



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 254643

DfES Number: 544902

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	29/10/2004
Inspector Name	Anne Walker

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Stepping Stones Day Nursery
Setting Address	Arboretum Street Nottingham NG1 4JA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mr Gary Holmes
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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 Day Nursery opened in December 2000. It operates from a one storey building on the same site as the Arboretum Nursery School and is close to the Nottingham High Schools, in the city centre of Nottingham. Children are cared for in four group rooms according to their age and stage of development. The nursery serves a wide catchment area including families living locally as well as parents who work in the city and surrounding areas.

There are currently 52 children from 6 weeks to 8 years on roll. This includes 5 funded 3-year-olds and 2 funded 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of days and sessions. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are no children with special needs but systems are in place to support them.

The nursery operates 51 weeks of the year and is open 07:45- 18:00 Monday to Friday. They provide an after school service and holiday care for children under 8 years of age.

Fifteen staff work with the children, 12 of whom have early years childcare qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The 3 remaining staff are working towards a recognised qualification. The nursery receives support from a specialist teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Day Nursery provides good quality care for children. The building is bright, well maintained and provides a comfortable environment. Children are looked after in four group rooms according to their stage of development. The majority of staff hold recognised child care qualifications and are deployed effectively to ensure balanced teams, with relevant experience in each area. There are good play materials and equipment throughout the nursery that are kept clean and safe. These are used to promote all areas of children's development. Records, policies and procedures are well organised, understood by staff and available to parents.

Good attention is paid to providing a safe environment for children. Staff are observant and watchful as children play, have their meals and sleep. The building has effective systems to keep the nursery secure and monitor who comes and goes. Older children learn about good hygiene through daily routines, whilst nappy changing and care of babies takes place according to the clear health and hygiene policies. Meals are healthy, varied and nutritious. Individual dietary needs are respected. Staff and management have a clear understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection but the policy has not been reviewed in line with current guidance.

Play in all areas is well planned according to children's developmental stage. Staff interact with the children in an enthusiastic manner and provide activities that children find stimulating and purposeful. Older children are well behaved and staff are good role models and promote acceptable behaviour in a consistent manner.

The partnership with parents is good. There is a range of information in the entrance and each room, to inform them how the nursery is organised. Parents of children under two receive daily written details about their day. The nursery works to build a partnership with parents and to listen and value their wishes, about their child's care.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the setting agreed to address a number of actions. These have all been completed satisfactorily. They have developed a number of their policies and procedures to ensure they meet National Standard requirements. Staff are aware of the changes and implement policies and procedures effectively in their work with the children to promote their welfare and development. The operational plan has been improved so that it now includes information about the servicing of gas and electrical appliances, procedures for lost or uncollected children and further systems to check staff are physically and mentally suitable for their post.

What is being done well?

- The provision for babies and children under two gives careful consideration to their individual needs. Staff have a sound knowledge of the children in their care. They collate good information from parents and use this to organise the child's day around their own feeding, play and sleep routines.
- There is a range of good quality play resources throughout the nursery. Staff plan appropriately using "Birth to Three Matters" and the "Foundation Stage Curriculum", to ensure that the resources are used effectively to provide a stimulating environment where children can explore and build on their natural curiosity as learners.
- Children are provided with seasonal menus that are appetizing and of good nutritional content. Due regard is given to any dietary needs and staff work with parents to ensure all children are included and valued. Mealtimes are social occasions where children learn to use cutlery and share time with other children and the staff, who eat with them.

- The nursery building is maintained to a high standard and provides a bright and welcoming environment. Space and staff teams are organised effectively to ensure that children are cared for in groups where they are able to play actively, rest and have their meals comfortably, with good levels of adult care and support.

What needs to be improved?

- the statement of child protection procedures.

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
13	Review the child protection statement to ensure it complies with the booklet "What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused", and the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Day Nursery provides good quality nursery education overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. They make very good progress in their personal social and emotional development.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff manage the children well and have good relationships with them. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the early learning goals and use this knowledge to deliver the curriculum through a range of practical activities that are purposeful and which the children enjoy. Some aspects of planning and curriculum delivery are not effectively developed, which on occasions leads to insufficient challenges for children.

Children with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, are enabled and encouraged to participate in the full range of nursery activities. The daily routine is clearly thought through. It offers children time to practice and consolidate newly acquired skills and fosters their social development effectively. Staff assess and record children's development but do not always make best use of the stepping stones to plan children's next steps in learning.

Leadership and management is generally good. They facilitate good opportunities for staff's ongoing training and development, which are assessed through yearly appraisals. The manager has regular opportunities to oversee the three to five's room and meets with staff regularly. However, there is not yet a fully rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching.

The partnership with parents has significant weaknesses. Staff have good relationships with parents and share information verbally on a regular basis. There is unclear information for parents about the curriculum, so that displaying planning is of limited value. They have not yet established a fully effective system to share development records with parents or ongoing ways to involve parents in their child's learning.

What is being done well?

- Staff are good role models and work consistently as a team to set clear, fair expectations regarding behaviour. Consequently children have good relationships with each other and their carers. They are sensitive to each others needs, polite and well behaved.
- Children's language skills are developing well. They readily use language to convey thoughts and needs, with each other and the adults. Older children are beginning to use language to think through ideas and solve problems.
- The staff understand that young children are active learners. They provide learning opportunities through a range of practical activities which children

participate in enthusiastically.

- Children are imaginative and readily engage in role play activities. They use the available props well and negotiate using language to develop their play. Both three and four-year-olds are able to play cooperatively for good periods of time without adult involvement.
- The children can count and recognise numbers 1-10. Four-year-olds can count beyond this and they use their skills in their play.

What needs to be improved?

- planning for outdoor play in order to fully promote children's gross motor skills and encourage them to move with confidence, imagination and safety and develop an awareness of space
- the opportunities for children to become aware of the different purposes of writing and encouragement for them to practice their emerging writing skills as they play
- the partnership with parents so that they are more clearly informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum, are encouraged to share what they know about their child on an ongoing basis and have opportunities to be involved in their child's learning
- planning of activities to foster children's skills in designing and making. With particular regard to challenges for four-year-olds to enable them to explore techniques for joining and assembling materials.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children participate in activities with enthusiasm. They concentrate well for example, to complete a drawing of what they would like to be when they grow up. Children are sensitive to each others needs, polite and well behaved. Through planned activities they have a developing awareness for others cultures and beliefs and treat others with respect. They have good self care skills and enjoy contributing to the nursery day by tidying toys or laying the table for lunch.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use language effectively to engage with their peers, for example, negotiating ideas in the home corner. Older children are beginning to use language for problem solving. Four-year-olds are able to form recognisable letters as they write familiar words. However children do not demonstrate awareness of the varied purposes of writing. Children recognise some initial letter sounds. They use the book corner frequently and enjoy a range of books independently or with their peers.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children can count and recognise numbers 1-10. Older children count beyond this and are beginning to understand mathematical concepts of more and less but do not have opportunities to practice this in their everyday routines. They recognise simple shapes and enjoy creating patterns by joining different wooden shapes together or completing jigsaws. As they use the play dough they use mathematical language correctly to describe weight and size.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children talk about events in their life at home and nursery and are interested in their local environment, recalling a recent outing to goose fair. They spontaneously investigate things, such as an unusual insect in the outdoor area. All children are confident users of the computer and can complete simple programmes using the mouse and keyboard. They enjoy using materials to build and construct but older children are not able to investigate different ways of joining and assembling materials.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
Through planned activities and daily routines children understand how they can keep their bodies healthy and the importance of exercise. They have good fine motor control skills and use a range of tools such as, cutlery, scissors, brushes and pencils competently. Children are not regularly able to experience using and negotiating space, for example in the outdoor area, in order to use their bodies with control and confidence.	

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
The children show pleasure when using dough, crayons or collage to express their thoughts and ideas. However they are not able to access additional materials to explore different ways of using media. They are imaginative and readily engage in role play using the props. All children play cooperatively and can negotiate ideas to extend their play. The children have a good repertoire of songs which they can sing from memory and take pleasure in exploring sounds with musical instruments.	

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 planning for outdoor play in order to fully promote children's gross motor skills and encourage them to move with confidence, imagination and safety, and develop an awareness of space
- develop the opportunities for children to become aware of the different purposes of writing and encouragement for them to practice their emerging writing skills as they play
- develop the partnership with parents so that they are more clearly informed about the Foundation Stage Curriculum, are encouraged to share what they know about their child on an ongoing basis and have opportunities to be involved in their child's learning
- extend the planning of activities to foster children's skills in designing and making. With particular regard to challenges for four-year-olds to enable them to explore techniques for joining and assembling materials.

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.