



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 205310

DfES Number: 520207

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	11/06/2004
Inspector Name	Rebecca Hadley

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	Stepping Stones
Setting Address	Wychavon District Council Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive Persnore Worcs

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Emma Dixon
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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 1992. It operates from three rooms in Wychavon District Council Civic Centre, in the town of Pershore. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 35 children under 5 years on roll. This includes two funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week throughout the year. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00. Six full-time and two part-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones nursery provides good quality care for children. Effective procedures are in place for appointing and vetting staff and for protecting children from people who are not vetted. Excellent use is made of available space to provide a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment for children. There is a wide range of age appropriate toys and equipment available and procedures are in place to ensure that they are regularly cleaned and checked for safety. All documentation required in the National Standards is in place.

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of health and safety although this knowledge is not always put into practice. Staff are pro-active in promoting good hygiene both with the children and in their own practice. There are effective procedures in place to protect the children from illness and infection. Drinks are available at all times and children are offered healthy and nutritious snacks and meals which meet all dietary requirements. Children's differences are acknowledged and valued and they have access to a wide range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and diversity. Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge of child

protection procedures.

Children have access to interesting and stimulating activities to help them make progress in all areas of learning and development. There are effective and consistent age appropriate methods in place for managing children's behaviour which include distraction, explanation and reward and reinforcement of positive behaviour.

Staff work with parents to ensure that children are cared for according to parents' wishes. Information is readily available on the parents' notice board and through daily feedback from staff.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable, as there were no actions raised at the previous inspection.

What is being done well?

- Excellent use is made of available space to allow children to move freely between activities within the confines of the building. Children are grouped appropriately and space used effectively to ensure that children's needs are fully met.
- There is excellent interaction between staff and children in all areas of the nursery. Staff actively encourage children, ask questions to make them think and offer constant praise.
- Staff are trained in health and safety and risk assessment. They are vigilant in ensuring children's safety both inside and on outings. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and staff evaluate risks if they occur and put procedures in place immediately to reduce them.
- Staff demonstrate a good awareness that some children have special needs and there are effective procedures in place for identifying these needs which involve monitoring, recording and working with outside agencies.
- Staff have an excellent knowledge of what child abuse means and fully understand their role in protecting the children in their care. There are effective procedures in place to monitor and record concerns.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of outdoor play space to ensure that children can access all activities safely
- the organisation of sleep times to ensure that hygiene practices are maintained at all times.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

<i>All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.</i>
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<i>As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.</i>

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
6	Consider ways to organise outdoor play to ensure that all children can safely access all activities.
7	Consider the organisation of sleep times to ensure that good hygiene practice is maintained at all times.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones day nursery provides generally good quality nursery education. Children are eager and enthusiastic to try the range of varied and stimulating activities provided to help them progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good with some very good aspects and staff support children through all areas of learning. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan a range of interesting activities to help children learn. They provide children with opportunities to extend learning through group and play situations and ask questions to encourage children to think although organisation of groups and resources does not always ensure that all children are able to fully participate. Staff are consistent in their approach to managing children's behaviour and help children to develop good social values, self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff use assessment records to identify the progress children are making and to help them plan activities to help children move forward. The day is well organised and space is used effectively to enable children to benefit from all activities, although not all everyday routines are used to their full advantage.

Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear management structure and managers are able to assess the nursery's strengths and weaknesses, although they do not always act on their findings. Staff have regular opportunities to improve personal development and are actively encouraged to attend training. Management and staff show good commitment to improving the children's experiences.

Partnership with parents is very good and parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. They are informed of their children's progress through regular parents evenings and daily verbal communication.

What is being done well?

- Children have very good opportunities to explore and investigate and are learning about the natural world. They dig and plant in the garden and look at how things grow and change.
- Children respond well to their creative experiences and are eager to participate in activities. They have access to a wide range of activities to encourage them to use their senses and they can describe what they see and feel using a variety of appropriate language.
- Staff set good challenges for children and provide them with a range of opportunities and experiences to extend their learning. Good use is made of time and resources to allow children to make progress in all areas of learning.
- Management and staff are totally committed to providing a high standard of care and education for the children. They are continually looking at ways to improve and for activities and experiences to move the children forward.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of group times and activities to ensure that all children are fully able to participate
- opportunities for children to use knives and forks appropriately.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Two key issues were identified; to provide opportunities for parents to make a contribution towards their children's assessments and to include opportunities for children to learn about history. These have both been addressed.

There are now in-depth assessment sheets which are completed every three months and which include a section for parents to comment about the progress their child has made.

Children now have very good opportunities to learn about and explore the past through planned activities and topics.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested, motivated to learn and participate in activities. They interact confidently with staff and their peers, express likes and dislikes and request help when needed. They are building relationships and are sensitive to each others' needs. They can work as part of a group to complete tasks or independently alongside their peers and are able to sit and wait for their turn during activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and listeners. They actively join in group times, although sometimes the organisation of the group makes this difficult. They share information with each other and answer simple questions. They practise mark-making on a daily basis, are able to form recognisable letters and some can write their name. They link sounds to letters and can name the letter that objects start with. They recognise their own names and the names of familiar objects which surround them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show an active interest in numbers and counting and use number and counting in everyday situations. They investigate a range of mathematical concepts and use mathematical language appropriately to compare size, shape, weight and measure in a variety of different activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore and learn about their local environment and the wider world. They are developing a good understanding of peoples' different cultures and beliefs through a variety of activities. They are able to discuss past and present events in their lives and are developing a good sense of time. They are able to use a variety of equipment including a computer and a cassette player with headphones.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have access to and can confidently use a wide range of activities to promote physical well being. They are developing an awareness of space both for themselves and others and some can move with control and co-ordination, although the organisation of outdoor space does not always encourage this. They are developing a good understanding of the importance of staying healthy both through eating and in personal hygiene.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children play imaginatively both individually and with their peers, although the organisation of activities does not always promote this. They enjoy exploring sounds and listening to music and regularly sing throughout the day. They respond well to creative experiences and are able to create using a wide range of media and materials. They are able to express themselves in a variety of ways including dance and sensory activities.	

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

- Ensure that group times and all activities are organised so that all children are able to participate fully.

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.