedures and monitor their effectiveness. All are dedicated to improvement and have a sound understanding of the link between children's welfare and their ability to learn. Senior staff take on responsibility for specific areas of work, and ongoing training is encouraged.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents and carers receive good quality information about the setting and the curriculum. They are encouraged to visit with their children before they start. Parents learn about their children's progress through informal discussion with staff and regular meetings with key workers. They have opportunities to be involved in their children's learning by joining the helper rota, and information about topics is displayed to enable learning to continue at home.

What is being done well?

- Children are sociable, confident and cooperative. Most are comfortable and relaxed with all adults and their peers. They eagerly participate in the activities and some become completely engrossed when working alone on their chosen tasks. Children move from one group of friends to another, sharing resources and ideas, protesting over injustice, and striving to please. They behave very well.
- Mathematics is developed continually throughout the day. Children are given opportunities to count, calculate, identify numbers, and use mathematical language and concepts through a range of meaningful practical tasks. Some count accurately beyond 25, most recognise some numerals. All show

sustained interest in constructing objects to match a picture or from their own designs.

- Staff work well as a team. They all use their expertise and interests to contribute to planning, some take on special responsibilities, all observe, monitor, and evaluate the programme and children's progress. They support each other ensuring everyone knows what is expected of them, and effectively deploying themselves where necessary to enable children to learn at an appropriate rate.
- Parents and carers are made to feel welcome. They are given opportunities to visit before children start in order to share information and smooth the settling in period. They receive regular verbal updates about their children's progress and can help on a rota to be involved in their children's learning.
- Management have a sound understanding of their responsibilities. A well developed operational plan is in practice, and kept under review, to ensure the provision meets the needs of the children. Staff and management are dedicated to improvement and training is encouraged.

What needs to be improved?

- consistency of planning to ensure all children have the same opportunities to use the computer and participate in planned music activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. There were no significant weaknesses identified but the group was asked to consider ways to involve the children in planning, in choosing the equipment, and in taking a more active role in register and snack time.

The staff have produced an album containing photographs of activities for each area of learning. Children can select activities and resources from this if they need help in making a decision. Any time a planned activity is not popular, or children have finished with it, they can change it for one of their own choosing. Many of the resources and equipment are stored at low level for children to access without help but lack of space requires some to be stored out of reach.

The staff are continuing to monitor snack time and register time to ensure practice is relevant. Various methods of involvement have been tried and currently children actively take part in the preparation of fruit, find their name before sitting down, count how many drinks are needed, choose and pour their own drinks, and a monitor hands the snack round to the rest of the table.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children eagerly participate in activities and confidently try everything on offer. Most are relaxed with all adults and their peers and they play with different groups of friends. Some become engrossed when working alone, and all concentrate for extended periods on their chosen tasks. They are beginning to understand about fairness and willingly share resources or negotiate turns. All are becoming increasingly independent, selecting equipment, preparing snacks, and changing clothes.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children speak clearly, listen well to instructions, and follow direction to clear away and complete simple tasks. They are encouraged to think for themselves and reason things through well. They can predict what might happen and use past experience to develop play. Children know the words to favourite stories and use appropriate gestures to tell a tale. They use controlled movements to write freely, creating 'stories' which they read aloud to friends.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy using numbers and do so competently, some counting accurately beyond 25. They willingly engage in mathematical tasks and enjoy being the monitor who calculates how many people are sitting at the table. Some are beginning to recognise numbers without help. Children use mathematical language constantly while playing and understand about shape, size, and quantity. They skilfully build three-dimensional objects from their own ideas and some successfully copy designs from pictures.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are eager to explore their local community and the natural world and they share points of interest with others. They construct with a purpose in mind, adapting their ideas to take advantage of unexpected opportunities, creating wild branches from the chair legs with magnetic links. Children are developing a sense of time and place and follow the routine closely. They know what is to follow, know where resources live and talk about their home life.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move well in a number of ways and they pedal, scoot, climb, balance and jump with confidence. They show an awareness of personal space and automatically find an alternative route if someone is blocking their way. Children skilfully use knives to shape models, scrape dough from surfaces and chop fruit for snack. They develop fine motor skills by fixing visors to minute helmets on the small Lego, and control all movements well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children explore colour, texture and shape on a daily basis using a variety of media, squeezing corn flour and food colouring to see what happens, and shaking trays of birdseed to watch mini beasts disappear. Children sing happily to themselves as they play, remembering a few words of favourite songs. They react appropriately to changes in tempo or voice tone, jumping up and down excitedly when tension rises. Children handle resources to develop their senses and have freedom to be creative.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- the consistency of planning, to ensure all children have the same opportunities to experience all aspects of the curriculum.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.