



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 109227

DfES Number: 583618

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	14/09/2004
Inspector Name	Marnie Downes

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	New Stepping Stones Playgroup
Setting Address	1st Sea Scout Hall Alder Road Mortlake London

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of New Stepping Stones Playgroup Parent Committee 1045889
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	New Stepping Stones Playgroup Parent Committee
Address	c/o Rhian Simm 17 Martindale, London SW14 and c/o Lara Milward (both Co Chairs of Committee) 26 Ripley Gardens SW14 8HF

## 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

New Stepping Stones Playgroup opened in 1992. It operates from one main hall and a small room in a Sea Scout hut in Mortlake. The playgroup serves the local community.

There are currently 34 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. This includes 22 funded 3-year olds and 1 funded 4-year old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:30.

Nine part/full time staff work with the children. Eight have Early Years qualifications equivalent to NVQ Level 2 or 3. No staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The group following the Foundation Stages of Learning and Learning Through Play.

### How good is the Day Care?

New stepping Stones Playgroup provides good quality care for children overall.

Procedures are in place to enable staff to contribute towards the efficient and effective running of the group. Weekly meetings take place and staff are clear about their daily roles and responsibilities. The premises are clean and maintained to a suitable standard. They are organised to meet the needs of the children with specific areas of learning set up.

The group have comprehensive health and safety policies which are followed by staff. All areas of the playgroup are safe, apart from children's access to some berries in the garden which could pose a potential hazard. Staff raise children's awareness of hygiene and safety issues, they promote children's independence,

especially at snack times. The staff as a team have knowledge of Child Protection.

Activities are age appropriate, fun, interesting and keep children occupied. There is a wide range of resources and equipment to meet the differing needs of the children. Staff interact well with the children and give acknowledgement for good behaviour. They provide consistency when developing children's learning, building their confidence and self esteem. They are very aware of the children's individual needs and work together to ensure all children are included regardless of differences, similarities or special educational needs.

Staff greet parents on arrival and departure. Very good channels of communication are in place with parents. Verbal communication and notice boards are used to share information. Parental involvement is fully encouraged and staff work closely with parents to meet the individual needs of the children. All policies and procedures are in written formats and are in line with the National Standards. However medication records are not always signed by parents and the written child protection could be extended further.

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

The action raised at the last inspection has been fully addressed. New heaters have been installed and are covered with safety guards, ensuring they do not pose a hazard to children.

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

- The playgroup is very well organised. They operate above the required staff to child ratios and eight out of nine hold relevant childcare qualifications. They work as an effective team, each member being aware of their individual responsibilities.
- The staff team provide children with a good level of positive interaction. They encourage children's independence especially at snack time. They respond to children's interests, asking questions, listening to them and encouraging children to be happy and confident in their surroundings.
- Children are provided with a wide range of activities and resources that promote their development in all areas of learning. Children can explore the play equipment set out of the day and there is a good balance of free and structured activities available to them. Staff facilitate children's progress by planning for the next steps of their learning.
- The group works in close partnership with parents. Parents are welcomed in to the group, especially whilst their children are settling in and are asked to share information on their child to ensure the staff team are aware of any individual needs or requirements. Staff and parents take regular opportunities throughout the year to share information and discuss children's progress in both verbal and written formats.

#### **An aspect of outstanding practice:**

The staff team work together to provide an excellent service for children with special

educational needs and developmental delays. They observe and monitor children's progress, adapting activities, and working closely with outside agencies like speech and language therapists and paediatricians. They show good understanding of caring for children with needs, having a commitment to training and regularly reviewing their practice. The staff team work in partnership with parents to meet children's individual needs. Parents are welcomed into the group to work with staff on individual plans for their children, they are fully involved in their children's learning and development. Parents are happy with the individual care and attention their children receive.

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

- the accessibility of berries in the garden;
- obtaining parent's signatures to acknowledge medication records;
- the written procedure on child protection.

#### **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
13	ensure the child protection policy includes informing Ofsted of any significant events.
6	ensure that potentially hazardous plants in the garden are made inaccessible to the children.
7	ensure that written records of medicines administered to children are signed by parents.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

New Stepping Stones Playgroup provides a high quality learning environment, whereby children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. The children's interest and motivation to learn is developed by staff's excellent knowledge and understanding of how children learn through exciting and stimulating play activities. Staff are skilled at exploiting opportunities to extend children's learning through discussion, questioning and joining in play. Consistent and effective systems for monitoring and assessing children's progress towards the early learning goals ensures children are sufficiently challenged and staff's commitment to supporting children with special educational needs is inspiring. Staff involve the children in routine tasks such as tidying up and encourage children to use their developing self-help skills, but there are less opportunities for them to select their own creative resources to design and create independently. The children are positively encouraged to inter-relate their play and excellent use is made of the newly developed garden, where children absorb themselves in the hive of activity provided. Staff are enthusiastic, caring in their approach and know the children well.

Leadership and management is very good. Clear lines of responsibility and the high priority given to monitoring, supporting and developing staffs knowledge and skills ensures a reliable, experienced and consistent staff team. The quality of the provision is effectively monitored and ideas for improvement are swiftly implemented.

Parents are sound in their knowledge and understanding of children's progress towards the early learning goals and high priority is given to enabling parents to support learning in the home. Well organised, written information and daily communication keeps parents fully up to date on nursery activities and group learning intentions. Parents hold the provision in high regard.

### What is being done well?

- The consistent and well managed procedure for settling in new children ensures a positive experience for both children and parents. Key staff spend time getting to know the child and parents contribute to children's initial developmental assessment.
- Staff's sound understanding of the early learning goals equips them to plan sufficient challenges for all children. They are skilled at exploiting opportunities to extend children's learning through adapting activities, spontaneous interventions and discussions. For example, children are supported to work out practical problems with number, measure, shape and balance whilst building with construction and are encouraged with early calculation skills during board games.

- The curriculum is well planned and the exciting and interesting topics and activities inspires children's interest and enthusiasm to learn. In the topic on "growth" children watched with interest as seeds grew in the garden, learned about the transformation from chrysalis to butterfly and compared the differences between old and young skin.
- The innovative use of real resources encourages children to experiment, for example pouring and watching water travel along a zigzag formation of drain pipes. As they use decorating brushes to paint with water in the garden they squeal with delight as they splash barefoot in the puddles they have created.
- Children's progress towards the early learning goals is well monitored and documented. Developmental observations are used to inform assessments, which are then used to identify next steps for learning.
- Staff's dedicated support for children with special educational needs ensures that no stone is left un-turned. Their professional approach, subsequent links with outside agencies and strong commitment to working in partnership with parents secures effective plans to meet children's individual needs.

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

- opportunities for children to create their own designs .

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

The setting has made very good progress in response to the points for consideration given at the last inspection. There were no key issues.

Children now enthusiastically help with routine tasks, such as tidying away toys, they use their developing self-help skills to serve themselves during snack time and skilfully put on and take off dressing up clothes.

The programme for language and literacy is well planned. Daily routines, such as self registration, where children find their own names and place on a board and select their name labels to identify creative work, develops children's awareness of the letters in their names. Older children progress to being able to write their names, using well formed recognisable letters and more able children are supported to progress with linking letters to sounds.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use their developing independence and confidence to attempt new challenges, experiment and explore and manage their own personal skills, such as pouring milk from a jug and putting on their own shoes. They are happy and inquisitive, interested in sharing their news and listening to others. Consistent and fair rules help children to feel secure, they play co-operatively together and are polite and considerate.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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The children use articulate language and high levels of confidence to express themselves and become engrossed in interesting conversations with staff and each other. Children self register on arrival by finding their names and older 3 year olds write their names on creative work. Older children are beginning to recognise letters other than in their names and are able to link some to sounds. Children absorb themselves in books and actively participate in telling familiar stories.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use their developing mathematical skills to work out how to balance models, when building with construction. They use scales in role play to weigh pretend food and use number language in context. In board games they accurately identify groups of up to three objects, without the need to count. They recognise two more objects are needed to total four and older 3 year olds tap out numerals to 9 when making pretend telephone calls. Children name basic and some more complex shapes.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use hammers and nails to make purposeful models, experiment with decorating brushes and water and enjoy a variety of planned outings to support topics. Interesting curriculum plans broaden children's awareness of the natural and living world and the rota for "weather monitor" encourages the children's knowledge of different seasons and weather conditions. In circle time children talk of past and future birthdays and enjoy detailing how theirs were celebrated.

<b>PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children experiment with different methods for coming down the slide, are keen to attempt new balancing challenges with adult support and are becoming confident in taking informed, but supported risks on large apparatus. Children use small tools with developing skill, they use scissors skilfully and demonstrate good pencil control and hand-eye co-ordination. Children understand the importance of a healthy diet, they know that snack time cereals, fruit, water and milk are good for them.	

<b>CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children use their imagination to initiate their own make believe games and mix resources to extend their play. They sing with gusto, tap out simple rhythms, participate in music and movement with enthusiasm and are eager to act out the role of an orchestra conductor. Children draw detailed pictures and explore and experiment with colour, shape and texture, but opportunities for them to design and create with a purpose are mostly restricted to adult directed activities.	

<b>Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.</b>
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## **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;
- providing more opportunities for children to select their own resources and use their imagination to design and create independently, in particular with regards to using different resources to join and assemble.

*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.*