



# Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY321200
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 October 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Nighat Ghani
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<b>Registered person</b>	Shabina Kausser Mughal
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Stepping Stones Nursery has been registered since 2006. It operates from a detached house in Urmston, an area of Trafford. A maximum of 33 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 until 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children on the roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also support a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Good hygiene policies and procedures are in place to protect children's health. However, some of these procedures are not fully implemented in practice. For example, after changing a child's nappy a member of staff collects another child from the playroom wearing the same apron, which has been used whilst changing other children. This increases a risk of cross infection. Children throughout the nursery are encouraged to wash their hands before meal times and after using the toilet, this helps children develop their understanding of self-care skills and maintaining their own health. However, their privacy and dignity is not respected when using the toilet.

Children are provided with a healthy and nutritious diet, which promotes their growth and development. They are kept refreshed and hydrated as young children are offered drinks throughout the day while the older children help themselves to fresh drinking water. Children's health is compromised because of a member of staff cooling children's food in the open air, which can lead to exposure to airborne dirt, flies or insects. Children's dietary needs are discussed with the parents and taken into consideration when providing meals. However, their individual health needs are not protected as details are displayed on the cupboards in the playrooms. All the records for the administration of medication and reporting of accidents are in place. However, staff have not obtained parental permission to seek emergency medical advice treatment. Consequently, in the event of a serious accident or illness staff may not act according to parental wishes.

Children are provided with plenty of opportunities to take part in the physical activities both outdoors and indoors, which promote their muscular control and coordination. They are learning to move around confidently and select and use one-handed tools and equipment well. Most children demonstrate good spatial awareness and control their body movements' very well whilst walking and negotiating obstacles in the room.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. Space is well organised, which ensures children can move about freely and play in comfort. Children access a range of good quality toys and resources, which are suitable for different ages and stages of development. These are organised on low shelves and boxes to promote children's choices and independence. Staff check most of the equipment to ensure it is safe and does not pose a risk to children.

Staff conduct regular risk assessments to ensure children's safety, However, hazards, such as piles of tyres, pushchairs, equipment full of rain water and large equipment is left in the middle of the play area while children ride their wheel toys, which compromises children's safety. Children's safety is protected by a secure procedure for entering the nursery building. The entrance door is kept locked and access can only be obtained by a member of staff opening the door. All the visitors entering the nursery sign in the visitor's book.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. All staff are aware of possible signs and symptoms, which may be a cause for concern. They are all clear about their responsibility with regards to child protection issues. There are clear and effective procedures in place to keep children safe.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff know the children well, they greet them warmly on arrival to the nursery. Babies receive lots of cuddles and develop a strong bond with staff and have positive relationships with their peers. Babies are held, cuddled and given lots of eye contact and one to one attention by staff. They develop good self-esteem as the staff listen and value what they say. Staff sit with the children and promote their learning through interaction, for example, a child playing with play dough is encouraged to talk about the colours and different shape cutters he is using. Children confidently play happily and cooperatively together to develop imaginative role play scenes, such as 'going shopping on a bus and cooking'.

Staff have satisfactory knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, as most of them have attended training in this area of work. They provide activities, which enable young children to make greater use of their senses and creative abilities. However, these activities are very structured and are offered to a small number of children within the room, which restricts their freedom of choice and independence. Several children from another group observed standing and waiting to participate in an activity going on the other side of the gate.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff provide a warm and caring environment, where children feel happy and secure. Children's confidence and self-esteem are well fostered and behaviour is consistently managed by staff who know the children well. All staff have good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Medium and long term plans are in place and include all six areas of learning. Staff have just started planning activities that are provided to the children on a daily basis. However, these do not clearly identify focused activities or their learning objectives. Staff complete assessments for individual children. These assessments are not used effectively as these do not clearly identify the next step in children's learning, or show how these are used to inform planning. Consequently, staff plan mostly for the children's group needs rather than individual needs, resulting in children not being sufficiently challenged and at times finding it difficult to sustain concentration. Staff are warm and affectionate, which creates an atmosphere in which learning can be developed. Resources are plentiful and children can access them freely.

Children are happy and confident in their environment. They relate well with each other and have made close attachments with their peer group. Children are becoming independent, as they are encouraged to put on their aprons before taking part in a messy activity and hang their coats on their pegs on arrival.

Children are confident speakers. They eagerly initiate conversation about their experiences, for example, to recount going on holiday to Greece in a big aeroplane. Very few children access books to acknowledge that these can be used for enjoyment and to locate information. Children access the mark making area for a very short period as staff do not encourage or challenge them to further their skills in everyday writing. They enthusiastically play with different musical instruments, making music and singing along with the other children. Children can recognise basic shapes, such as a circle, square, star and a triangle. They use mathematical language well, such as big, bigger, long and short as they build and compare their models.

Children learn about the natural world and their community during meaningful activities. They construct using a variety of objects and materials and use simple tools to achieve a desired effect. They access the computer confidently and generally use it well to support their learning. Children are curious, but their exploratory impulse is not sufficiently challenged, so they miss opportunities to be scientific in order to understand why things happen and how things work.

Children get the opportunity to develop their large motor skills, as they are provided with physical activities on a regular basis. Imagination is well fostered through role play. Children are rarely observed using paint freely, for example, to see what happens when two colours are mixed together. Modelling material, such as play dough, is regularly available for children to experiment with and create freely.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly greeted on arrival making them feel welcome. They are treated with equal concern, helping them to settle and join in with the activities. Staff respect parent's wishes as regards to any individual needs, helping to promote the children's self-esteem. Children with special needs are respected and fully integrated within the setting and their needs met through staff working in partnership with other agencies. Children play with a variety of toys and materials that reflect the wider world to increase their awareness of diversity and their understanding of others.

The children are generally well behaved and are beginning to learn and understand the difference between right and wrong. For example, a member of staff helps children to negotiate over a tricycle and understand they can share and take turns. Staff are consistent in the management of children's behaviour which has a positive effect on children's behaviour. They respect their environment by helping to tidy away the toys before meal time and at the end of the session. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with the parents is satisfactory. Children under three benefit from positive partnership with the parents. Staff get the opportunity to know and collate information from the parents during the settling in period while children settle and get familiar with their environment. Parents are provided with daily diaries, which includes a child's full days routine, such as sleep, intake, nappy change and the activities a child had done during the day. Staff also share information verbally about children's needs and interests on a regular basis.

Parents of the children who receive nursery education receive information on the Foundation Stage when children start the pre-school room. They are kept informed about their children's progress through formal evenings and general discussions with the staff. Children's assessment files are not freely accessible to the parents, which makes it difficult for them to identify the areas where their children are lacking and require their support. In conclusion, parents are not encouraged to contribute towards their children's learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well organised environment. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures and an efficient induction for new staff help to ensure that children are safe and well cared for. Staff are aware of roles and responsibilities and are deployed effectively. The management team have a strong commitment to improvement, training and the professional development of staff to further raise the quality of care and education. Sufficient staff are employed to work with children and the daily registers are completed accurately. An operational plan is in place which details the settings policies and procedures. The manager has worked hard to raise the standards for the care of under threes. Staff have had training in 'Birth to three matters' and this is now implemented in the nursery.

The quality of the leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager works closely with the staff during each session. She provides a role model for them and they are fully aware of their own and others roles and responsibilities. The manager is closely monitoring the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery provision and has already devised some action plans which will be implemented shortly. However, currently the areas for improvement within the curriculum have not been effectively developed. Therefore some children are not provided with sufficient challenges. Appraisals, regular meetings and good access to training ensures that staff are well supported in their professional development. However, there is no formal system in place to support and to identify developmental needs of the nursery manager. The staff work closely as a team, which results in smooth running, calm and happy play sessions. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection 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 satisfactory. 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):

- promote good hygiene practices during nappy changing and when handling children's food, ensure children's privacy and dignity is respected when using the toilet, maintain confidentiality regarding children's individual health needs and obtain parental permission to seek medical advice or treatment
- ensure that hazards to children in the outdoor play area are minimised with reference to piles of tyres, pushchairs, equipment full of rain water and the large equipment
- ensure children are able to access sensory activities freely

##### **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):

- ensure learning objectives of the focused activities are clearly identified and understood by staff so that children are sufficiently challenged, and develop the assessment system so that the next step in children's learning is identified, and show clearly how this is used to inform planning
- ensure parents can access their children's assessment files freely and contribute towards their learning
- ensure all areas for improvement identified within the curriculum is effectively implemented and develop a formal system to ensure that the nursery manager is supported and her areas of development are identified and acted upon.

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