



Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY315335
Inspection date	09 May 2006
Inspector	Nigel Lindsay Smith
Setting Address	1 Hawkesbury Road, Bristol, Avon, BS16 2AP
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Registered person	Lisa Marie Woodman
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stepping Stones day nursery is one of a pair of privately owned nurseries. It opened in 1975 and transferred to new ownership in 2006. It operates from the ground floor of a Victorian house in Fishponds, Bristol. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week all year round, from 8.00 to 18.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 39 children

receive funding for early education. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas, and some children come from further away. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. Of these, five have appropriate early years qualifications, and three are currently working towards a recognised qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to learn the importance of physical activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Children have regular opportunities to play freely in fresh air in the outside play area where they demonstrate developing physical skills, for example pedalling ride-on toys and balancing on beams. Younger children benefit from being able to sleep at a regular time in a quiet room and older children have opportunities to rest and relax.

Children show enthusiasm for the freshly prepared and nutritious snacks and meals. Older children serve themselves at tea-time to crumpets or toast. All children have regular drinks, so that they do not become dehydrated. Children's individual dietary requirements and any allergies are identified in discussion with parents, so that their needs are met and they are safe when eating and drinking. Children learn about their bodies and health needs through good hygiene practices such as regularly washing their hands and through learning a poem about "dirty hands, cakes and tummy aches". Nappy changing arrangements minimise the risk of cross infection, and the premises and resources are kept clean.

Children's health is well protected through an exclusion policy, which minimises spread of infection. Children are protected if there is a minor accident as most of the staff are qualified to administer first aid. There is a procedure in place to care for children who become ill or have an accident, although the wording of the permission for emergency treatment does not cover all contingencies. All accidents and any medication administered are clearly recorded and shared with parents in a confidential manner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely and safely in premises which are comfortable and appropriate for their use. They enjoy rooms which are laid out to provide a variety of activities in different areas. They can access a computer and printer in the "Learning Zone", or use their imagination in role-play games in the "hospital" in the room used by the younger children, and the "shop" in the area used by older children. The outside area provides a wide variety of play and learning opportunities, such as growing plants.

Children are protected by stringent procedures to ensure that unauthorised people do not have contact with them, and only people nominated by parents are able to collect them. Staff are vigilant in checking rooms and equipment to make sure all are safe for children to use. Safety precautions such as a gate across the kitchen entrance and a high latch on the front door ensure that children are not exposed to hazards and cannot leave the premises unsupervised. Children take part in fire drills, which ensure that staff are familiar with the procedures for evacuation.

Children's welfare is closely attended to as staff have a good understanding of how to implement the comprehensive child protection procedures. Contact details for the local social services department are available to facilitate staff obtaining advice and support if needed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure and confident in their surroundings. They form positive relationships with each other and staff. Children are able to choose toys from a well-organised provision, thus they begin to make choices at an early age. Birth to three matters materials are used effectively to support planning for younger children. Thorough observations are used to ensure that children's individual learning needs are met; staff working with children in the Foundation stage are continuing to develop the most effective way of recording this.

Younger children benefit from a good variety of activities such as learning numbers through a group game with frogs and a parachute, and enthusiastically joining in songs with actions. They have warm relationships with staff, who spend time talking and listening to them, giving them good self-esteem and the confidence to approach new experiences positively.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The range of activities offered to children promotes positive learning outcomes for all areas of learning. Children benefit from the staff's good interaction and questioning as they are encouraged to think and solve problems in both self-initiated and adult-led activities. They also have the opportunity of individual time with their key worker, and circle time for discussion. Staff's observations of children as they play are used to ensure that children are sufficiently extended in future activities.

Children learn to cooperate, share and work well together. For example, some children outside join together to push a heavy wheeled vehicle up a slope and others share decisions about what action to take when watching an interactive CD ROM. Children are encouraged to be independent in their personal care and activity choices. They choose their portion sizes for lunch and serve themselves at tea-time.

Children engage well in imaginative play based on their first hand experiences, for example buying and selling and delivering in the "shop". A child chooses a doctor's outfit and looks after three dolls as patients. Children choose materials to create

designs, such as a house; they use scissors correctly and use a sellotape dispenser or select glue to assemble their models. Children have opportunities to count and to compare shapes and sizes during a range of activities. For example, children are asked to count how many of them there are before returning indoors from outside play. They weigh and compare shapes and portions when cooking and learn to sequence numbers through cards hanging on a line like washing.

Children communicate confidently. They enjoy listening to well-told stories and enthusiastically respond to questions about the story. They listen to each other when discussing stories and join in discussion appropriately. They recall previous discussions about books, understanding the meaning of "illustrator" and "author". They know what rhyming means - a child says "cat and mat". They have regular opportunities to write and recognise their names.

Children confidently use a computer and take and view photos of each other and of their homes.

They extend their understanding of nature by looking after plants in the garden and examining creatures that they find there. They enjoy learning about water, heat and cold through experiments such as discovering items inside blocks of ice when they melt, contrasting this with steam from a kettle.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of cultural diversity is supported by a good range of resources, such as multi-cultural dolls, books, dressing up clothes and heads to practise hairdressing. They learn about different cultural celebrations, such as Diwali, and they made Zambian costumes for a festival. Staff have a good understanding of how to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities appropriately so that they become included in the nursery routines. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are secure within the friendly and welcoming atmosphere. They are well supported by positive interaction with warm and caring staff. Children's good behaviour is encouraged by clear explanations from staff about what will happen next and what their expectations are. There is an appropriate policy for dealing with managing challenging behaviour.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive a comprehensive prospectus, and a wide range of information in the entrance hall includes information about the Foundation Stage, feedback forms and the complaints book. Parents receive newsletters and can have copies of the menu. Positive informal links with parents promote discussion about individual children's needs on a daily basis. Key workers produce progress reports every six months to share with parents, and daily personal records are available for the younger children. Parents report positively on the key worker relationship with the children and themselves and feel that the nursery prepares their children well for the transition to school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery is well resourced and staff organise the rooms and resources effectively, so that children's interest is sustained. Good staff ratios are maintained, allowing them to respond to the needs of all children. Children have a variety of free and structured play opportunities. Documents are well organised and retained securely and confidentially, for the required time-scales.

Children benefit from a stable staff team which means that they receive consistent care. There are regular staff meetings and the manager plans to hold appraisals to identify the performance and development needs of each member of staff. Staff are actively encouraged to undertake training, so that children benefit from current ideas and developments. All new staff complete an induction programme which includes familiarising themselves with essential policies and procedures. All staff are vetted, although arrangements are not in place to ask recruits about alcohol and drug usage. All the staff hold child care qualifications or are working towards a recognised qualification.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The staff team work well together, sharing responsibilities. Plans and assessments of the children in the Foundation Stage are thorough. The nursery assesses the effectiveness of the activities for use in future planning. The nursery has commenced a recognised accreditation scheme in order to evaluate and develop practice. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since Registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that written parental permission is requested to the seeking of any necessary medical advice in the future
- ensure that recruitment procedures take into account alcohol and drug usage

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop the recording of assessments to identify the learning needs of individual children

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk