



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 251670

DfES Number: 582469

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 27/01/2004  
Inspector Name Emma Louise Bright

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name Stepping Stones Pre-school  
Setting Address The Rear of Exning County Primary School  
Oxford Street, Exning  
Newmarket  
Suffolk  
CB8 7EW

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Stepping Stones Pre-School 1028589

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Pre-School  
Address The Rear Of Exning County Primary School  
Oxford Street, Exning  
Newmarket  
Suffolk  
CB8 7EW

## **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**

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Stepping Stones Pre-School is good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is very good. All staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn through meaningful, practical activities. They plan and provide an excellent range of activities and experiences for children to explore. A thorough assessment system is in place to ensure that each child's learning needs are identified and met. The staff team are enthusiastic; they ensure the environment and resources are well-organised to encourage and stimulate children's interest. Staff manage children's behaviour well and they present themselves as good role models; children respond to their consistent and positive behaviour management. There is an excellent system in place to support children with special educational needs.

Leadership and management is very good. The manager is a strong leader and committed to providing a high quality learning environment, and to improving the provision. Professional development is given high priority and regular meetings enable the staff to share ideas, evaluate and develop their practice as a group. The deployment of staff is good and they are clear about their roles and responsibilities; this ensures the smooth running of the setting.

The partnership with parents is very good. Staff have good relationships with parents; they ensure that parents have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress with them. Parents receive excellent information about the setting, its provision and aims for children. Regular notices and newsletters keep them informed about the curriculum and the pre-school's daily activities. Parents are encouraged to take part in their child's learning through a variety of opportunities and are welcomed into the group to share their traditions or special interests with the children.

### What is being done well?

- Children's creative development is nurtured very well. They have excellent opportunities to explore colour, texture and form; this is evident in their highly individual artwork.
- Children are confident, independent learners, approaching planned and self-chosen activities with enthusiasm. They share resources and negotiate with each other and demonstrate a sense of pride in their achievements.
- Children's letter recognition and their pre-reading skills are developing very well. They are able to recognise their own names and are interested in how letters and words are formed.
- The staff form very good relationships with the children and their families. They show a genuine interest in what children say and do, treating their

comments and opinions with respect. Adults provide good role models, showing children how to be respectful and caring towards one another.

- Planning is very good. It is based on a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and makes clear what children should be learning from each activity; this enables staff to offer good support for children according to their age and ability.

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

- further opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's assessment records.

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

The pre-school has made very good progress since the last inspection. Greater opportunities are now provided for children to use technology as a support to their learning. Resources are readily available throughout the curriculum. Children are now encouraged to practise mark-making on their individual work and have a range of opportunities to practise further, for example, in role-play and other daily activities.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are highly confident, self-reliant and are encouraged to be independent. They are enthusiastic in their self-chosen activities, persevering in their tasks and display high levels of involvement. Children form good relationships with each other and staff. They express their needs and feelings appropriately and are developing a good awareness of the needs of others. Children have a positive approach to new experiences and enjoy exploring their environment.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children have excellent opportunities to practise mark-making, in planned activities and role-play situations. Their fine motor and early writing skills are developing very well and some children can write their own name. Children are confident communicators, initiating conversations with adults and each other. They show a great interest in books, following the text and using books correctly. Children are able to recall past events and are animated in the re-telling of their stories.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use numbers and counting in their play and in planned activities. They recognise written numerals and have good opportunities to match numbers, such as parking their numbered 'vehicles' in the correct parking bay. Children have a good understanding of shapes and know whether they are big or small. Children are beginning to learn about weight and quantity through activities, such as comparing the weight of different objects and estimating the number of balls.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have good opportunities to explore their environment. They go for local walks, meet familiar people and learn about the jobs they do. Children use the computer competently and enjoy using the range of programmes on offer. Children talk about their families and home with understanding. They learn about each others cultures through practical activities, such as preparing vegetables for harvest festival, making a thank you tree for Thanksgiving and practise eating noodles with chopsticks.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move freely with pleasure and confidence during outdoor play, chasing bubbles and throwing balls through hoops. They demonstrate good co-ordination and an awareness of space. Children are learning to handle and manipulate small tools, large construction and malleable materials with increasing control. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about keeping healthy, such as studying food that is good for you, exercising to music and practising Tai Chi.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have lots of excellent opportunities to create their own individual artwork and are clearly encouraged to express their imagination through a range of media and materials. They explore shape, form and design, selecting their own resources, to create collages and models from 'junk'. Children enjoy listening and dancing to music, and explore sound and rhythm through musical instruments. They make very good use of the role-play area and enjoy re-enacting scenarios and familiar stories.

**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 the following:
- continue to develop the system of assessment to provide further opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's assessment records.

*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.*