



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 305341

DfES Number: 511451

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 01/07/2004  
Inspector Name Debra Elizabeth Jean Dahlstrom

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name Stepping Stones Pre-School  
Setting Address Daven Primary School  
New Street  
Congleton  
Cheshire  
CW12 3AH

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Pre-School 1041149

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Pre-School  
Address Daven Primary School  
New Street  
Congleton  
Cheshire  
CW12 3AH

## 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 was first opened in 1994 and operates within a double demountable building in the grounds of Daven Primary School, which is in walking distance of the centre of Congleton town. The pre-school group is organised by a committee of parents. The group offers pre-school activities to children, on a sessional basis from Monday to Friday, from 09:00 to 11:45 and 13:00 to 15:00 term time only. The children have access to two main play room areas, toilets and hand washing facilities. There is also access to a kitchen for the preparation of snacks/baking. The group also have an enclosed play area with safety surface and use of the grassed playing fields for outdoor play.

The pre-school are in receipt of nursery education funding for both three and four-year-olds. At the current time there are 46 children on the group's register of whom 23 are funded four-year-olds and 18 funded three-year-olds. There are no children attending for whom English is an additional language. Children with identified special educational needs are supported within the group.

There are currently eight members of staff of whom six are appropriately qualified in childcare. All staff work directly with the children. The pre-school are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

As the setting is in receipt of nursery education funding they have access to a Foundation Stage teacher and other advisory staff from Sure Start Cheshire.

### How good is the Day Care?

Stepping stones provides satisfactory care for children The environment is warm and welcoming to children with plenty of space for both indoor and outdoor play. Children are happy and settled. There is a varied range of toys and equipment for children to enjoy. These are organised well and provide easy access for children. The records and documentation require further detail in the complaints, child protection procedures and the behaviour policy. A written procedure is also needed in the event of a child not being collected.

Staff place high regard to health and safety matters. There are good hygiene practices, children are confident in areas of personal hygiene, they can competently wash their hands, tidy away and mop up spills. Snacks are varied with dietary needs catered for. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection procedures. There is a positive approach by staff to caring for children with special needs who have experience in this area.

The activities provided for children are varied and allow them to make steady progress in all areas. Children are confident as the relationships with staff are good. Staff know the children well, although sometimes they could allow the younger children more opportunities to practice new skills. Children behave well and staff have a good understanding of positive strategies to manage their behaviour. Children are cooperative and helpful to others.

There are good relationships with parents, with information shared daily about the children's achievements.

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

At the last inspection there were several actions agreed by the person in charge to improve the safety and welfare of children. Confirmation has now been obtained that necessary checks are carried out for those working unsupervised with children. Such checks provide reassurances that persons working with children are suitable to do so. Record systems are now in place to confirm gas checks are carried out to ensure the heaters are safe. A book has been purchased to record any significant incidents involving children, and parents will be informed on the day. The behaviour management policy still does not have any reference to how any incidents of bullying will be dealt with. As such this action will be brought through to this current inspection report as a recommendation.

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

- Children are confident, happy and settled. They are helpful, relate well to their peers and readily make choices about their learning and play. For example they sit and 'read' stories to themselves and others. They handle books well, carefully turning the pages and sharing the story with their friends.
- Staff create for children, a welcoming and safe environment with lots of space for them to explore. From an early age children learn about health and safety within the setting. Children quickly learn to be independent, they happily mop up spills and tidy way toys.
- There are open and friendly relationships with parents who feel well supported by staff. Parents are happy with the care provided and the progress their children are making.
- Staff know the children well, they provide individual attention to meet children's different needs and ensure they are included in all activities.

**What needs to be improved?**

- the documentation for child protection, behaviour, complaints, uncollected children and consents for emergency treatment
- the arrangements for younger children to work independently, with support from staff.

**Outcome of the inspection**

Satisfactory

**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
2	Ensure that you have in place a procedure in the event of a child not being collected and this is shared with parents.
3	Consider how more opportunities can be made to support learning for younger children in the setting
12	Ensure the contact details of the regulator are included in the complaints procedure.
13	Review your child protection statement in line with the revised guidance and include the procedures in the event of an allegation against staff.
14	Obtain written consents from parents for medical treatment in the event of an emergency and make sure that a reference to bullying is included in your behaviour management policy.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The funded nursery education at Stepping Stones Pre-school is acceptable and of good quality. The children are making generally good progress in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. They make very good progress in physical development.

The quality of teaching is generally good; staff plan a range of activities in line with the stepping stones, however, more opportunities need to be included within personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Planning and activities are supported by a good range of toys and equipment, but there are inconsistencies between the morning and afternoon sessions. Planning is not yet consistently evaluated by staff and used with observations of children's development and achievements to plan what children need to learn next. Staff work well with children with special educational needs to ensure that they are supported and able to participate fully.

The leadership and management of the setting are generally good. The persons in charge confirm the recent appointment of a new committee of parents and carers who show commitment to the ongoing development of the provision. All staff meeting regularly with the persons in charge to discuss the planning of themes and activities. The provision operate a key worker system for all children, staff also have specific roles with the organisation of the group.

The pre-school's partnership with parents and carers is very good, they receive verbal feedback on their child's development and achievements, and have opportunities to view written records prior to them being sent to school, they also receive a book containing examples of their children's work. Information on the educational provision, themes and activities is available.

### What is being done well?

- Children's physical skills are promoted effectively through the provision of both indoor and outdoor activities which involves the children in using of a range of appropriate large and small tools and equipment. The children are developing good skills of manipulation and co-ordination.
- The children are confident speakers and are using good language and vocabulary skills as they speak in front of others and during their play.
- The children are developing good relationships with each other, they show concern for one another and help each other. Staff encourage the children to share, take turns and to co-operate with one another.

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

- the provision of opportunities for the children to practice counting, number operations and to develop their understanding of mathematical language and concepts through everyday situations
- opportunities for the children to practice their writing and mark making through the provision of writing materials at a designated area and within imaginary play
- opportunities to develop the children's awareness of the wider world, cultures and beliefs
- the provision of regular opportunities for the children to listen to and be involved in music
- the consistency of activities provided during the morning and afternoon sessions to ensure all children have equal access to all experiences
- the system of planning to show what the children are expected to learn and the purpose of the activity including staff involvement
- the monitoring and evaluating of planning and activities and to use these evaluations along with records of the children's development and achievements to track their progress against the stepping stones to enable any gaps in learning to be re-visited, and to plan the next steps for children.

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

The pre-school have made very good progress in response to the two key issues raised at the last inspection.

The setting were asked to consider some re-organisation of the room to give more emphasis to the story corner, role play area, easel painting, and floor activities to enable children's selection of activities. The pre-school have access to two rooms which are used for different play activities. There are designated role play, craft areas and a book corner which contains appropriate children's seating. All areas are used appropriately, and children are able to access and self select equipment and activities from that on offer.

The setting were also asked to review books in the story corner, to introduce good quality books and to ensure that staff give appropriate support in this area. Children use this area independently, with adult support and with each other. They understand how books work, and are involved in 'reading' to one another. Children sit quietly and listen to stories which are well read by staff. The setting have nominated a member of staff who takes responsibility for organising the book corner, changing the books regularly and ensuring that these are of good quality.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children are developing good relationships with one another, for example a four-year-old negotiates between two children following a disagreement. Staff encourage children to share and take turns with toys and equipment and to play co-operatively. The children show that they can co-operate with one another and behaviour is good, they also show concern for others helping one another with tasks. Children are not regularly involved in looking at their own community, other cultures and beliefs.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are developing good language and communication skills, for example, during imaginary play as they act out and negotiate roles, at group times as they speak in front of others. Four-year-olds in particular are involved in conversations using well developed language, vocabulary and social skills. Children listen attentively to well read stories and are able to answer questions and give ideas. Opportunities for children to practice writing and mark making skills are not always built upon.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

With assistance children are able to count objects beyond ten, are able to match and sort as they assist staff to tidy toys during the session, and have opportunities to group objects together. Children understand the sequence of numbers and simple addition and subtraction as they sing nursery rhymes. Activities, both planned and spontaneous everyday opportunities to practice counting and to develop children's understanding of mathematical concepts such as 'big/small' are not built upon.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have access to a 'discovery zone' where they are able to use 'scientific' equipment. After finding 'mini beasts' both indoor and outdoor, they ask questions about them and use a magnifying glass to look more closely at them. A display shows that the children have looked at 'rainforests', but opportunities to look at the wider world, cultures and beliefs are not built upon. Children talk about past and future events as they discuss events before pre-school and going on school visits.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Very Good

The programme of activities allows the children to experience and use a range of both large and small equipment, which they use with competence. They are involved in practising climbing, balancing, throwing, catching, and running, and are developing hand eye co-ordination as they practice a 'water' race for sports day, this involves them running, stopping to collect water in a mug, running on and pouring the water in the next bowl. They are aware of how to keep healthy by eating healthy food.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Generally Good

The children are able to use a variety of techniques and textures in their art work, including free painting and collage. Children are involved in spontaneous role play both with and without adult support, where they confidently use their imagination, developing language and negotiating skills, for example, a four-year-old states he is a builder and is going to build a skyscraper, others offer to help him. Opportunities for children to listen to and play music should be planned more regularly.

**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**

- ensure that planning shows what the children are expected to learn from the activities provided and the purpose of the activity, and ensure staff are aware of this. Monitor and evaluate planning to ensure that the stepping stones are being covered and given equal emphasis, and that the provision is meeting the needs of all children. Use these evaluations along with assessments of children's development and achievements to track children's progress, establish any gaps to be re-visited and to plan the next steps for children's learning
- ensure the consistency of activities provided between the morning and afternoon sessions to enable children to have equal access to all experiences and opportunities
- extend opportunities for the children to practice counting, and to develop their understanding of mathematical language and concepts through planned and spontaneous everyday situations
- make available to children opportunities and materials for them to practice their writing and mark making skills
- plan opportunities to help the children develop their awareness of the wider world, cultures and beliefs and to listen and be involved with music on a regular basis.

*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.*