



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127646

DfES Number: 521369

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 12/10/2004
Inspector Name Jane Wakelen

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones Pre-School
Setting Address Stepping Stones Pre-School
Lynsted and Norton School, Lynsted Lane
Lynsted
Kent
ME9 0RL

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Stepping Stones

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones
Address Lynsted CP School
Lynsted Lane, Lynsted
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME9 0RL

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 Pre-School and Out of School club opened in 1999. It operates from two rooms in a modular building, in the grounds of Lynsted and Norton school, in Lynsted village, near Sittingbourne. The setting serves the local area.

There are currently 33 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 17 funded three year-olds. There are no funded four year-olds at present. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports one child with a special need but there are no children with English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during term times for pre-school, but the out-of-school club operates after school and during school holidays. Sessions are from 09:00 until 15:00 for pre-school and 15:15 to 18:00 for the out-of-school club and 09:00 to 15:00 during school holidays.

Five staff work directly with the children, one of which is voluntary and three of which hold an early years qualification to level III. There are three staff that work in the out-of-school club, two of these hold a relevant early years qualification.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Pre-school provides good standard of care for children.

Three of the four staff who work in the pre-school and the two paid staff in the out-of-school club hold an early years qualification to NVQ level III. They provide a stable, enthusiastic staff team who ensure the premises and environment is welcoming to children. The building is purpose built and is self contained. There is a variety of good quality equipment, the majority stored with easy access by the children. Documentation is in place and is soon to be re-organized to form the operational plan.

Health and Safety issues are given high priority and procedures are in place for the safe arrival and collection of the children. Procedures are in place when changing

nappies or food preparation to prevent the spread of infection. Parents are kept informed about any contagious childhood illnesses that children in the group may have and policies are in place. Some children stay all day and bring a packed lunch which is stored in the fridge. Healthy snacks are provided for the children mid-morning and afternoon and a light tea is provided for the after school children. Staff have attended training for child protection.

Staff provide a safe, warm environment where children learn to feel secure and develop good relationships with the staff and each other. Children participate in a range of activities to extend their learning in all areas and are encouraged to share and take turns with each other. Children have regular opportunities for large physical play outside and encouraged to use their senses in the pre-school garden. All children are included in activities including those with special needs. Children's behaviour is good which is rewarded through praise from the staff.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are kept informed about nursery events and are encouraged to sit on the committee. They receive a regular newsletter and are encouraged to extend children's learning at home.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Staff build good relationships with the children and have a good understanding of ages and stages of development.
- Procedures are in place to ensure health and safety issues are given high priority and prevent the spread of infection where possible.
- Children are able to self-select activities from low-level shelving or choose from a variety of adult-led activities.

What needs to be improved?

- the operational plan to ensure all information is included
- opportunities for parents to view their child's work and assessment records.

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
2	Extend the operational plan to ensure all relevant information is included.
12	Review procedures for keeping parents informed about their child's assessment procedure and helping them to become involved in their child's learning.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in all areas.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff manage the children well taking into account their age and stage of development and ensuring activities are differentiated for the children. They have good relationships with the children, helping raise their self esteem and personal independence through practical activities and praise and encouragement. This in turn is reflected in the good behaviour of the children. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the stepping stones and early learning goals and plan appropriate activities, with a good understanding of what the children are to learn from the activity. They place great emphasis on learning through doing and outdoors is used as an extension of indoors. Staff organize exciting, interesting activities with the natural world, such as growing vegetables and observing their roots through windows, growing fruit to taste and herbs to smell. There is a sensory area as well as large physical play equipment. Staff assess children's learning against the stepping stones and early learning goals and use this information to inform the planning for what children should do next. All staff are involved in the planning and the assessment procedure.

The leadership and management of the setting is very good. The supervisor has been particularly effective in developing an enthusiastic staff team, who work together in all aspects of the setting to ensure the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching and children's learning. All staff regularly attend training and cascade this to other staff members.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress through talking informally and set open days to view their child's records. They receive regular newsletters detailing the topic for the half term and are kept informed about forthcoming events

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered very well. Children learn to feel valued as part of a group, with staff using praise and encouragement to raise children's self esteem and personal independence.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of the stepping stones and early learning goals. They plan an exciting variety of activities to offer children new experiences.
- Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through regular use of their garden and play area. They learn how to grow flowers, vegetables and fruit and use their senses to smell the herbs and taste the fruit.

- Physical skills are promoted both indoors and outdoors using a range of small and large equipment.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to use re-cyclable materials on a regular basis to join, build and construct
- the written information for parents, informing them how the setting works within the foundation stage curriculum.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. The staff have addressed both key issues from the previous report, concerning the special need policy and methods of keeping parents regularly informed about their child's achievements.

Staff have re-written and implemented a special needs policy in line with the Code of Practice. One member of staff has attended the Senco training and another staff is booked on the next course.

Staff implemented a tray system to store each child's work and any letters for parents. They implemented a rising four report (before the record of transfer was introduced) to show parents how their children were learning, and a set time to show parents the assessment records with their keyworker. This area is constantly reviewed and updated.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's confidence and self esteem are built up by staff who are sensitive to their needs and stage of development. Children are encouraged to be independent, putting on coats and washing their hands. They choose activities from those on offer or select alternatives and are encouraged to put it away when they have finished. Children learn to take turns, share toys and care for others and develop good relationships with adults and each other.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children benefit from a good variety of activities to extend their language and vocabulary skills and develop confidence singing and talking in large groups. They enjoy sharing stories with adults and are beginning to anticipate what happens next when listening to rhyming stories. They are introduced to the print in their environment and are beginning to recognize their names. They enjoy making marks on paper and are beginning to ascribe meaning to these.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn to sort by colour, size and shape. They learn to compare two objects looking at big and small through practical activities. Children are encouraged to use mathematical language in all areas of their play, including cooking and the role play shop area. They look at 2D shapes and compare to shapes in their environment and handle 3D bricks to build and construct. Children count objects and children and use simple addition and subtraction in everyday situations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Planned activities offer excellent experiences for children. They learn to observe change in the weather and the seasons. They use all their senses when planting, growing and tasting herbs, vegetables, fruit and flowers and gain an understanding of the needs of living things. They learn about different cultures and festivals from around the world and gain an understanding about past and present when looking at photos. Children have regular use of the computer and tape recorder.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children develop hand/eye co-ordination threading beads, cutting paper and use a variety of tools when cooking and playing with the dough. They paint with brushes and fingers and use glue spreaders, learning tools have a purpose. Children build with small bricks and use the mouse on the computer with skill and developing control. Children develop spatial awareness outdoors using sit and ride cars and scooters and develop balancing skills with paired ski's and barrel-stilts.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children show enjoyment listening to adults playing instruments such as the guitar. They learn slow/fast, quiet and loud music and are encouraged to listen to rhythm and the beat of the music. They use their imagination in role play situations acting out familiar roles and learn to include others in their play. Children explore colour with paints, mixing them to make other colours and use collage materials to investigate textures.

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:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:-
- opportunities for children to build using recyclable materials
- the written information for parents detailing how the setting works with the foundation stage curriculum and how this relates to the assessment procedure.

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.