



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 219879

DfES Number: 517343

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 16/03/2005  
Inspector Name Coral Hales

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name Stepping Stones Pre-School (Clipston)  
Setting Address Clipston School  
High Street, Clipston  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire  
LE16 9RU

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Stepping Stones Pre-School

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Pre-School  
Address Clipston School  
High Street, Clipston  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire  
LE16 9RU

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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 in 1993 and operates from premises within the local school in the rural village of Clipston. A maximum of 18 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The pre-school is open from 09:15 - 11.45 Monday to Friday during school term times. The pre-school also runs a lunch club from 11:45 to 12:45 on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and afternoon sessions on Monday and Wednesday from 12:30 - 15:00. All children share access to the outside play facilities and the large hall area for physical play.

There are currently 28 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 16 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school accepts children from the age of 2 years 6 months. Children come from the local and surrounding villages.

Six part time staff work with the children. Five have appropriate early years qualifications. In addition staff regularly attend training and the setting receives support from a teacher/mentor organised by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Pre-School provides very good nursery education. Children are enthusiastic and motivated to learn and make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the early learning goals and children are very well taught. Staff plan an interesting and stimulating range of activities and use resources well to help children learn through play. The overall programme includes all areas of learning and activities are evaluated and monitored to ensure that a balanced range is offered. Learning outcomes are clearly identified and these are effectively discussed with the children before any activities begin. Staff extend children's learning by challenging them to think and by effective use of questioning. High priority is given to personal, social and emotional development and children work very well independently. Staff make observations and assessments and use these to inform future plans. Although there are no children with special educational needs, a very good system is in place to offer support. Children behave very well in response to high expectations and support from the staff.

Leadership and management of the setting is very good. An experienced and well-structured staff team ensures that good practice is shared and areas for future development are identified. They have in place systems, which enable them to monitor the educational programme effectively. The staff are very motivated, committed, caring and enthusiastic.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Key workers regularly talk to and share information with parents about their child's progress. They receive good written information about the pre-school and the curriculum and are encouraged to be involved in the children's learning. Parents are valued and their opinions about the group are sought and acted upon when necessary.

### What is being done well?

- The children happily operate independently during sessions and also successfully make links and friendships. They show care for each other but are also able to negotiate and show assertiveness when they need to.
- Children's natural enthusiasm is fostered well through many of the activities, both during free-play and adult-directed activities. Staff interact well with children, extending individual learning through appropriate and thoughtful questioning.
- Staff's clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and early learning goals leads to well planned activities which effectively engage and sustain children's interest and efforts.

- Leadership and management systems are well established and have a very positive impact on children's progress. Staff set clear and realistic targets and effectively assess, evaluate and monitor children's progress.
- The very good partnership with parents helps children to learn. Parents receive clear and detailed information about the educational provision through a parent brochure and newsletters. This enables them to contribute ideas and objects and to talk with their children at home.

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

- further develop the current good systems in place, to ensure that the provision continues to be effectively monitored and evaluated.

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

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.

The pre-school, as a point for consideration, had to ensure that information communication technology was used regularly to support children's learning. The staff have reviewed planning and teaching and now provide many opportunities for children to use and understand simple working technology.

As another point for consideration, the pre-school had to provide more opportunities for children to write for different purposes. Children regularly write, make marks and show a good understanding that print carries meaning.

These points have been fully addressed and the improvements have had a positive impact on both teaching and learning.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy, interested, motivated and have a positive approach to learning. They have good levels of self-confidence; work well in groups and independently. They form good relationships with their peers and with adults. Good behaviour is well promoted and children routinely use good manners, take turns and share well. During well-planned activities they develop awareness of themselves and of other cultures and beliefs and learn about the wider world.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are very good communicators. They are confident to initiate conversations and listen effectively to others. Children's vocabulary is further enhanced through the introduction of new words relating to topics. Games and books help promote letter sounds and shapes and children regularly practise writing skills as they make luggage labels or send postcards. Children use books for pleasure as they look for some information about the dinosaurs that they are playing with.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children take part in a good variety of planned practical activities, which introduce them to simple mathematical ideas and language. As they walk around the village they observe and compare shapes, count and record transport and create charts with their findings. Counting is used in many situations, such as lining up to go outside, and children become familiar with number names. As they play with water and sand children successfully use language to describe weight, size and capacity.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are curious to learn about the natural world and enjoy going out on walks around the community. They are very aware of their place within the family and of events in their lives both future and past. As children look at different types of transport they show interest in how things work and similarities between them. They show lots of interest in working technology and are developing good levels of confidence and control when using for example, the computer or the cassette player.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children have many opportunities to develop a range of physical skills, and they have positive attitudes to exercise. They move confidently within the playgroup in a range of ways and have a good sense of space. Children understand their own basic needs as they discuss healthy eating and as they develop good hygiene practices. Large and small equipment is used well by the children to develop new skills and they show good levels of control as they use ribbon sticks in time to the music.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children use their imagination well during role-play and small world play and use supplied resources well to imitate real objects. They explore sounds as they dance with ribbon sticks, sing and use instruments to explore sounds. Children especially enjoy chalking on the playground and are clear about their ideas. They show skill and control as they learn different techniques. Children have a good range of sensory experiences, including textures, smells and tasting sessions.

**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 improving the following:
- the systems used to effectively monitor the provision to ensure current high standards are maintained.

*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.*