



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 511673

DfES Number: 514790

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	16/03/2004
Inspector Name	Marilyn Joy

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Stepping Stones Preschool
Setting Address	36 Shaftesbury Street Fordingbridge Hampshire SP6 1JF

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL COMMITTEE
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Address	36 Shaftesbury Street Fordingbridge Hampshire SP6 1JF

## 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 1997. It is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and operates from the community centre in the town. It uses two rooms for the pre-school sessions and a separate room for the lunch club. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 44 children on roll. There are 13 funded three-year-olds and 11 funded four-year-olds. There are 2 children who have special educational needs and 2 who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school opens five days a week during term times from 09:15 to 15:30.

There are seven staff working with the children. There are three staff who have early years qualifications. The group is accredited with the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

### How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Pre-school provides good quality care for children. The pre-school provides a warm and friendly environment where parents and children feel confident and secure. Space is planned to provide a variety of activities to support children's learning in all areas. A broad range of indoor and outdoor resources are available to stimulate children's interest. Most documentation is accurately maintained.

Staff have a good awareness of health and safety issues and maintain a safe environment for children. Regular risk assessments are carried out and reviewed. Evacuation procedures are in place and practised, although not all eventualities have been considered. Healthy and nutritious snacks are available and parents are encouraged to provide healthy food in packed lunches. Staff have an awareness of equal opportunities and are sensitive to individual needs. Staff have a good awareness of child protection although the policy does need updating.

A wide variety of activities are used to promote children's development in all areas. Children are encouraged to move around the activities and make choices. Staff have a good understanding of behaviour management strategies and provide clear and

consistent boundaries. Praise and encouragement is used to promote positive behaviour.

The pre-school works in partnership with parents. They are provided with a wide range of information about the pre-school and kept up-to-date with regular newsletters. Staff share information regularly with parents and have a sound knowledge of children's individual needs. They respect parent's wishes regarding their care.

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

Not applicable.

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

- A stimulating and welcoming environment is provided where children can explore a wide range of activities. Staff are involved in children's play and are interested in what they do and say. They interact effectively promoting their language and understanding well.
- Staff form friendly relationships with parents exchanging information regularly to ensure individual needs are met and parents are aware of children's progress. Newsletters, as well as information on the notice board, keeps parents up-to-date with the group's activities and planning.
- The pre-school has a positive approach to caring for children with special educational needs. Staff liaise with parents and professionals to ensure appropriate support and resources are provided.
- Staff observe good health and hygiene practices throughout the pre-school and encourage children to develop good routines for themselves. They are vigilant about children's safety at all times.

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

- evacuation procedures
- child protection policy
- documentation.

#### **Outcome of the inspection**

Good

## CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

*All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.*

*As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.*

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

### **The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
6	Undertake regular fire drills to ensure the procedure works effectively when children are using differing parts of the building.
13	Update the child protection policy and procedures to ensure it complies with current guidance.
14	Ensure the accident book and register are maintained accurately at all times.

## 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 acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. They are making very good progress in mathematical and physical development.

The quality of teaching is generally good. The dedicated team of staff work well together to plan an exciting range of activities. A wide variety of good quality resources are available indoors and outdoors. Staff use their knowledge of the early learning goals well when planning and assessing children's progress. However organisation of some activities does not always encourage children's positive involvement and opportunities are missed to extend their creativity. Staff have a calm and consistent approach to behaviour management and work in partnership with parents to support children with special educational needs.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are provided with a wide range of information about the pre-school. They are kept up-to-date through regular newsletters and the notice board. They are well-informed about their child's achievements and progress through regular open evenings and daily discussions. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the pre-school and value the friendly and approachable staff.

Leadership and management is very good. Strong leadership on a daily basis provides a sound and consistent foundation for the changing management committee. Team working, partnership with parents and the provision of a positive environment for children's learning is promoted well. The pre-school is committed to improvement and actively seeks further training and involvement in quality assurance schemes.

### What is being done well?

- Partnership with parents is given a high priority. Parents are provided with a range of information about the provision and their child. They are regularly consulted and their views are responded to. They value the supportive and approachable staff.
- Staff form easy and trusting relationships with children. They work well together to provide purposeful activities to stimulate children's interest in learning.
- Children engage in a variety of activities to develop their mathematical understanding. Children enjoy counting and number games.
- Children move confidently and with co-ordination. They demonstrate skills in using a range of small and large equipment and move with control and

co-ordination indoors and outdoors.

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

- organisation of group activities to ensure children have enough space to feel comfortable and sufficient support so they can be fully involved
- planning and organisation of the afternoon sessions to ensure activities are delivered at the right level and children have sufficient choices to maintain their interest
- opportunities for children to select resources for themselves so they can design and make their own creations using a variety of materials, tools and techniques.

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

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to:-

give more emphasis to the appropriate use of upper and lower case letter formation by introducing activities that are more appropriate to the children's stages of development, before practising formal writing skills. Additional resources have been obtained such as sand trays to provide different opportunities for children to experiment with forming letters and shapes. Children are encouraged to trace their name during planned activities and use pencils during imaginative play.

give consideration to show how a balance is kept across the curriculum and which areas of the desirable learning outcomes will be focussed each term. Long term planning has been colour coded to show how the stepping stones in each area of learning are included.

give consideration to making the method of recording assessments more manageable. Staff are confident with the system introduced which is linked to the stepping stones and used to plan for children's progression.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children arrive confidently and are keen to explore activities set out such as painting and the home corner. They are developing concentration and are interested in learning. Many develop positive relationships with adults and each other and are keen to share their successes. Many are learning to play co-operatively, however this is difficult during some group activities where space is limited. Children are developing independence in caring for themselves and know the rules of the setting.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are becoming aware print has meaning and many recognise letters and their name. They enjoy stories and handle books with care. They engage in a variety of activities to develop their pre-writing skills and attempt writing during role-play. More able children are encouraged to form letters and write their name. Children are developing confidence in communicating with others. Many contribute during group activities although some opportunities are missed to support individual children.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy number activities. They count how many children are present and add on when more arrive. Some recognise numerals and count groups of objects such as how many windows in the houses they have drawn. They match numerals and objects when playing dominoes and count when making the number snake. Many are becoming aware of shape, pattern and size when making puzzles and creating their own sequences. Some use mathematical language in their play such as how long or short objects are.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Exciting topics are planned to encourage children's curiosity and interest in the world around them. They grow plants and talk about the seasons, experiment with gloop and make footprints in the snow. They look at baby photos to compare then and now. They learn about road safety when the crossing patrol visits and make a map of the town. They explore woodwork and refer to instructions when using construction kits. There are few opportunities to select tools to create their own models.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move with control and co-ordination indoors and outdoors. They run, jump, crawl and climb. They demonstrate increasing skill in using a variety of small and large equipment such as manoeuvring bikes and learning to stop when outside. They fit figures in and out of the dolls house and use a variety of tools for cutting, shaping and moulding. Many use one-handed tools competently such as pouring drinks. They are developing health awareness when washing hands and eating healthy snacks.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children explore a variety of media and materials during planned craft activities. They make models and sew. Many name colours and become absorbed when painting or making a collage. They enjoy role-play and creating stories with small world figures. However opportunities for imaginative play or free choice of craft materials are not always available. Children enthusiastically join in with music and singing. They explore a range of different instruments and copy sound patterns.

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



## OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally 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: THE KEY ISSUES

- improve the organisation of group activities to ensure children have enough space to feel comfortable and sufficient support so they can be fully involved
- improve the planning and organisation of the afternoon sessions to ensure activities are delivered at the right level and children have sufficient choices to maintain their interest
- develop opportunities for children to select resources for themselves so they can design and make their own creations using a variety of materials, tools and techniques.

*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.*