



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY275967

DfES Number: 515001

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	02/12/2003
Inspector Name	Joanne Graham

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Stepping Stones Pre-School
Setting Address	Meadway School, Dunsfold Road Tilehurst Reading Berkshire RG30 4NP

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Stepping Stones Pre-School
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Stepping Stones Pre-School
Address	Meadway School, Dunsfold Road Tilehurst Reading Berkshire RG30 4NP

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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 is a committee run pre-school and opened in 1972. It is located in two classrooms within the Meadway school in Tilehurst and serves the needs of families in the surrounding area. It is in an area of diversity and this is reflected in the intake of children.

Stepping Stones Pre-school accepts children between the ages of two and a half and five years old. There are currently 26 children on roll. Of these, three are funded three year olds and 11 are funded four year olds. The setting supports children with special needs and with English as an additional language. The pre-school currently opens Monday to Friday between 9.30 a.m. and noon term time only. There are plans to extend opening times until 1.00 p.m. to incorporate a lunch club and a four year old extension of work group.

Seven staff work across the age groups; four of whom hold suitable childcare qualifications. Two further member of staff are working towards a suitable qualification. Two of the staff hold a first aid qualification. There is a caretaker on site for maintenance.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Stepping Stones Pre-School is acceptable and of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff provide a very good learning environment with some minor points for consideration. Staff have a clear understanding of the foundation stage, which includes assessing children's work to plan for the next steps. Staff are sensitive and supportive towards the needs of the children. Children behave well in response to high expectations and good relationships are being formed. Confidence and independence is developed with children enjoying the freedom to self-select toys, equipment and activities. However snack-time is very structured and adult led, offering limited opportunities to encourage independence. Staff provide opportunities for children to explore and develop their senses and imagination through a variety of activities such as collage, music and role-play.

Children with special needs and English as an additional language attend the group and provision is made to ensure they are included and able to access all activities, moving their learning forward. Very good support is given.

Leadership and management are very good. Staff training and professional development is encouraged. The staff work hard to support each other and contribute to the running of the group. An effective keyworker system ensures the staff know the children well. This ensures future planning and assessments are effective, informative and contribute to the children's learning. However there is currently no written evaluation of planned activities.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good and contributes well to the children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are well informed of the group's policies and activities and have regular opportunities to share their observations with staff and discuss their children's progress.

### What is being done well?

- Staff create a well resourced and interesting environment where children learn through a wide range of practical activities. Staff's effective questioning extends the learning opportunities.
- The stimulating environment, and the staff's understanding, enables children with special educational needs to develop to their full potential.
- Children's creative development is very good. They have opportunities to use their imagination and to express their thoughts and ideas through role play. The Baker's shop proved to be very popular and the children's imaginations

were stimulated fully.

- Very good teaching and excellent use of resources ensure children's progress in maths is very good. The children are confident in their own ability to use number and counting.
- Staff set challenges for all children, including those with special educational needs, that increase their thinking and skills.

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

- There is no significant weakness to report but consideration should be given to improve the following
- Written evaluation of planned activities;
- Opportunities to provide a less structured and adult led snack time to promote and encourage the children's independence.

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

The group has made very good progress since the last inspection. Learning objectives are now identified in the specific daily planning. The children are able to access separate, specific maths activities and have the opportunity to solve problems through practical activities daily. These are changed once or twice per week.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The children have positive attitudes to learning. They are confident, competent and can express themselves well. Relationships are very good and children show consideration and support for others. Children respond well to the high expectations of staff for acceptable behaviour. The children have few opportunities to develop their independence during snack time.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children listen well to each other and the staff, showing awareness of the listener. Children's contributions to circle time are encouraged and valued. Many children are beginning to recognise and write their own name. Staff reinforce and extend learning opportunities. Visual prompts and the use of varied story telling methods reinforce and develop children's language and literacy.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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The children have access to a large and imaginative variety of resources. The planning clearly demonstrates methods used to extend the learning of all of the children. The older and more able children are challenged effectively to continue progression. Good opportunities are created for the children to problem solve within everyday play situations and to use a wide range of mathematical language.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have the confidence to share past and present events in their lives, and are supported by staff who extend this further. There is good evidence of the children having an understanding of their own culture and beliefs and those of other people. They enjoyed learning about Christmas in Sweden through a wide variety of activities. Children have the opportunity to use and access everyday technology through cassette recorders, cameras and calculators.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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The children have access and the opportunity to develop and extend their physical co-ordination in a variety of situations. Music and movement and P E sessions are regularly planned and the children participate enthusiastically. Children are confident in handling tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely.

<b>CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT</b>	
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Judgement:	Very Good
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Children participate enthusiastically in action songs and rhymes. They participate in and enjoy the opportunity of free expression and to use their imagination in role play. Art and craft, music and opportunities to explore sound, are regularly experienced.
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<b>Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.</b>
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### **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:*

- Develop a written system to effectively evaluate activities ensuring the continued development of the children;
- Develop methods to provide a less structured and adult led snack time promoting the children's independence.

*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.*