



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 101730

DfES Number: 582281

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 01/12/2004
Inspector Name Linda Janet Witts

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones Playgroup (Dursley)
Setting Address c/o Dursley C of E Primary School
Highfields
Dursley
Gloucestershire
GL11 4NZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Playgroup (Dursley) 1054233

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Playgroup (Dursley)
Address Highfields School
School Road
Dursley
Gloucestershire
GL11 4NZ

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 Playgroup is a committee-run group that operates from a self-contained building in the grounds of Highfields Primary School in Dursley.

Playgroup sessions run term-time only, Monday to Thursday 09.30 hours until 12.00. A crèche facility is offered between 09.00 and 09.30 hours and on Tuesdays pre-school children may stay for a lunch club until 13.00 hours in preparation for school. A parent/ toddler group operates on Fridays between 09.00 and 11.00 hours. Children are accepted from the age of two-years-nine months to five years. There are currently 34 children on roll of whom 22 are funded three-year-olds. The group supports children with special educational needs.

The children attending the group are primarily from the local community and some may also use the Opportunity Centre that is based in the School.

The premise is also used by an out-of-school club. The playgroup has the use of two large play rooms, kitchen, toilets and storage facilities. They have an enclosed outside area and are also able to use the school garden.

The committee employs nine staff who all have relevant childcare experience. The leader and deputy both hold level three qualifications and assistants are also trained in childcare. A high percentage of staff are trained in first aid and child protection. Parents provide additional support by helping at the playgroup on a rota basis.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Playgroup offers good quality care for children. The staff team are enthusiastic, experienced individuals trained in childcare and a high percentage of staff are trained in first aid and child protection. The special educational needs co-ordinator is not fully aware of the Code of Practice (2002) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs but has sought outside professional help to ensure that children with special needs are supported well. The group is well

organised; high adult: child ratios are maintained and staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The premises are well maintained and attractively decorated. Space and resources are utilised well. The group has an extensive range of good quality equipment and resources. Records are well maintained. Policies have recently been amended but are not yet available to parents.

Supervision of children is very good. The playgroup is safe and secure. Staff demonstrate safety awareness and carry out thorough risk assessments of all areas used and take action to minimise risks within the play environment. Good health and hygiene is actively promoted. Children enjoy the healthy, nutritious snacks offered.

A broad range of activities is offered during each session. Staff have an excellent knowledge of children's individual needs and value each child, supporting them appropriately within their play. Children are happy and engage enthusiastically in both freely chosen and adult-led activities. They are well-behaved and staff foster self-esteem. Equal opportunities are actively promoted.

Parents are encouraged to play an active role with the playgroup and their contributions are valued. Parents describe staff as friendly and report that they are happy with all aspects of the care offered. Staff provide regular newsletters and share information with parents/ carers at the end of the session.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the playgroup was asked obtain written parental permission to administer medication; to keep a written record of child and staff attendance, medication administered and significant incidents including physical restraint. They were also required to extend the group's child protection statement to include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer.

In response staff have amended the child protection policy, sought parental permission to administer medication and now maintain all records appropriately.

What is being done well?

- The playgroup is well organised. Staff and committee members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The staff team work well together. New staff are inducted successfully and the qualities which staff have as individuals compliment one another and their skills are utilised well. The session runs smoothly following a routine, which is familiar to the children. High adult to child ratios ensure that children receive good support as appropriate.
- Children are very happy at the playgroup. They develop good relationships with their peers and staff, enjoying one another's company. They excitedly choose activities from those on offer and happily engage in chosen activities, working as individuals, pairs, small or large groups.

- Staff offer very good support of children's play. They know instinctively when to be actively involved in activities or when to stand back and let children play undirected.
- The playgroup premise is warm and inviting to children, their parents and visitors. It provides an interesting, comfortable and attractive environment, in which to work and play. It is well maintained, attractively decorated with bright coloured walls, displays of children's art- work, number and alphabet murals and learning materials

What needs to be improved?

- special educational needs co-ordinator's knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice (2002) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, to give her confidence in her role
- parents' access to amended group policies.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

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
10	Improve the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice (2002) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.
14	Share amended policies with parents.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Playgroup provides good quality education and children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good. Staff are enthusiastic in their roles. They plan a good range of worthwhile activities to promote children's all-round development, supporting children with special educational needs as appropriate. The leader and deputy have knowledge of the Foundation Stage, early learning goals and associated developmental stepping stones but other staff do not. Plans lack information to enable all staff and volunteers to understand the learning objectives of activities. Plans are applied flexibly to enable spontaneity in response to children's ideas or other events. Staff have an excellent knowledge of individual children and ask questions effectively to promote children's thinking and learning. Assessment of children's progress has recently begun but the system has not yet effectively been used to inform planning, to help children to move onto the next stage of their learning. Staff encourage good behaviour and foster children's self-esteem, creating a calm, happy environment conducive to children's play and learning.

Leadership and management are generally good. The group is managed well by the leader and team spirit fostered. The committee and staff are committed to improvement. The committee offers staff support as appropriate and fund raises to extend resources. A system to evaluate the provision of nursery education has not been developed.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents find staff friendly and approachable. They receive good information about the provision and regularly help at sessions, which extends their understanding of how their children are learning. Parents are encouraged to share information about their children but staff have not planned how they will share information about children's progress.

What is being done well?

- Staff are enthusiastic and experienced in their roles. They are skilled in behaviour management; they value children as individuals, praising good behaviour, fostering self-esteem; they are themselves good role models, who help children to understand the behavioural expectations within the setting.
- Children are interested, excited and motivated to learn. They are confident, well behaved and independent. They are able to select activities and resources from those on offer, moving freely within the indoor environment. They have good opportunities to undertake activities outside. Children are encouraged to talk, count and use acquired mathematical ideas within their play. They engage in imaginative play based on their own first hand experiences having access to an extensive range of resources to extend

such play.

- Staff make good use of time, structuring the session well and resources are also utilised well. They plan a broad range of activities, which the children enjoy. Staff offer support as appropriate, they ask questions to promote children's language and thinking.

What needs to be improved?

- short term plans, to give greater detail about the learning objectives of activities and further information to support the delivery of the curriculum by all staff and volunteers
- use of assessment, to gather evidence of children's progress, to share with parents and use to inform future planning helping children to move onto the next stage of their learning
- children's freedom to create using their own ideas.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Improvement since the last inspection is generally good.

An action plan to address the key issues raised has been implemented by staff. Children now have regular opportunities to count; counting is encouraged at registration and snack time and through the use of games and number rhymes. Children's opportunities to use musical instruments has improved, but use is occasional rather than regularly planned.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children show interest to learn, enthusiastically join in activities and persist at chosen activities for extended periods. Children are confident and demonstrate independence. They relate well to their peers and adults; converse with one another, offer assistance, link up and work as part of a group. Children are well behaved, share, take-turns and are aware of the behavioural expectations within the setting. Children talk about their own lives and show a strong sense of self within the group.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are keen to talk and speak confidently. They initiate conversation and use talk to share news, talk about what they are doing and to express their feelings. Children see print around them and understand that it carries meaning. They listen attentively to stories and join in; they enjoy looking at books and handle them carefully. Children mark-make, ascribing meaning to marks. Children are not encouraged to recognise rhythm in spoken words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are keen to count and many can count confidently to ten and beyond. More able children say confidently the number that is one more than a given number and offer solutions to number problems. Children show awareness of similarities in shapes and patterns. Some children talk about and compare the weight of objects. More able children are not introduced to mathematical ideas to build upon what they already know, such as recognition of numerals, ordering by size and calculation.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show curiosity, observe, examine and manipulate objects. A visit from Zoo Lab gave children a chance to handle mini-beasts carefully and find out about them. Children are able to explore the natural environment of the school garden. They construct using their own design ideas. Children have good opportunities to gain cultural awareness and learn about disability. Children have few opportunities to operate simple equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move with pleasure. They partake in ring games, moving sideways, walking, skipping and doing actions. They negotiate space, avoiding obstacles. Children pedal and propel wheeled toys competently. They carry resources safely. They manipulate malleable material, moulding, prodding, squeezing, using tools to cut and roll, effecting change upon it. Children do not regularly climb or use the full range of physical play equipment available. Children show some health and bodily awareness.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy creative activities and tactile experiences such as getting gluey, glittery hands. Children do not access materials freely, creating using their own ideas. Children hear a wide range of music; as the classical 'flight of the bumble bee' played children responded busying around in a range of ways. They sing nursery rhymes and Christmas songs from memory. Children engage in role-play based on their own first-hand experiences, playing alongside others engaged in the same theme.

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

- develop short term plans, to give greater detail about the learning objectives of activities and further information to support the delivery of the curriculum by all staff and volunteers
- improve the use of assessment, to gather evidence of children's progress, to share with parents and use to inform future planning helping children to move onto the next stage of their learning
- provide children with greater freedom to create using their own ideas.

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.