



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 315937

DfES Number: 519348

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 05/11/2003
Inspector Name Christine Fraser Turner

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones
Setting Address Methodist Church, Chorley Old Road
Bolton
Lancashire
BL1 6AH

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Playschool LTD

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Playschool LTD
Address Stepping Stones
Methodist Church
Chorley Old Road
Bolton
BL1 6AH

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 opened on 4 September 1996. The group operates in church premises in Bolton using four rooms, including a large hall. It serves the local area.

There are 68 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. This includes 26 funded 3 year olds and 12 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs.

The group opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 09:00 until 16:00.

There are nine full time members of staff, one part-time member of staff and a manager who work with the children. All child care staff hold early years qualifications. Over half of the staff hold a level three qualification and the remainder hold a level two qualification. A part-time administrator also holds a level two childcare qualification and is available for emergency cover. An additional member of staff is used for domestic duties and additional lunch time support.

The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Child Care Team.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Playschool Ltd. provides good quality daycare. The clear operational plan supports the playschool with its organisation. The key worker system helps children to feel secure in the setting. Staff training is given a high priority and is used effectively to improve practice. The documentation is generally good with the need for minor improvements. The environment is well organised and provides children with many opportunities to use all areas, including outdoor play.

Clear policies and procedures ensure that staff have a good awareness of health and safety issues. Risk assessments are used well to ensure children are cared for in a safe environment, including procedures for outings. Staff promote good hygiene

through daily routines and take appropriate action when a child becomes ill in their care. Healthy eating is promoted at snack time with a variety of drinks available for the majority of the session. Food provided by parents is stored safely in the fridge until lunch time. Staff provide effective support to children with special needs. All staff are clear on their role in the protection of children.

Children are able to make their own choices for play and the well planned timetable ensures that activities are well balanced. The daily routine for snacks ensures that play continues throughout the session, whilst staff monitor that all children have the opportunity for a snack. Staff respond appropriately to children and use the information provided by parents to ensure individual needs are met. Children's behaviour is well managed.

Staff have an effective partnership with parents which starts with preliminary visits to the group and to meet the child's key worker.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Staff create an environment that enables children to experience a wide range of self-chosen activities.
- The partnership with parents which starts before the child joins the group. Parents are invited to visit the group to meet the key worker. Parents provide sufficient information about their child for staff to provide individual care to meet the child's needs. The partnership continues with daily contact, news letters and parents meetings to keep parents informed about their child.
- The well planned routine helps children to feel secure and confident.
- Staff have a good understanding of behaviour management and manage behaviour consistently well.

What needs to be improved?

- the information in the staff register
- the system for recording child development.

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	Implement development records for children aged two years.
14	Ensure the written record of medication is signed by parents.
14	Include the full name of staff and the date in the staff register.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Children attending Stepping Stones Playschool Ltd. are making very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Teaching is very good. Staff have a clear understanding of their role and work well as a team. They use appropriate questions to extend children's learning. Staff have a clear understanding of the Early Learning Goals and use the Stepping Stones to monitor children's progress. Staff have created a learning environment that enables children to access toys and equipment easily. They evaluate planning on a regular basis for success. Planning is generally good with the need for minor improvements.

Leadership and management of the setting are very good. Regular appraisals of staff are used to develop the staff team. Staff training is given a high priority, looking at the needs of the setting. The management team constantly look at improving the setting by using parental questionnaires, staff training and staff meetings as part of the ongoing process. Staff change their practice as areas for improvement are identified.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is very good. They receive detailed information on the setting. News letters are used to keep parents informed on what current events are in playschool. Parents have access to their child's record at any time and planned meeting with parents, keep them informed of their child's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident and are able to choose their own resources from the well planned environment which encourages children to become independent.
- Children have good relationships with each other and staff.
- Staff are committed to ongoing personal development through training and use the training to improve practice within the setting.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and children behave well.

What needs to be improved?

- The consistency of planning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the previous inspection the group were asked as a point of consideration to purchase good quality musical instruments to enhance their provision for music. The group has made very good progress in this area. Staff have purchased a wide variety of good quality musical instruments. Children experiment with them daily and use additional instruments in groups with adult support.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Children are confident when leaving their carer and are able to select a self-chosen activity. Staff and children relate to each other well and children play together co-operatively in groups. Staff encourage children to become independent by learning to put on their own coats and managing their own personal needs. Children behave well and staff provide effective role models.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in language and literacy. Speaking and listening skills are given a high priority. Staff extend children's learning by using appropriate questioning. Staff provide a wide range of writing materials to promote writing skills. Children are encouraged to recognise and write their own name. Children enjoy books and use the well resourced book area both independently and with staff during the session.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in mathematical development. They are learning to count as part of the daily routine e.g. counting children at registration. Children are able to recognise numbers that have personal significance. They learn positional language through play and learn about capacity in the water play. Staff provide opportunities for children to learn about two dimensional and three dimensional shapes through practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff provide resources that enable children to make their own discoveries. Children learn about the natural world by planting and caring for plants and vegetables in the playschool garden. Children learn about their local environment by visiting shops in the local area linked in to planned themes. Children learn about other cultures as well as their own.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in physical development. Children move with control and co-ordination when using large equipment. They use tools and equipment with increasing control. Children are able to recognise their own personal needs by the way their body responds to exercise and staff respond appropriately. Children learn about good health through visits from health professional to the playschool.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are making very good progress in creative development. They use their imagination well in play. Children use their creative skills to express their own ideas through art and to make three dimensional structures. Children are enthusiastic about singing and use musical instruments to accompany the songs. Staff listen to children's ideas for music and encourage children to implement them.

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:

- The group has been asked to consider the following point for improvement in nursery education.
- Review planning to ensure that all plans take account of the different needs of children aged three and four.

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.