



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 109865

DfES Number: 516026

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 18/03/2004
Inspector Name Tonia Chilcott

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name STEPPING STONES PLAYGROUP
Setting Address THE SCOUT HUT
INMANS LANE, SHEET,
PETERSFIELD
HAMPSHIRE
GU32 2AN

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Stepping Stones Playgroup - Petersfield

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Playgroup - Petersfield
Address The Scout Hut
Inmans Lane
Petersfield
GU32 2AN

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 Preschool has been registered for over 20 years. It is a community group, which is managed by a committee of volunteers and serves the children of Sheet and the surrounding area. It meets in the scout hut, which is situated in the village recreation ground.

The preschool is registered for 26 children between two and five years and, of these, no more than eight may be under three years at any one time. It is group policy to not take children younger than two years nine months. Stepping Stones operates during term time on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings between 09:15 and 12:15 and on Tuesdays from 11:30 to 14:45. The afternoon session is aimed at older children who will shortly be starting school.

The group has seven members of staff and, of these, three have an early years qualification and one is in training. There are training plans in place for all members of staff. Two members of staff have current first aid training.

There are 40 children attending the group and this includes 20 three year olds and 4 children aged four who are receiving funding. The preschool supports children who have special needs and those who speak English as an additional language. It has links with local schools.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Preschool provides good quality nursery education; children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Children's progress in mathematical development is limited due to some significant weaknesses. Generally good progress is made in all other areas of development

The quality of teaching is generally good. The staff all work well together as a team and regularly undertake training. Children with special needs and who use English as an additional language are supported well. Planning of sessions is undertaken, but does not consistently link to the six areas of learning for each session, nor does it show what or how the children are expected to learn which leads to learning opportunities being missed. Assessments of the children's learning takes place but these are not always used to inform the planning of all sessions. Time and staff deployment is managed well for most of the session, however children can be distracted at times.

Leadership and management is generally good. The preschool benefits from strong teamwork and staff are encouraged to attend training on a regular basis. The procedures to support and appraise staff are effective in identifying training needs. The systems for assessing the educational programme are not effective in ensuring that all six areas of learning are being delivered. The staff access support from the Preschool Development Worker and Qualified Teacher.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents are informed about their children's progress towards the early learning goals and see their children develop during their time at the group. Parents are provided with limited information about the Foundation Stage.

What is being done well?

- The staff are encouraged to attend training on a regular basis and regular appraisals are used to identify training needs and support staff. The staff work well together as a team to support the needs of the children.
- Staff support and encourage the children to develop good relationships with one another. As a result the children are confident, sociable and have caring relationships with one another and the staff.
- Staff welcome and encourage parental involvement in their child's learning and parents regularly volunteer to help in the sessions. There are procedures in place to ensure that information is shared regularly with parents about the children's development.

What needs to be improved?

- planning and assessment, to ensure that the six areas of learning are taken into account when planning all sessions and that the information gained from assessment is used to further inform planning
- the information provided to parents, to ensure that they are provided with information about the Foundation Stage
- the use of time and staff deployment.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The preschool has made limited progress since the last inspection. Although equipment is available that will allow children more opportunity to explore technology, the weaknesses in the planning and assessment have led to learning opportunities being missed and as such the issues identified at the last inspection still remain.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident and concentrate well at chosen activities for instance threading activities. They have good levels of independence and are able to confidently select the activity that they wish to take part in. Children develop good relationships with one another and the adults in the group. Children do become distracted at times during the session, for example, snack time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and engage easily in conversations with adults and children and often initiate conversations. Most children listen with enjoyment to stories, although are sometimes distracted, and handle books with confidence. Many children are beginning to link sounds to letters and that print carries meaning and most are able to recognise their written names. Children have some opportunities to practice writing for a variety of different purposes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Some children are confident in counting to 10 and beyond. Most children enjoy simple number rhymes. Children are not sufficiently challenged in planned or everyday activities to develop their understanding of number and size or to begin to solve simple number problems. Some children are able to recognise simple shapes and are learning to recreate simple patterns, however children have limited opportunities to further develop their understanding in these areas.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children develop good cutting and joining skills and enjoy using their senses to explore objects in practical activities, for example glitter. Children confidently talk about past and present events in their lives. They have some opportunities to look closely at similarities, patterns and change. Children have limited opportunities to access simple information technology equipment, for example the tills.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children move confidently and have a good awareness of space whilst negotiating activities. They have limited opportunities to discuss health and body awareness. They have opportunities to use large equipment, for instance bikes and the parachute and move confidently during physical activities. Children are skilled at using a variety of construction equipment and frequently use card, scissors and glue for cutting and sticking.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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The children use their imaginations well whilst undertaking role play. Children enjoy participating in singing sessions and have some opportunities to access musical instruments. Many children are able to sing simple songs from memory and readily join in with group singing time. Most children are beginning to differentiate colours. Children are sometimes interrupted whilst undertaking craft 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

- review the information provided to parents, ensuring that they are provided with information about the Foundation Stage and how the setting promotes children's learning in all six areas of learning
- develop the current systems for planning and assessment to cover all sessions, ensuring that the six areas of learning are included and that planning contains details of the intended learning outcomes for activities; ensure that the assessments of children's learning and the educational programme clearly inform the planning
- evaluate the use of time and staff deployment, ensuring that all elements of the session, for instance snack time, meet the needs of all children.

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.