



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 400084

DfES Number: 581971

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 29/11/2004
Inspector Name Mandy Black

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones RAF Leeming
Setting Address Royal Air Force
Leeming
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 9NJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of RAF Leeming Childcare Charity 1069597

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name RAF Leeming Childcare Charity
Address Royal Air Force
Leeming
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 9NJ

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 RAF Leeming is run by a committee with a supervisor employed to manage the childcare. It has been registered since approximately 1987 but has moved premises since then. It is located in purpose built premises at RAF Leeming, close to shops, the local school and other facilities for families. Children are cared for in age appropriate groups, in five rooms. There is a kitchen, staff room, toilets for staff and children, and an office for the supervisor and the nursery administrator. Outdoor play is provided in an enclosed area with a grass and paved surface. The nursery serves children from the local community and they are currently caring for 74 children of which 29 three year olds and 1 four year old are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery offers care for children with special educational needs; there are no children attending who have English as a additional language. There are 15 members of staff working with the children on a regular basis, 11 of whom hold a relevant childcare qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority. Opening times are from 07:30 to 18:00 from Monday to Friday. The nursery is a member of the Pre School Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones RAF Leeming provides a good standard of care for all children, in a well designed, purpose built, welcoming environment. The nursery owns a vast range of resources which are constantly being developed and extended. Outdoor play is provided regularly although children cannot currently access the swings due to the very long grass.

Children's safety is highlighted in the close monitoring of arrivals and departures to the nursery building. Safety checks on the premises are carried out regularly, as well as fire inspections, by RAF and civilian personnel. All staff are fully aware of their role in protecting children. Health and hygiene procedures including nappy changing and effective hand washing, are well promoted. Children are provided with healthy, well balanced meals and snacks, with frequent access to drinks. Staff eat their meals with children, in order to provide role models to encourage good eating habits and table manners.

Children are very confident, self assured, secure in their surroundings and familiar with their routines. Activities and play for younger children are being developed. Staff raise children's awareness of diversity through access to appropriate resources and the celebration of a variety of festivals and events. The nursery have a successful proven track record of caring for children with special needs. Staff consistently implement a range of positive strategies to manage the behaviour of their mixed age range of children.

All staff are very respectful of parents views and wishes, and always care for their younger children in line with home routines. Parents receive a wealth of information about the nursery, including a user friendly prospectus, regular newsletters and many displayed notices. The majority of documentation is in very good order and extremely well organised although the complaints policy needs to be updated to include Ofsted details. All confidential information is kept securely in the nursery office.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

What is being done well?

- Staff training exceeds the minimum requirement. New staff receive an effective induction and are well supported by the supervisor. Staff are well deployed to cater for varying levels of attendance, and minimum ratios are always maintained.
- Relationships between staff and children are very good. Staff have a natural rapport and interact well with children in all age groups, using plenty of praise and encouragement, which builds their confidence and self esteem.
- The nursery environment is well designed and purpose built with spacious rooms, where children are cared for in age appropriate groups. Staff have created many attractive displays and ensure notice boards are very informative and up to date.
- Caring for children with special needs is successful. Staff work effectively with parents and other professionals to identify and cater for the needs of individuals.
- Child protection procedures, the importance of maintaining accurate records and supporting families, are all well understood by all staff.

What needs to be improved?

- activities and play for the younger children,
- environment, to ensure that children are able to access all areas of the garden to maximise their opportunities for physical play,
- documentation, to include Ofsted details in the complaints policy.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

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
3	Continue to develop a suitable range of activities for the younger children, for example, by using the Birth to three framework.
4	Ensure that children are able to access all areas of the garden to maximise their opportunities for physical play.
12	Ensure that Ofsted details are included in the complaints policy.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones RAF Leeming provides a welcoming environment where children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. They are making generally good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and their communication, language and literacy. Very good progress is made in their knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical, physical and creative development.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff evidently have a secure knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage of learning, which is demonstrated in their planning and everyday practice. They significantly extend children's learning and encourage independent thinking as they make suggestions, introduce new vocabulary and ask questions. Staff have clear expectations of children's behaviour and children respond willingly to their requests to share, take turns and tidy away toys. All staff are positive role models for children and set a good example in the way they interact with each other.

Leadership and management is generally good. The nursery supervisor is a strong leader who strives to achieve the highest standards. She values parental feedback and where appropriate, uses this information to implement changes. Staff feel well able to approach management, and their training and development needs are effectively met by the supervisor

Partnership with parents is very good. Very detailed and informative literature regarding the nursery curriculum is displayed for parents and is also included in the prospectus. Interesting opportunities for parents to learn how children benefit from nursery activities are provided at regular open evenings. Parents have close links with their children's key worker and information is shared well; access is freely given to view children's developmental profiles.

What is being done well?

- Children are developing very good counting skills and they understand shape and size through spontaneous and well planned activities.
- Children participate in an excellent range of activities to develop their physical skills, strength and coordination; this is particularly highlighted in their weekly Physi fit sessions.
- An effective partnership with parents ensures that they feel involved in their children's learning and receive valuable information regarding their progress in all areas.
- The strong leadership ensures that the nursery runs very well, the atmosphere is happy and relaxed, and children are well stimulated.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to develop their independence,
- access to mark making resources and further use of writing in children's play.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.

The assessment of all funded children clearly links to progress made during planned activities, in line with the early learning goals.

Parents receive a wealth of information in the form of displays, the nursery prospectus and invitations to attend open sessions; all of this ensures they have a good awareness of the foundation stage of learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are very confident and separate easily from parents. They display high levels of involvement in activities of their own choosing. Older children contribute eagerly at circle time and discuss their news from home. They lack opportunities to develop independence, particularly at snack time. Children behave well and show a good awareness of boundaries in the nursery regarding behaviour, such as limitations on numbers of children at certain activities; they are polite and well mannered.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have an extensive vocabulary and ask many questions. They use language for communication well and converse easily as they play with their peers and adults. Children do not make sufficient use of mark making resources and lack opportunities to use writing in their play. All children access many activities requiring hand eye coordination to develop their pre writing skills. Older children are able to recognise their names on printed cards; younger children are developing this skill.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have many opportunities to count; older children are able to recognise written numbers up to nine. More able children show an interest in number problems, as they calculate how many children have Chickenpox, and also during group number games. They correctly identify shapes such as a circle, triangle, square and rectangle. They learn how to use positional language effectively, using words such as inside, outside, in front and behind during an activity using a Teddy bear.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children create with a purpose as they use construction materials competently; they make elaborate models and tall towers. They are learning how to perform simple functions as they type their own names or take part in a number matching game using IT. Children ask questions and show an interest in the natural world as they are visited by animals and reptiles at nursery. Children are encouraged to take their own digital photos of special activities and observe them being printed off to take home.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
------------	-----------

Children have excellent opportunities to develop physically in weekly Physi fit sessions; they move in a large variety of ways, with and without equipment. They show respect for other children's personal space as they run about or skilfully pedal wheeled toys. Children show increasing control over clothing and fastenings as they undress for physi fit and get ready to play outdoors. They talk about and observe the effects of activity on their bodies with great interest.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
------------	-----------

Children regularly imitate and create movement in response to music; they participate in action rhymes, sometimes with musical instruments as accompaniment. They use their imagination well and access suitable resources purposefully to create a hospital. Younger children introduce an interesting narrative to their role play, based on first hand experiences. All children have good sensory experiences as they explore gloop, foam, water, sand and 'feely flowers.

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

- Provide opportunities for children to develop their independence,
- Improve access to mark making resources and further use of writing in children's play.

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.