



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 311839

DfES Number: 584262

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	19/11/2003
Inspector Name	Cilla Burdis

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Stepping Stones Nursery
Setting Address	Market Lane Swalwell Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE16 3ED

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The partnership of Jacqueline Muers and John Moody
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Jacqueline Muers and John Moody
Address	9 Struddars Farm Court Bates Lane Blaydon-on-Tyne Tyne and Wear NE21 5TF

## 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 Nursery opened in 1997. It operates from a self contained building in Swalwell, Gateshead, close to the A1 and MetroCentre shopping complex. The nursery has four main base rooms; the Baby Nest for children aged under one year, the Ducklings for one to two-year-olds, the Cygnets for two to three-year-olds and the Swans for three and four-year-olds. The nursery serves a wide area of the north east.

The nursery is registered to provide care for 72 children under five years. There are currently 120 children aged from six months on roll. This includes nine funded three-year-olds and two funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Three children attending have special needs. There are currently no children attending who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all year round, closing only on bank holidays. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00. There are two part-time and 14 full-time staff working with the children; 14 have early years qualifications. There are two members of staff currently on training programmes. The setting receives support from an advisor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and an early years special educational needs support coordinator (SENCO).

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

### **How effective is the nursery education?**

Stepping Stones Nursery provides an attractive and stimulating environment in which children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a very sound knowledge of the curriculum and a good understanding of how children learn through play-based activities. Space and resources are used creatively to provide a very child-centred and attractive environment. Staff interact well with the children who are developing positive attitudes towards learning. They have high expectations of children's behaviour and use effective strategies to teach children to show care and consideration to others.

Partnerships with parents are very good. Parents are given comprehensive information about the setting and the educational provision and staff ensure that parents are kept well informed of their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge and skills with the children. Parental contributions to their child's learning and assessments are welcomed. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that the needs of the child and parent are met, especially when settling the child into the nursery.

Leadership and management is very good. Staff are continually looking at ways to improve the care and education they provide to ensure that children are happy, stimulated and have fun while they learn. The assessment system clearly records what children have achieved and what the child needs to do next to ensure continuing development towards the early learning goals. Children with special educational needs are well supported by staff who can request further advice from the area SENCO.

### **What is being done well?**

- Children are happy and confident within the setting and are developing positive attitudes towards learning.
- Children regularly practice their writing skills and have opportunities to develop their knowledge of letter sounds.
- Children show an interest in number and counting and count competently to more than twelve in group activities.
- Children talk confidently and spontaneously about people and events in their own lives
- staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and use effective strategies to help children show care and concern for others.
- Staff are continually looking at ways to improve the care and education they provide to ensure children are happy, stimulated and have fun.

**What needs to be improved?**

- There are no significant weaknesses to report but consideration should be given to the following:
- opportunities for children to achieve personal independence.

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

While there were no significant weaknesses identified at the last inspection, the following points to consider were recommended: to continue to develop planning and to make information about the educational system more accessible to parents.

Both these issues have been addressed. Planning is undergoing continual development. There is an appropriate balance across all six areas of learning. Activities are evaluated and the information used to inform future planning. Assessments of individual children identify ways to extend learning further.

Information about the educational provision is shared verbally with parents. They receive written information and general relevant information is displayed on the parents' noticeboard.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are very happy and confident and have a good approach to learning. They have developed very good relationships with staff and peers and show care and consideration to others and the environment. They share and take turns during adult led and free play activities and their behaviour is very good. The children are developing an awareness and showing an interest in cultural and religious differences.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are learning to link sounds to letters through planned practical activities. They regularly practice their writing skills and have opportunities to develop their knowledge of letter sounds during these activities. Children listen with interest to stories and are learning to use reference books to obtain information. They enjoy joining in group activities involving, singing, storytelling and discussion.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children show an interest in number and counting and count competently to more than 12 in group activities. All children can recognise simple shapes. Some children use mathematical language in play and the older and more able children carry out simple calculations.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy exploring their environment and investigating how things work. They talk confidently and spontaneously about people and events in their own lives and are learning about different cultures, their festivals and beliefs. Children build and construct imaginatively using a wide range of materials.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move confidently and safely in their environment and show regard for the personal space of others. They enjoy participating in fun activities that develop their fine and gross motor skills by using a variety of large and small equipment. Children are showing increasing skill and control in their use of equipment and resources including one handed tools and mark making implements.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children enjoy exploring a range of creative materials and are encouraged to explore with colour and texture. They express themselves imaginatively during role play and co-operate well with peers. The children enjoy expressing their thoughts and ideas during group discussions and activities.	
<b>Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.</b>	

## **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 the following;
- Ensure that all staff working with the children enable children's personal 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.*