



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 254293

DfES Number: 530159

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 12/03/2004
Inspector Name Marianne Gascoyne

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones Pre-School
Setting Address Aldborough CP School
Alby Hill, Alby
Norwich
Norfolk
NR11 7PH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Stepping Stones Pre-School 1077895

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Pre-School
Address Aldborough CP School
Alby Hill, Alby
Norwich
Norfolk
NR11 7PH

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 Nursery has been open in its present premises for eight years. It operates from a static mobile classroom in the grounds of Aldborough Primary School, in a small village in rural North Norfolk. Children who attend come from the village and surrounding area.

There are currently 32 children on roll. This includes 14 funded three-year-olds and 10 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting does not currently support any children with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Nursery sessions currently operate 09:15 to 12:00 with the option of staying until 12.30 to eat a packed lunch or a hot meal supplied by the school. Children attending the nursery session can stay for the Afternoon Club on a Tuesday and Thursday until 15.30. Playgroup sessions are held from 13:00 to 15:30 on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The setting is open during school term times only.

Six members of staff work with the children on a part-time basis. Two members of staff have an early years qualification to level three and other staff are due to start working towards a recognised qualification shortly. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Nursery provides good quality care for children aged two to under five years. The aims of the setting are seen in practice and the secure, friendly and stimulating environment provided for children ensures they are confident and happy. An effective key worker system is in place. The premises are child-centred with attractive displays of children's work. The good range of toys and equipment is easily accessible to children who are encouraged to self-select activities. Documentation is well organised although the registration system in the playgroup sessions is not fully effective.

Children are learning good hygiene practices through the daily routine. Staff have a good knowledge of dietary requirements to prevent the risk of allergic reaction and nutritious snacks are provided. Parents are able to choose a hot meal for their child at lunchtime. Good deployment of staff and clear procedures to identify risks, ensures children are able to play in a safe environment. However, the risk assessment does not record how regularly it is carried out or how all risks will be minimised. The procedures for the protection of children have recently been updated and staff are due to update first aid training shortly.

Children's interest is maintained by the stimulating range of activities provided. They move freely between play situations and concentrate for long periods at their self chosen activity playing imaginatively inside and outside. Staff support children well and value their achievements. Individual needs are met and good relationships in place. Children are learning to manage their own behaviour through explanations and reminders of the simple, positive rules in the group particularly in the morning nursery.

Good relationships are in place with parents who value the approachable, helpful staff group. Parents are provided with clear information regarding the operation of the nursery and are able to be involved in all aspects.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure all staff were vetted and this process has now been completed. They were asked to develop written procedures for the safe conduct of any outings and ensure the child protection statement included procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer and a clear procedure is now in place. A clear procedure for outings is now in place and the child protection statement includes the necessary procedure.

What is being done well?

- An interesting, stimulating range of activities is provided and children are very well occupied and concentrate for long periods at their self-chosen activity. Activities provide for all areas of children's development and encourage their imagination and creativity. Staff provide appropriate support and encouragement, sitting at the children's level and valuing and encouraging their play and learning.
- A very welcoming, child centred environment is created with attractive displays of children's own creative work and a well organised and arranged playroom. There are well defined areas for different types of play and a comfortable book corner. Children are eager to attend.
- Children's independence is encouraged at self registration, snack times, preparation for outside play and decisions made with regard to the activities they wish to undertake. Children are involved in the planning of future activities.

- Good use is made of the outside areas regardless of the weather. A choice of areas is available to provide an appropriate surface for different types of activities. Children are able to explore and use their imagination in the garden area and use balls and wheeled toys in the tennis courts.

What needs to be improved?

- the risk assessments to ensure risks are minimised and a clear record maintained
- the register held by the playgroup session to ensure an accurate record of children attending is maintained.

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
6	Staff to take responsibility for ensuring the playgroup register records times of arrival and departure.
6	Develop the risk assessment to ensure all risks are identified and minimised and a clear record held.

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 Nursery is very good. It enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff work well together with clear roles and responsibilities focussing on children's individual needs. They plan a wide variety of play situations and create activities to provide an environment in which children are developing independence and confidence. Staff question children effectively and provide appropriate challenges for children to encourage them to think. Good relationships are in place.

The nursery teacher has a sound knowledge of the elgs and supports the assistants in developing their understanding. Detailed plans are in place which clearly show the learning intention and are effectively evaluated to inform future planning. The setting has recently changed the assessment process and staff are carrying out observations. These are not yet so well documented.

Leadership and management is very good. Staff are provided with clear leadership by the nursery teacher with the support of a strong committee. Roles are clear. Staff appraisals identify developmental needs and staff given access to training. Regular meetings enable staff to plan and evaluate effectively and the advice given by the link teacher from the Early Yearly Development and Childcare Partnership is valued by the setting in helping to monitor the provision. The nursery has recently completed the first module of the Norfolk Kitemark as a commitment to improving the care and education for the children attending.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are well informed through regular newsletters and informative displays advising of the current topic and ways in which they can help their children learn. Parents are not fully aware of the assessment process. The relationship with parents has a positive effect on children's learning.

What is being done well?

- Real friendships are in place. For example, two children sit and draw together and talk about a wide range of topics from their families to favourite colours. Children sit in the tent and look at books together. Staff encourage friendships and help children learn to negotiate so they can sit together at snacktime. Children help each other and offer to untie aprons for other children.
- Activities are well planned. A planned mathematics activity covers all aspects of mathematical development. Children are asked to estimate how many beans they can hold in their hand. They count the number of beans they have picked up and find the written numeral to match the number of beans they

have counted. They talk about whether it is more or less than a given number. They record the result on the whiteboard.

- Children's design and construction skills are well developed. They make elaborate constructions with lego and duplo. Staff make suggestions based on the theme for a collage of Jack the Beanstalk. Children create in two and three dimensions, with additional materials provided at their request by staff, to design castles and beanstalks.
- Staff interact very well with children. They are skilled in the use of questioning to encourage children to think. They encourage children to be involved in the planning of future activities and value and respect suggestions made. Good relationships are in place.

What needs to be improved?

- staff knowledge and understanding of the assessment process to ensure parents are fully aware of their children's progress at every stage.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The settings has made very good progress in implementing the action plan written to address the two issues identified at the last inspection. They were asked to provide more opportunities for children to explore the features of natural and man made objects. Further resources have been obtained including a builders tray which was well used during the inspection. The nursery teacher has undertaken early years qualifying training to increase her knowledge and understanding and many more opportunities are provided.

They were asked to increase children's chances to question why things happen and how things work. Plans of focussed activities now include conversations to be encouraged and questions for staff to ask to encourage children to question. Observations are used to review interaction. Some skilled interactions were observed during the visit which encouraged children to question why things happened, for example, why bubbles came out of the spout of the watering can.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a very positive approach to learning. They listen attentively, join in with activities, initiate play and concentrate at activities for long periods. Staff value children's achievements and invite other children to share in their discoveries. Friendships are encouraged; children are caring and enjoy good relationships. Staff consult with children when planning future activities and they make effective contributions to the discussion. Children behave well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident communicators. They readily converse with adults and each other and contribute willingly at group times. They enjoy listening to stories and join in with familiar refrains or act out roles in the story being told. They are learning that books can be used for a variety of purposes and that words have meaning when writing poems. Opportunities are provided in everyday situations to encourage children to mark make and older/more able children write their names.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

An interest in numbers is being encouraged through everyday events and planned activities. Children count and record the number of beans they can hold in their hand matching the number to the written numeral. They calculate when singing action songs and use mathematical language with confidence. They are learning to sequence when planting beans and other plants and about shape and capacity through practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are given many opportunities to explore natural materials and encouraged to think about why things happen. Children enjoy constructing with a variety of materials when developing ideas arising from the Jack and the Beanstalk story at the collage table. Planned activities to celebrate festivals and use musical instruments from Africa are increasing their knowledge of special events in their own and other cultures. Discussions and projects help children's sense of place and time.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move freely indoors and out and follow the movements in actions song with enthusiasm. They are competent in using the range of ride-on toys, pedalling and manoeuvring them with ease. The daily routine is giving children health and bodily awareness when they are reminded to wrap up well to keep warm and eat healthy snacks. They are adept at using small tools when constructing, drawing, painting and modelling playdough.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The organisation of the role play area helps develop children's imagination with themes linked to the topic. Children enjoy serving in the garden centre and using the resources provided. A child takes on the role of 'Jack' when the story is being told and improvises when looking for props. Children explore in two and three dimensions and talk about their creations. They sing with enthusiasm and have opportunities to use musical instruments. Staff value children's creativity and use in displays.

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 the following:
- Continue to develop staff knowledge and understanding of assessment to ensure parents are fully aware of their child's progress at every stage.

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.