



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 323016

DfES Number: 517869

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 11/12/2003
Inspector Name Victoria Gail Halliwell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones Private Day Nursery
Setting Address 351 Leigh Road
 Leigh
 Lancashire
 WN7 1TN

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Ms Patricia Malone Cavanagh

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 Private Day Nursery opened in 1991. It is owned by Patricia Cavanagh and operates from the ground floor of a large detached house. Children are cared for in three main rooms. Stepping Stones is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Leigh and serves the local area.

There are currently 48 children from 0 to 8 years on roll. This includes 15 funded three year olds and 2 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a small number of children with special needs. It does not support any children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year from 8:00 until 18:00.

Nine staff work with the children, 7 of whom have early years qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 3. The setting receives support from a community advisory teacher from Wigan Sure start.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Day Nursery provides a good standard of care for children.

The nursery is well organised to meet the individual needs of the children. Staff are effectively deployed and continuity of care is particularly good. The nursery owner and manager have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They work effectively to support and develop the staff team and ensure the smooth running of the nursery. The setting is committed to evaluating and further improving their service and are currently participating in a quality assurance scheme. Attention to written records is generally very good. The nursery environment is very welcoming for children and their families.

Staff have a clear understanding of health and safety. They implement established systems and procedures to minimise potential hazards to the children within the nursery and whilst on routine outings. Staff are aware of child protection procedures

and have systems in place to ensure appropriate action is taken.

Staff value the children as individuals. They show high levels of care and concern and respond sensitively to meet individual needs and routines. Many strong relationships have developed between children and their key worker. All children have very good opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities. The staff are resourceful and skilfully adapt resources to provide new and stimulating experiences for the children. Staff support children with additional needs well although written records are not always clearly documented.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting and provided with a wide range of information, including policies and procedures, to ensure they are well informed about the organisation and operation of the nursery. They are encouraged to share what they know about their child and receive both verbal and written updates about their child's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the nursery agreed to the following.

To ensure that the number and ages of children in attendance are organised to comply with the conditions of registration; children under three now remain in the toddler room to ensure all children are cared for by sufficient staff and have adequate space available.

To ensure that gas fittings and low level glass within the premises are safe; written documentation has been obtained to demonstrate that gas fittings and low level glass are safe and do not pose a hazard to the children.

What is being done well?

- Children are developing a strong sense of self worth. Their individual contributions and achievements are recognised and valued by the staff.
- Staff have good opportunities to develop professionally through internal systems such as induction and information sharing at team meetings. They also attend a broad range of external training courses.
- The deployment and long service of many staff provides high levels of continuity. Staff are knowledgeable about the children in their care and have formed good relationships with both the children and their parents.
- The premises are very well maintained. The owner is committed to retaining the domestic appearance to help children feel secure and relaxed within a 'homely' environment.
- Staff are knowledgeable about each child's stage of development and plan effectively to encourage all children from birth to five to make progress.
- Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning at home and share achievements with the staff. Parents are well informed of changes, for example, the introduction of the national standards and are routinely given

information about their child's day.

What needs to be improved?

- Opportunities for toddler aged children to undertake outings within the local community.
- Record's of children who have additional needs.

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 system for maintaining records relating to children with who have additional needs.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The nursery education provision at Stepping Stones Day Nursery is of high quality. The children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Key staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones which lead to the early learning goals. They plan effectively. Short term plans include clear learning intentions for children of all abilities and staff confidently adapt and extend planned activities to further support individual children's learning. Staff interact skilfully with individual and small groups of children, they challenge the children's thinking, encourage questions and consolidate what the children have learnt through repetition. They make very good use of the local community and offer lots of opportunities for children to make decisions about activities and involve children in simple planning and preparation tasks. Staff provide an excellent range of resources which are attractively presented and readily accessible to promote children's independence.

Leadership and management is very good. The owner and manager have clearly defined roles and work effectively as a team. The manager has a key role in planning and actively evaluates and monitors the effectiveness of the provision for nursery education through her direct work with the children. The staff team are motivated and are committed to further improving the care and education. They attend regular training and implement changes promptly following the advice of the community advisory teacher.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are provided with detailed information about the setting and receive regular newsletters. They are well informed of their children's learning through fortnightly progress reports which include future learning intentions. Parents share verbally what they know about their child. Short term plans are displayed and parents are offered a video to find out more about the foundation stage.

What is being done well?

- Children are highly motivated and confident learners. They are eager to explore and find out about new things. They have excellent opportunities to learn through direct experiences both within the nursery and the local community.
- Children have high levels of independence. They confidently select their own resources and have good opportunities to make decisions. They enjoy having responsibility to undertake simple tasks and take pride in their achievements.
- Children communicate very effectively. They confidently initiate conversations with staff, visitors and their peers. They use expression and tone well to emphasize specific points in their conversation.

- Children have good planned opportunities to develop their number skills and routine opportunities to consolidate what they have learnt.
- Staff plan well to promote the children's physical development and make good use of both the in and outdoor environment.

What needs to be improved?

- Opportunities for parents to include written comments on their child's record of achievement.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The progress made by the setting in response to the key issues raised at the last inspection has been very good.

The children are becoming increasingly aware of the cultures and beliefs of others. They have good opportunities to learn through stories and direct experiences such as food tasting and role play. A wide range of festivals and events are incorporated into the long term plans.

Plans are now specific to children's individual stage's of development ensuring that more able children are sufficiently challenged.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are aware of and are learning to value relationships with one another. They readily provide assistance and are able to resolve minor disputes, reminding peers that they 'should be kind to their friends'. They are eager to learn new skills and approach new experiences and challenges with confidence. Many children persevere with difficult tasks such as complex puzzles until they have been completed. Children take pride in their daily responsibilities such as pouring the milk.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Most children interact skilfully. They engage confidently in one to one discussions, listening carefully and asking appropriate questions to establish facts such as what will happen next. They listen with interest to one another during group discussions and listen intently to stories. They are aware that print carries meaning and use pictures in sequence to aid them when retelling familiar stories. Children give meaning to written marks, making shopping lists and 'writing' letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested in number. Many children can count confidently beyond 10 and quickly add on one more, or subtract from numbers less than five. They are motivated by a wide range of interesting resources such as sequencing boards, number frames and games. They have good opportunities to refine their counting and calculating skills on a daily basis, for example when asked how many more cups are needed or when assessing if they may enter the role play area limited to 3 children.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have good opportunities to consider and appreciate their own and the lifestyles and culture of others. Themes are well researched and resources carefully selected to provide meaningful activities such as finding out about 'Hanukkah'. Children are knowledgeable about the local community and roles in society. They enjoy regular trips out and visits from people who help us such as the police. They are learning about the natural world through the direct exploration of lifecycles.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move with increasing skill and control. They enjoy practicing their movements to ensure they move in sequence when acting out the nativity. They have many planned opportunities to develop physical co-ordination using balancing beams, climbing apparatus and completing obstacle courses. Local parks provide additional challenge for more confident children. Children are developing good hand eye co-ordination, many skilfully manipulate scissors and have good pencil control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have very good opportunities to explore a wide range of media such as paints, sand and water. Food products such as spaghetti and jelly are imaginatively used to provide a greater range of textures and encourage the use of descriptive words and the exploration of feelings. Children play with imagination and utilise props effectively to give additional meaning to role play, they often rehearse their roles and advise peers about how their character should respond.

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:

- Point for consideration.
- Provide opportunities for parents to include their written comments on their child's record of achievement.

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.