



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 305344

DfES Number: 520838

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	25/03/2004
Inspector Name	Sylvia Cornock

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Stepping Stones Pre-School
Setting Address	Melbourne Road Blacon Chester Cheshire CH1 5JG

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Stepping Stones Pre-School 1070081
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Stepping Stones Pre-School
Address	J H Godwin CP School Melbourne Road, Blacon Chester Cheshire CH1 5JG

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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 opened in their present premises in 1992. It operates in two classrooms within J.H. Godwin Primary School, which is situated in a residential area close to the centre of Chester. The pre-school mainly serves the local community. It has a management committee of parents.

There are currently 48 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 29 funded three year olds and seven funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently has no children with special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.30. and 12.30. to 15.00.

Five full time staff work with the children of whom four hold a relevant qualification in Childcare and Education. All staff are first aid trained.

The group are a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and are supported by a teacher from Sure Start.

### How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Pre-school provides good quality care for children.

Staff qualifications are above the required fifty percent. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to further training to enhance existing good practice. Staff/child ratios are good, which enables children to receive appropriate support and encouragement during each session. The environment offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere where children feel valued. Space is used well, with suitable equipment and furniture provided. All documentation is in place and well kept, but some minor amendments are required.

There are well managed, clear routines that help children feel secure. Staff complete

regular risk assessments on the building and equipment. Staff emphasises safety at all times and children have a good awareness of potential dangers. Children's individual dietary needs are met well. Aspects of hygiene practices are good throughout the pre-school. Children have equal access to all activities. There is a clear child protection policy for staff and parents.

The pre-school plans a wide variety of interesting and exciting activities both indoors and outside for all children. The large range of good quality equipment ensures children have many opportunities to develop, learn and to progress to their full potential. Staff know the children well. They encourage them by talking and playing imaginatively, which help children look forward to their day. Staff/child interaction is effective. As a result the children have 'fun' and their behaviour is good.

There are very good relationships with parents. The business-like approach and well documented policies ensure continuity of care for their children. They share information about the children through daily discussion. Parents make positive comments about the care provided.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

There were two actions raised at the last inspection, these related to the recording of accidents and incidents.

The group have addressed both issues by introducing a system which records all relevant information, ensuring children's well being at all times.

#### **What is being done well?**

- The high staff ratios and good qualification levels mean that children's individual needs are being thoroughly assessed and well met during sessions.
- The staff deployment rotas and detailed planning mean that staff are well prepared and sessions run smoothly, with children understanding what is on offer for them to do.
- The environment offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere, with security systems in place to enhance children's overall safety.
- The encouragement and praising of children leads to good behaviour, good personal hygiene, table manners and kindness.
- The toys and equipment are varied, accessible, stimulating and well set out, so that children are interested and enjoy their play. They are supported in their language, mathematical thinking, imagination and creativity.
- The snacks and drinks are healthy and nutritious. Any special dietary requirements are taken into account.

<b>What needs to be improved?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● devise a system for recording visitors to the pre-school</li><li>● ensure all relevant documentation is kept for two years.</li></ul>



<b>Outcome of the inspection</b>
Good

<b>CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION</b>
<i>All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.</i>
<i>As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.</i>

<b>WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?</b>
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<b>The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection</b>	
Std	Recommendation
2	ensure there is a system for recording visitors to the pre-school.

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

### **How effective is the nursery education?**

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. They are happy and confident within the setting and demonstrate a high level of involvement and enjoyment in activities provided.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage. There is a planned programme of activities and experiences across all six areas of learning. Organisation of staff and resources enables all children to make very good progress. Children's behaviour is well managed. Observations and assessments are used to record children's achievements and progress. These are used as a tool to identify the next steps of learning. Staff continually evaluate the assessment system.

The quality of leadership and management is very good. The committee liaises closely with staff to ensure its aims are carried out. There are regular staff and committee meetings, these clearly identifies roles and responsibilities. The training and development plans for staff are discussed and staff attend many courses. Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of individual activities are recorded. All staff work hard to improve any areas of weakness identified.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents receive comprehensive information about the setting, including the educational programme. They are kept well informed about the activities children do, and the areas of learning that these cover, on a daily basis. They share information daily. Discussions about their child's progress contributes to their record. However this is an area which could be further developed.

### **What is being done well?**

- Staff use their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan activities to meet children's individual needs. They provide an effective curriculum covering all areas of learning. They support, encourage and challenge children's thinking and provide a stimulating environment, where children are clearly valued and included.
- The children communicate well with each other and staff. They are confident, interested and motivated to learn. They demonstrate a high level of concentration and involvement in activities.
- There is a good balance of free play and adult initiated activity within the setting. Children are able to choose from a wide range of play materials which are easily accessible to them. They have the freedom of movement to alternate from one activity base to another.

- Staff give lots of praise and encouragement towards individual children which boost self confidence and esteem.
- Effective systems in place for monitoring children's achievements. Staff use their observations for planning future activities based on the individual learning needs of the children.
- Staff attend training courses, focussing on different areas of the curriculum. Staff apply this knowledge and expertise to practice.
- Programme plans are drawn up well in advance and clearly understood by all staff and assistants.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the system to ensure all parents are kept informed about their child's achievements and progress.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The pre-school has made very good progress towards implementing the three areas for improvement made at their last inspection.

The planning has been revised to ensure all areas of learning are included. This includes a wide variety of opportunities and experiences for children to investigate and freely express themselves in their art work, music and dance. This has improved children's confidence to display their independence skills.

The introduction of a starting nursery questionnaire for parents to complete helps staff in the assessment procedure for individual children. These details are used within the step by step profiles as a record of children's progress and learning.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are happy, confident and secure within the setting. They develop confidence, independence and are self-reliant as they select their own activities and put things away. Children demonstrate a high level of involvement in activities. They form good relationships with adults and children. They take turns and share as part of a group. Children's behaviour is very good. They are kind and considerate to each other and treat each other with respect.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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All children communicate well with each other and staff, using language with increasing confidence and developing skill. They are confident when speaking in groups. Dialogue in role play is particularly imaginative, for example when tidying the shop. Children are learning to recognise their names. They can match sounds to letters and letters to form words. Children enjoy stories and participating in action rhymes. They freely select books and have many opportunities to use their writing skills.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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The children have many opportunities to use their counting skills. They count to 10, with more able children counting to 20 and beyond. They count and solve mathematical problems well in planned practical activities. They have a good understanding of addition and subtraction as they prepare the tables for snack time. Children recognise shape. They use language well to describe, size, shape and quantity when completing drawings, pictures and singing rhymes.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children learn about the environment through observing the immediate surroundings around them. They examine and explore a wide range of objects, materials and living things by using their senses. They look at similarities, differences, pattern and change. They record their findings. They are developing an awareness of the wider world as they celebrate festivals and special events. They have access to computers where they show confidence and use them well.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move around the environment with confidence and good control. They show an awareness of space, themselves and others. They have many opportunities to develop strength and balance through using climbing apparatus and wheeled toys. They understand the importance of keeping healthy through healthy eating and discussion about their bodies. They handle small tools such as writing implements, scissors, brushes and glue spreaders with good control.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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The children enjoy exploring colour in imaginative ways through art and craft activities. They use many different textures and materials to create pictures, such as the making of Easter cards using feathers. They express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings by using a widening range of tools. They sing songs with enjoyment. They respond to what they see, taste, touch and feel with enthusiasm. They use small equipment well, fitting building and construction kits with dexterity.

**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, but a point for consideration:
- further develop the system for sharing children's progress and achievements with parents.

*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.*

## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON**

*Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.*

### **STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION**

*The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.*

### **STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY**

*The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.*

### **STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.*

### **STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT**

*Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.*

### **STANDARD 6 - SAFETY**

*The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.*

### **STANDARD 7 - HEALTH**

*The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.*

### **STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK**

*Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.*

### **STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.*

### **STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)**

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is*

*proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.*

#### **STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR**

*Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.*

#### **STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

*The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.*

#### **STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION**

*The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.*

#### **STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION**

*Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.*