



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 316832

DfES Number: 592301

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 19/01/2004
Inspector Name Gillian Patricia Bishop

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones
Setting Address Tottington Primary School
Moorside Road
Bury
BL8 3HR

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of The Governors of Tottington Primary School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name The Governors of Tottington Primary School
Address Tottington Primary School
Morrside ROad
Tottington
BL8 3HR

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 in 1998. It operates from one large room within a refurbished classroom within the grounds of Tottington Primary School in Bury. Children attending live within the local community.

There are currently 57 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 15 funded 3 year olds and 8 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports one child with special needs. There are no children attending who have English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school terms. Sessions are 09:00 until 11:30, and 12:40 until 15:10 Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Full day pre-school sessions are from 09:00 until 15:10 on Tuesday and Friday, these sessions are only available to children who are due to start school in the following September term.

Four staff work with the children. Two have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 3 and a third has an early years teaching certificate. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) The setting is currently working towards the Bury Quality Kite mark Award.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Pre-School provides satisfactory care for children. The pre-school group is supported by a management committee of which there are representatives from parents, staff and teaching staff from Tottington Primary School. The person in charge and the deputy hold NVQ Level 3 qualifications in Child Care and Education. Staff training opportunities are recognised as a means to develop so short term training opportunities are offered when ever possible. Space within the environment is limited but well organised and creative displays create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The operational plan requires reviewing with regard to the key worker system and to ensure appropriate ratio's are met for younger children.

There are clear policies for health and safety which are implemented by staff, they

are knowledgeable about children's individual needs and they promote good hygiene practices within everyday routines. Supervision is good due to the effective deployment of staff. Children know what is expected of them in relation to safety particularly when visiting the primary school. Children's individuality is respected and those with special needs are well supported although children using the ramp access still require adult support to ensure safety.

Children are confident in their environment and well occupied in a full range of interesting activities to support their learning. Staff are calm, sensitive and supportive, they ask appropriately challenging questions to extend children's experience and knowledge of particular topics. The children respond well to praise and encouragement, they have a clear understanding of right and wrong and they demonstrate responsibility and maturity in their actions.

Parents find staff to be friendly and approachable and good relationships have been established. Parents are kept informed through news letters and informal contact and they are aware that development files are available to see if they wish.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made very good progress with regard to the actions specified at the last inspection. A visitors record is now in place and new policies have been established to outline the child protection procedures and the procedure to be followed in the event that a child goes missing.

What is being done well?

- Children are welcomed, listened to and appropriately cared for by staff who know them well, warm and caring relationships exist which encourages children to feel happy and secure.
- Snack time is a pleasant and social occasion where children can chat and share their news. Independence and self help skills are appropriately encouraged by staff. Special consideration is given to ensure children staying for a school meal are appropriately supported by familiar staff.
- Children with special educational needs are well supported. Close links have been made with outside agencies as a means of support and advice.
- Staff speak to children with sensitivity and respect and they are consulted with regards to practical and safety issues. This encourages children to be responsible and mature in their actions.

What needs to be improved?

- the operational plan to ensure appropriate staff/ child ratio's are maintained
- the key worker system
- the temperature in the pre-school building

- the suitability of the ramp leading into the premises
- the behaviour management policy and details of children's arrival and departure times.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

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
2	Review the operational plan with regard to staff /child ratio's and the development of the key worker system.
4	Ensure all radiators are in working order .
6	Monitor the suitability of the ramp leading to the building. Ensure those currently using the ramp are able to do so without risk.
14	Amend the behaviour management policy to refer to bullying and include children's arrival and departure times in the daily registration system.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Pre-School provides generally good education overall. Children are confident and secure and benefit from a range of stimulating activities which challenge their thinking and learning across the six areas of learning. Children are making very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, mathematics and creative development. Children are making generally good progress in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.

The quality of the teaching is generally good. Children's confidence, creativity and self esteem is well fostered, children are very independent in their environment and they regularly make choices about what they want to do. Behaviour is consistently good due to the praise and encouragement they receive from staff. Key staff have a sound knowledge of the early learning goals but they would benefit from further training to enable long term topics to be further developed. The observation and assessment systems are under developed which can prevent staff from building on what children already know.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Staff are friendly and approachable to parents and good relationships exist, parents are kept informed about the setting through news letters and informal contact. Parental information about the early learning goals and the exchange of assessment records could be improved to ensure they are fully informed of their child's curriculum and progress.

The leadership and management of the setting is generally good. The small staff team work well together and are effective as a team. Close links with Tottington Primary School are very well established, there are excellent arrangements in place to ensure children transferring to the school do so with confidence and familiarity.

What is being done well?

- Children take great pride in their work and achievements, these are often celebrated with the whole group at circle time.
- Staff challenge children's thinking by asking open ended questions to enhance practical experiences and to develop their knowledge of various topics.
- Children display a great familiarity with how books work, they know that print carries meaning and they re-tell stories with clarity and great expression.
- Children are confident and articulate speakers who are able to express their ideas and thoughts with great enthusiasm.
- The small staff team work well together and they have established close links with Tottington Primary School. The transition from pre-school to reception

class is well managed ensuring that children feel secure and confident in their new environment.

What needs to be improved?

- training opportunities for staff to support the learning programme in knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematics
- opportunities for children to mark make during role play situations and the organisation of resources within the writing area so children can select from a wider range of resources more independently
- resources to support children's learning in knowledge and understanding of the world and opportunities for children to explore their local environment with regard to nature and the natural world
- the planning for outdoor play to ensure it receives the same priority as other areas of learning
- the systems for monitoring and recording progress
- the format and availability of assessment records for parents
- information for parents with regard to the early learning goals.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made very good progress implementing the three key issues since the last inspection.

In response to the first key issue children now have many good opportunities to aid letter and name recognition. This area of learning is now a key strength.

In response to the second key issue planning systems have now been developed to include all six areas of learning.

In response to the third key issue children now have regular opportunities to develop climbing skills.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in this area. Children are happy and secure in their environment which encourages them to be interested and motivated to learn, they have a positive disposition to learning and show a great enthusiasm when choosing and participating in all activities. Independence is well fostered, children make decisions about what they want to do and how an activity might be organised, children understand the need to take turns and share.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are making generally good progress in this area. Children are confident and fluent speakers, they use a wide vocabulary and are creative in their use of language and gesture to express their ideas and thoughts. Children link sounds and letters well making connections with familiar words. They have well developed writing skills and are able to write, copy and trace names and recognisable letters. Children have less opportunities to write during role play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in this area. Children sequence sort and match in everyday activities and situations. They use positional language in their play and are introduced to simple problem solving during meaningful activities and purposeful questioning by staff. Number and counting is well promoted and children are developing an understanding of addition and subtraction. Children respond well to challenge and are now ready to explore less familiar concepts such as symmetry.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are making very good progress in this area. Children construct and design using a variety of objects and materials to express their ideas. They consider size, shape and texture, thinking carefully about what they want to produce. They explore and investigate with their senses and by looking closely at differences and change. Resources in this area are limited and children have in-sufficient opportunities to explore the local environment with regard to nature and the natural world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are making generally good progress in this area. They confidently use a wide range of tools and equipment and their fine motor skills are challenged by purposeful and creative activities. Children successfully negotiate the restricted space indoors and are able to make larger movements during outdoor play. Children have good opportunities to learn new physical skills such as climbing, balancing and catching. Planning for outdoor play is weak and is not given sufficient priority.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are making very good progress in this area. Children use their imaginations well in art, role play, small world and during conversation with their peers. Children have many good opportunities to explore a variety of media and materials during well planned, adult led activities and they take great pride in their creative art work. Children enjoy singing and they know a good repertoire of songs, there are good opportunities to express themselves through song, dance and music.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally 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: THE KEY ISSUES

- Develop the educational programme and resources in knowledge and understanding of the world. Provide more opportunities for children to explore their local environment with regard to nature and the wider natural world.
- Develop opportunities for children to write during role play. Improve the organisation and availability of resources in the writing area so that children can select from a wider range of resources more independently.
- Develop current planning systems to include outdoor play. Review the observation and assessment systems to ensure the information gathered is used to inform future planning and builds on what children already know. Improve procedures for informing parents about children's progress and assessment and the information available to them regarding the early learning goals.

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.