



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 106045

DfES Number: 581799

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	21/10/2004
Inspector Name	Anne Legge

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Stepping Stones Nursery
Setting Address	Axminster Community Primary School Stoney Lane Axminster Devon EX13 5BU

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Stepping Stones Management
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Stepping Stones Management
Address	Axminster Community Primary School Stoney Lane Axminster Devon EX13 5BU

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 Nursery is based at Axminster Primary School in East Devon. The nursery is located in a classroom in the early years section of the school, next to the reception class. There is an enclosed outside play, activity and teaching area, shared with the reception class children. The school grounds, including swimming pool, wild life area, playground, school hall and school field are available to Stepping Stones to use.

The nursery is registered to care for up to 24 children, aged from 3 to 5 years. There are currently 26 children on roll, including 14 funded three-year-olds and 12 funded four-year-olds. Children can attend from the term of their fourth birthday, as the nursery offers a bridge between other local pre-schools and school entry. Sessions are daily during term time from 13.00 until 15.30, with some children collected from local pre-schools and supervised over the lunch period from 12.00. The group welcomes and supports children with special needs or with English as an additional language.

Four staff work with the children, two of whom have appropriate child care qualifications and the other two are about to complete training. There are additional lunch time staff. The nursery staff work closely with school staff and the Headteacher is also Chair of the nursery committee.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Nursery provides good quality care for children. Staff are well-qualified and experienced. They work effectively as a team and in close co-operation with the school. They use space in the classroom and outside areas well, to provide children with a stimulating learning environment. All the required documentation is in place, although some lacks clarity or necessary details, and some records are not shared confidentially with parents.

Safety is given high priority and children learn to be aware of potential hazards. There are good hygiene procedures and systems for the care of sick children. Staff

have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues and are committed to the inclusion of all children. They work effectively with parents and other agencies, to meet children's individual and special needs. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues and procedures.

Staff provide a very good variety of activities for children and sessions are well-organised, to give children plenty of choice, within a clear and well-managed structure. Staff talk and play with children, successfully developing their skills and understanding. They teach children to behave well, using positive and appropriate strategies.

Staff develop a good partnership with parents. They provide detailed information about the nursery and about activities, as well as involving parents in their child's nursery experience, by suggesting related activities to do at home. There are regular opportunities for parents to see their child's progress records.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the nursery agreed to record procedures to be followed if a child is lost or uncollected, to maintain a record of visitors, and to update the complaints procedure, to include details of how to contact Ofsted.

Written procedures are now in place for lost or uncollected children and all visitors sign in at the school office and in the nursery. The complaints procedure contains Ofsted's contact details, but does not clearly explain that parents can contact Ofsted at any time, if they wish to complain.

What is being done well?

- The classroom offers a pleasant working environment for children, with interesting displays and resources. Nursery and school facilities are used well, to provide children with a good range of play and learning opportunities, indoors and outside.
- Staff are well-qualified and committed to further training. They work very effectively as a team and benefit from a close working relationship with the school.
- Staff plan a very good variety of interesting activities for children. They are skilful in their use of questions and discussions, and effectively promote children's development.
- Staff are committed to including all children and supporting those with special needs or with English as an additional language.
- Staff form good relationships with children and manage their behaviour positively and consistently. Children respond to their clear routines and high expectations of behaviour.
- Staff work effectively with parents, keeping them very well informed about activities and involving them in children's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- policies and procedures so that they are up to date and relevant to the nursery
- the sharing of records with parents
- the detail in the daily register

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
14	Ensure daily registers include detail of arrival and departure times of children and staff.
14	Ensure parents are made aware of accidents and medication administered on individual forms.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Nursery provides high quality nursery education and children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Teaching is very good. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and are extremely effective in the way they question and talk to children, developing their understanding and skills. They plan an excellent variety of activities for children, ensuring that all areas of learning are addressed regularly. Sessions are very well structured, allowing children plenty of free choice, whilst maintaining a clear routine, including well-planned whole-group activities. Staff observe children's achievements and keep records of their progress, including samples of work. They use their assessments to plan appropriate activities, identifying ways to challenge more able children and to support those who learn more slowly. There are effective systems to identify and support children with special needs, and those with English as an additional language. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and use sensitive strategies to teach children to behave appropriately.

Leadership and management are very good. Staff, the committee and school staff work effectively together, to ensure that the nursery education is of a high standard. Systems are in place to monitor quality and to identify staff training needs. The supervisor and staff team are reflective in their practice and committed to constantly improving provision.

Partnership with parents is very good. Staff provide good information about the curriculum in newsletters, and display weekly plans, so that parents are very well-informed about topics and activities. Staff involve parents in their child's learning, by suggesting topic-related activities to do at home. Progress records are shared regularly with parents, but do not always show clearly how children are progressing towards the early learning goals in each area of learning.

What is being done well?

- Children learn through a wide range of carefully planned, practical activities, covering all areas of learning. All staff understand the what children are intended to learn from each activity and ensure that these are achieved.
- Staff pay close attention to children's social and emotional development. They skilfully teach children to make relationships and to negotiate, share and think about the views and feelings of others. Children are confident and behave well.
- Children make excellent progress in communication, language and literacy. Staff teach them to listen well in large and small groups, and to express their thinking clearly in discussions. They systematically develop children's

understanding of letter sounds and shapes, using the same approach as that used in the school.

- Staff effectively develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. They use questions and discussion to help children think about their experiences and about how things work and why they happen.
- Staff know children very well and are effective in identifying possible special needs and in supporting children with identified special needs.
- The nursery is led and managed by a skilled team, made up of nursery staff, committee members and school staff. The nursery is therefore able to fulfil its objective of giving children an easy transition into school.

What needs to be improved?

- systems for recording children's progress towards the early learning goals, so that this information is clear to parents.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Progress has been very good since the last inspection. At that inspection, the nursery was asked to develop a more precise method of informing parents about their child's progress, and to invite them to contribute to children's records.

A system has been introduced, which allows staff to keep samples of children's work and to show progress towards the early learning goals. Comments are entered by staff, and parents are invited to add their comments. These records are shared with parents twice each term.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children become enthusiastic learners, able to organise their own play and learning. They concentrate very well at chosen and adult-led activities. They make good relationships with each other and with adults, helped by staff to negotiate, take turns and consider each other's needs. They develop good independence skills, managing their own clothing and personal care, pouring drinks and making choices. They behave well, responding to the staff's clear expectations and positive attitudes.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children talk confidently in small and large groups, and staff teach them how to listen carefully. They use language well, to describe events or to organise their thinking, such as when using magnifiers to explore natural objects. They enjoy stories and choose to look at books. They make very good progress in linking letter shapes to sounds, due to effective teaching, and they learn to recognise and write their name. They make marks in a range of contexts and begin to form letters correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children recite numbers in a wide variety of daily activities. They recognise numerals and accurately relate numbers to groups of objects or people. Staff effectively extend their understanding of number by comparing groups and discussing one more or less. They use mathematical language in their play, such as when discussing sizes of vessels and whether they are full or empty, in the water tray. They learn through games to recognise, name and discuss features of two-dimensional shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children use their senses to explore natural objects, such as nuts, and a range of substances, such as cornflour. They ask questions and respond to those of staff. They use a wide range of construction equipment to design and make models, effectively supported by staff. They use a computer and other technology, and learn about other cultures in topic work or by celebrating festivals. They develop a good sense of time and place, through discussions with staff about events and places they know.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use small equipment, such as pens, scissors and funnels, with very good control. They use large equipment confidently, running across a wobbly bridge and climbing and balancing with good co-ordination. They develop a good sense of space, running freely in the large playground and moving with care in the more limited space outside the classroom. They use bats and balls with increasing co-ordination. They learn about physical changes through discussing how they feel after exercise.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children develop very good imaginations in their role play, making up stories in a café and re-living past experiences. They create freely in a variety of art and craft activities, enjoying painting and drawing, collage and modelling. They use their senses to explore textures, such as natural objects or plastic shapes in a feely bag, and respond with discussion or by making books. They enjoy singing familiar songs and using musical instruments to learn about rhythm and sound.

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 improving the following:
- review systems for recording children's progress towards the early learning goals, so that parents can see clearly how their child is developing in each area of learning.

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.