



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

## **COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT**

**URN 127965**

**DfES Number: 519102**

### **INSPECTION DETAILS**

Inspection Date 08/01/2004

Inspector Name Linda Fair

### **SETTING DETAILS**

Day Care Type Full Day Care

Setting Name Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Setting Address 38 Crib Street  
Ware  
Hertfordshire  
SG12 9EZ

### **REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS**

Name Mrs Susan McCall

## 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 a listed building in the centre of Ware town. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 31 children from 0 to 5 years on roll. This includes 3 funded 3 year olds and 1 funded 4 year old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently no children attending with special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The nursery is open all year round. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:30, with options of a morning session from 08:15 until 13:15 and an afternoon session of 13:30 until 18:00.

There are 9 members of staff working with the children. Over half have early years qualifications to level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a qualified teacher.

### How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Day Nursery offers satisfactory care for children. The setting provides children with a clean and well maintained environment where they can play and learn. Children are organised into age related key working groups where staff get to know them and frequently praise them on their achievements. Some documentation requires attention and staff are aware of the need to update training in some areas. Additional, accessible resources are required.

Most safety issues have been addressed and good hygiene practices have been implemented in some areas. Children are provided with a variety of healthy snacks and meals.

Children enjoy their play. They are well supervised and make choices from a range of activities made available to them. Staff talk respectfully to the children. They offer clear, age appropriate direction and give adequate support if needed. Children take part in weekly dancing lessons and regular trips to the library.

Parents are welcomed into the setting and information is shared daily. Newsletters, notice boards and written policies keep them informed about the provision. Parents interviews and daily diaries allow them to be aware of their own child's development and the activities their child takes part in within the setting.

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

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that children's departure times were recorded on the register, resources were made accessible to the children, adequate furniture and sufficient toys and play materials provided which include materials to reflect diversity. Also, the Registered Person was to hold an up to date public liability insurance, the risk assessment was to be developed and windows were to be made inaccessible to children. The heating appliances to be made safe and the details of the regulator to be included on the complaints procedure.

Most of these issues have now been addressed. Children's departure times are being recorded on the register. However, it has been agreed that arrival and departure times for children, staff and visitors will be recorded as detailed in the National Standards. Some resources are stored in stacked boxes fitted with lids, others are on high shelves. Inspectors did not see children freely access these boxes and there are implications on space requirements. At the time of the inspection there is adequate furniture for the number of children. The nursery has a policy of sharing some resources between rooms due to a lack of storage space. It has been agreed that every room will be provided with materials to reflect diversity.

The public liability insurance and risk assessments are in place and all accessible windows have been fitted with restrictors. Radiators have been identified within the nursery's risk assessment as being too hot., this is also the case at this inspection. Staff recall covers being fitted but do not know where these covers are. The complaints procedure is displayed together with the details of the regulator.

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

- Children's behaviour is good. Staff praise and encourage the children frequently and talk to them in a sensitive and calm manner.
- The premises is clean and well maintained.
- Children are confident and respond well to the stable routine.

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

- staff's training requirements
- procedures for obtaining parental consents and keeping records
- hygiene practices relating to children's hand washing
- documentation, to ensure policies are implemented or updated and the accident book is signed by parents.

- fire safety procedures ( as recommended by Fire Safety Officer ).

### Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

### 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 must take the following actions by the date shown

Std	Action	Date
2	Develop an action plan that sets out how staff training requirements will be met and ensure staff records are kept up to date.	12/02/2004
6	Meet any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer.	02/02/2004

#### The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
7	Ensure good hygiene practice is in place regarding children's hand washing and that prior written parental consent is obtained before administering medication and written records are kept.
14	Implement or update the lost child, equality of opportunity, behaviour management and child protection policies and ensure that the accident book is signed by parents.

## **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 Day Nursery is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Teaching is generally good. Staff interact well with the children and provide them with a range of interesting activities but there are some areas of weakness. Some staff have limited understanding of the Foundation Stage and of evaluating and assessing children's work to plan the next steps of their learning. Staff give clear explanations to the children and ask them challenging questions. However, the organisation of some resources does not allow the children to operate independently or make choices about their play.

Staff have good relationships with the children. Behaviour is good and children respond well to the staff's clear guidance. There are currently no children attending with special needs or who have English as an additional language.

Leadership and management is generally good. The staff work well together and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. The manager is aware of the importance of ensuring staff attend training on the Foundation Stage and of developing the assessment system to extend the children's learning. Staff meetings will be planned monthly. The manager is aware of providing the children with more opportunities to independently access a range of resources and is addressing this issue.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are provided with adequate information about the six areas of learning. They receive written reports about their children's progress and are given the opportunity to make comments about their child's learning. Parents are informed of the topics and activities taking place within the nursery so that they may extend their child's learning at home.

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

- Children are interested in the planned activities and are confident when talking about their home lives and past experiences. They enjoy sharing their news.
- Children are sociable. They have caring relationships with each other and the staff.
- Staff speak to the children respectfully, they give clear directions and offer support and encouragement.

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

- some staff's knowledge and implementation of the Foundation Stage
- activities and experiences which challenge the older and more able children, within the programmes for personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development
- organisation of activities, so that children can make choices and operate independently
- procedures of evaluation and assessment systems for use in planning, to enable children to make progress towards the early learning goals and enable staff to plan the next steps of their learning.

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

Generally good progress has been made in implementing the action plan drawn up as a result of the last inspection. Priority has been given to planned mathematical activities, although resources are kept on a high shelf and there are insufficient opportunities for children to calculate through planned activities.

The group were asked to give children opportunities to problem solve, question why things happen and how they work. They have addressed most of these issues, although children lack opportunities to independently develop their designing and making skills.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident in the known routine. They have good relationships with staff and each other. They co-operate and work well together. Behaviour is good and children respond to the staff's clear guidance and praise. Children speak individually in large group situations and listen attentively at story times. Children show some independence skills but the organisation of some activities, resources and daily routines does not allow them to operate independently.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children use language confidently. They enjoy looking at books and handle them correctly. They listen to stories attentively and ask questions. However, children are sometimes insufficiently challenged during story time. Older children are able to link some sounds to letters and can write their names. They practise writing letters in their Letterland books and enjoy joining in with songs and rhymes. Children extend their vocabulary as they are engaged in conversation about their topic work.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Older children can count to ten and beyond and are able to recognise some numbers. They are encouraged to use mathematical language as they sort sizes of boats and other items for water play. Children practise their counting skills through planned activities and daily routines as they sort and match socks into pairs and lay the table for snack. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to calculate through planned activities

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children talk about past and present events in their lives. They learn about the natural world and features of their environment from nature walks and local outings. Children learn about a range of cultures through planned activities such as making Rangoli patterns with rice. There are few opportunities for children to independently practise their designing and making skills, information and communication technology skills or to access multicultural toys on a daily basis.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children move with confidence and show an awareness of space for themselves and others. They use small equipment with increasing control and enjoy constructing puzzles. Through planned topic work they learn about staying healthy and keeping fit. There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their large physical skills through planned activities. Children move different parts of their bodies as they respond to action rhymes and songs.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children experience colour and texture through planned art and craft activities such as hand painting, using pasta, making weather pictures and sewing. They sing songs enthusiastically and practise playing musical instruments to a calypso rhythm. They use their imagination regularly as they respond to weekly dance activities. The organisation of the role-play and art and design resources limits the children from using their imagination skills and expressing their own ideas.	

**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 staff training needs to ensure all staff receive appropriate training for the Foundation Stage
- improve the activities and experiences which challenge the more able and older children within the programmes for personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development
- organise activities so that children can make choices and operate independently
- develop and implement evaluation and assessment systems for use in planning, to enable children to make progress towards the early learning goals and enable staff to plan the next steps of their learning.

*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.*