



Derwent Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY330097
Inspection date	08 September 2006
Inspector	Sheena Gibson
Setting Address	Derwent Stepping Stones, St. Marks Road, DERBY, DE21 6AH
Telephone number	01332 372245
E-mail	geraldinedss@hotmail.com
Registered person	Derwent Stepping Stones
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care, Crèche

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Derwent Stepping Stones Children's Centre registered in 2006. It operates from modern purpose built premises on the edge of Derby city centre. The setting provides full day care for families in and around the local community. It is registered to provide care for 128 children under eight years at any one time. Currently there are 120 children on roll who attend for various sessions. There are five playrooms for children aged under five years and one room for children aged over five years, as an out of

school service is also provided. The setting also cares for children over eight years. There are fully enclosed patio, decked and grassed areas available for outdoor play. The childcare service operates as part of a community and training centre serving the local neighbourhood. It offers funded nursery education and makes provision for children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language. Childcare provision is offered from Monday to Friday all year round between the hours of 08:00 to 21:00. Currently 80% of the childcare staff hold recognised early years qualifications at Level two or three. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of good personal hygiene is effectively promoted as staff take positive steps to support it through discussion and encouragement. They wash their hands before snack and after visiting the toilet. Younger children are supported by staff with hand washing, whilst older children use the toilet and wash their hands with confidence. Their health is well maintained, as staff are vigilant about preventing cross-contamination. For example, they wear an apron and disposable gloves when nappy changing. A detailed sickness policy that is shared with parents, minimises the risk of infection spreading. Staff have appropriate first aid training, which ensures that children receive good and prompt attention if they have a minor injury. Children's health is well promoted through regular outdoor play.

Effective use of the outside area supports and provides a variety of play opportunities. They enjoy climbing, balancing and playing on bikes. Younger children and babies benefit from a spacious area in which to grow as they gain in mobility. As a result their physical skills and general fitness are well promoted. Children are well nourished. The knowledge and understanding of catering staff mean that children receive a balanced and nutritious diet, which they also enjoy. The majority of meals are completely 'home-made' on site. Children's individual needs, including any allergies or cultural requirements, are respected and appropriate action is taken. Snacks are offered of, for example, fruit, raisins and bread sticks. As a result, children enjoy healthy options and are beginning to learn about making positive choices.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a bright and friendly setting. They benefit from well organised rooms, which are designed to reflect their developmental needs. For example, the baby unit has a separate side room for children to rest peacefully. They are kept safe at the nursery because there are good measures in place to ensure this. For example, an effective reception system and controlled locks on playroom doors mean that children are safe from unwanted visitors, sleeping children are very

frequently checked. Health and safety requirements are understood by all staff members so that children are kept safe in line with regulations. Regular comprehensive risk assessments are carried out and daily checks in individual rooms ensure that children are not exposed to potential hazards. Children benefit from access to a wide range of resources that are of good quality and suitable for the purpose. They can easily reach these from safe, low-level trolleys and boxes, promoting choice and independence. For babies, staff place a selection of well thought out toys at floor level to enable them to make choices, also encouraging their mobility as they reach out for toys.

Children are kept safe because suitable fire safety equipment and effective evacuation procedures are in place. Procedures are displayed, exits are identified and fire drills practised periodically whilst children are present. Children learn about their own safety through carrying out projects, such as a road safety project for which they, very proudly, won an award. Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that children are safe when on outings or travelling in vehicles. Whilst the current child protection policy is not totally compliant with the most recent regulations it is sufficiently detailed. Staff have a good understanding of their role within child protection and the procedures to follow if they have a concern. Managers are confident in their understanding of child protection and what to do if they are worried a child may be being abused in any way.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They benefit from staff knowing them well and taking time to find out what interests each child and what developmental stage they are at. Routines help them with feeling secure, supported by staff that are enthusiastic, warm and compassionate. Effective use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and very good planning for younger children provides a broad range of activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, including some very well thought out heuristic play activities. Therefore, through careful consideration and guidance from staff, children make the most of their experiences. Children are developing independence and confidence, as they access resources for themselves, using their initiative and taking responsibility for their own play. Their self-esteem is fostered because staff show a good level of interest in what they do. Staff interaction with them when they are playing, prolongs their involvement and enjoyment, also encouraging skills development in even the youngest children. For example, staff talk to babies whilst they are playing and they, in return, focus and show fascination, attempting to mimic what the staff are saying. Children of all ages co-operate when playing in groups and seek out friends to play with, enhancing their play and learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and some of the different ways children learn. Therefore, children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals, as they are offered a variety of activities that cover the six areas of learning. Observation and assessment of children is adequate, which supports their progress. However, assessments do not show children's starting point and are not

always accurately completed, which results in children's individual learning needs being compromised. Planning does not clearly indicate a broad and balanced curriculum although it does not illustrate a clear learning intention or how children's learning is supported and extended.

Staff do not have a confident knowledge of how to effectively deliver all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and planning is not clearly understood by staff. As a result children's learning potential is not maximised. Some staff use a range of methods to support children's learning, such as modelling. Less skilled staff are not as secure in their knowledge of promoting children's learning using a variety of creative methods, therefore, some children 'flit' from activity to activity with little opportunity to gain from them. Children benefit from a satisfactory use of time and resources by staff. Learning is primarily incidental as children choose what they want to do. During this time they have suitable opportunities to consolidate their learned skills through play.

Children are generally interested in what is on offer and when appropriate guidance is given some will focus for a period of time. They are curious and confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group. They have a developing sense of awareness of their own needs and demonstrate good personal independence skills. For example, they capably put on their shoes for outdoor play, go to the toilet on their own and choose activities independently. They constantly make decisions during their free play when accessing toys and play materials. They are consulted about what they want to do and they learn responsibility through activities such as tidying up after snack. Behaviour is generally good and they are beginning to understand about negotiating, for example, for popular toys.

At times children listen attentively to staff and each other. For example, when staff are explaining an activity. They are confident to make their views heard and at snack time they chat about home life, their likes and dislikes. Staff participate in rudimentary conversations with children although do not use these opportunities to ask open questions and encourage extension in children's vocabulary. Children sit attentively in the book corner and understand how books work. They enjoy 'reading' a story to other children, modelling staff behaviour as they run their finger under the words. They enjoy many opportunities to make marks, which support early writing skills. They enjoy playing 'schools' using notepads and pens to do their school work and creating tickets at the role play travel agent. They are beginning to be able to link sounds to letters. However, there are limited opportunities for children to see and relate to letters displayed within the environment.

Children enjoy number rhymes and some count well by rote. More able children recognise some numbers and count beyond 10. They know the names of many colours, common shapes and use some mathematical language in play. They are beginning to learn about calculation through some everyday activities and games. Children show interest in exploring media whilst carrying out a range of craft activities, such as, painting and box modelling. They discover and use their senses through the use of very well developed sensory bags. Some children enjoy choosing and listening to music on the cassette player.

Their physical skills are supported through regular opportunities to play outside. They

enjoy riding bikes, which helps to promote co-ordination and balance and they use tools to promote their manipulative skills. Staff are not clear on how to effectively promote all areas of physical education. As a result, for example, some children are not confident at negotiating their way around obstacles whilst riding a bike. Children enjoy developing their own ideas when in the role play area, making pretend meals for others, or in the creative area making frying pans out of collage materials to use as part of their camping theme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are included fully in the life of the setting and as a result their self-esteem is fostered. Their needs are very well met and they receive consistent care, because staff gather a good level of additional information from parents to find out about their needs and preferences. There are displays of the children's work around the setting, which helps them to feel valued and acknowledged. They have access to a range of resources that reflect positive images of different cultures, gender and disability, which enables them to learn about other people in their local environment and the wider world. They also take part in activities that celebrate festivals of religions and cultures. There is a strong commitment to inclusion, which is clearly stated in a written policy and confirmed when talking to staff. The setting works collaboratively with parents and, where necessary, other agencies to support individual children who have a disability or learning difficulty.

The setting's behaviour management policy stresses that staff concentrate on creating a positive environment, encouraging confidence and self-discipline in children, which can be seen in practice. Most children are able to share the toys and enjoy playing together. Older children understand and can communicate how to behave in a positive manner. They understand that there are rules within the setting and can describe one, for example, as 'being nice to each other'. Behaviour is generally good and staff demonstrate that they manage children's' behaviour taking account of their age and development stage, which effectively supports their well-being. As a result children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children are effectively supported by the positive relationship between their parents and the staff. Parents receive good quality information about the provision. Comprehensive policies and procedures, along with verbal and written information that is regularly exchanged, promote consistency of care.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. They are offered information about the provision of funding for children, the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the stepping stones at the point of registration. Staff share regular daily verbal exchanges of information with parents regarding the children's abilities. Children's assessments are shared with parents at organised parent's evenings, when parents are also encouraged to share their knowledge of their child's skills and abilities. They receive good information from the setting through the notice boards and newsletters. For example, newsletters inform them about what the topic is and what the settings hopes that children will learn. Therefore, children benefit because parents are able to support their child's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by staff that are well qualified and have good experience. The setting's manager and deputy are highly motivated and demonstrate a very good understanding of the National Standards. The staff team work well together and support each other to provide a positive environment for children. Generally robust procedures for recruitment ensure that children are cared for only by staff who are suitably checked. A thorough induction procedure means that staff have a good grounding on their responsibilities for children's on-going welfare. The setting has an in-house training centre that ensures opportunities are consistently available for staff to develop their skills, which benefits children's care.

Children receive effective levels of attention because staff ratios are good. Effective organisation of space means that they move confidently around the areas, choosing activities and playing with their peers. Staff deployment is effective most of the time. Younger children benefit from very well organised staff who are secure within their role, which benefits their learning and development. Very comprehensive policies and procedures are in place, which are regularly reviewed. These are effectively used to underpin their work with children and parents. Required paperwork, such as daily registers and children's contact details are in place and well organised to support children's care. Overall, the provision meets the needs of range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education is satisfactory. The management team have a clear vision and work closely together, also with external agencies where applicable, to provide an effective and supportive provision. The organisation of the pre- school room is very supportive of children's independence as they move freely throughout the room choosing what they want to do. The lack of balance between child led and adult guided activities means that children often flit from activity to activity, which compromises their ability to focus. Management demonstrate a clear commitment to improvement and regularly undertake general evaluations so that weaknesses can be quickly identified and addressed. However, staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and planning for children's learning is not effectively monitored and evaluated. As a result, their knowledge and understanding of how to effectively deliver the curriculum is not strong and it cannot be assured that children's individual learning needs are consistently well met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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.

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 satisfactory.

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 the child protection policy reflects the latest regulations.

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):

- develop further, the planning and assessment so that it is clearly understood by all staff, ensuring that: the assessment is accurately completed and considers children's starting points; the planning indicates clear learning intentions and considers differentiation for children of varying capabilities
- ensure that all areas of the curriculum are effectively promoted, with particular reference to: Communication Language and Literacy in regard to staff questioning and the opportunity to begin to recognise letters within the environment; Physical education, ensuring that all areas are regularly planned for and that it is sufficiently challenging
- develop further, staff's knowledge of how to effectively deliver all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- ensure that staff's practice is effectively monitored and evaluated to ensure that they are providing a broad and balanced curriculum that supports children's individual learning needs
- review how staff are deployed and activities organised to ensure an effective balance of child led and adult guided activities.

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