



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127645

DfES Number: 515379

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 12/07/2004  
Inspector Name Tracy Larnach

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name Stepping Stones Pre-School  
Setting Address Kendall Hall  
Nunnery Fields  
Canterbury  
Kent  
CT1 3JN

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Stepping Stones Pre-School

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Pre-School  
Address Kendell Hall  
Nunnery Fields  
Canterbury  
Kent  
CT1 3JN

## 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 was established in 1967. It operates in Kendall Hall, Canterbury. The pre-school has access to two rooms, toilets, a kitchen and an outside area. This registered charity aims to enhance the care and education of children under statutory school age in a parent-involving, community based group.

There are currently 35 children on the roll. This includes 24 funded 4-year-olds and 8 funded 3-year-olds.

Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The pre-school staff have experience working with children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week, term time only. Sessions last from 9.00 to 11.55. The pre-school provides a morning snack. They receive support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

### How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Pre-School provides good care for children. Staff provide a caring and welcoming environment. They are organised and work effectively as a team, meeting regularly to discuss the pre-school, future planning and their own development.

Staff give high priority to children's safety; a daily risk assessment is undertaken. Staff do not always close off the unused areas of the pre-school. Fire drills are held regularly. An attendance record is maintained, but it does not include children's arrival and departure times and parent helpers are not documented by name. Children learn about health and hygiene through routines such as hand washing. They are provided with drinks and snacks which are healthy and nutritious. Two staff hold a current first aid certificate and a named member of staff ensures the first aid kit is replenished. The pre-school has child protection procedures which are in line with the local authority guidelines.

The children are able to select from a broad range of toys, activities and equipment. These are set out by the pre-school staff after careful planning. Future plans will allow the children more opportunity to self-select. There is a good balance between self initiated and adult supported activities. Staff work positively with the children. They are interested in what they say, ask open ended questions and children are encouraged to communicate with each other. The children are well behaved and cooperative, and the noise level is pleasant in the classroom. All children are valued and included. The manager is trained as the special educational needs coordinator, and she works with other professionals and parents.

Parents interviewed were extremely happy with their children's care. The parent involvement is excellent and parents feel part of their children's development. All parents have copies of the comprehensive policies and procedures. Other information about the setting is clearly posted for the parents.

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

Staff have developed their knowledge of equal opportunities. An equal opportunities and diversity policy is in place. The manager has attended an equal opportunities course and cascaded the information to the staff. Classroom displays depict families of different races and cultures, as well as men and women in non stereotypical roles. There is a good range of toys and the book area has many books that promote equal opportunities.

### **What is being done well?**

- Staff work effectively as a team, each staff member is aware of her responsibilities for that day. Adult discussions are minimal. Staff are deployed to areas to support the children's learning and keep them safe.
- Staff meet every two weeks. This gives them time to share information, discuss concerns and discuss their future development. Future plans for shelving will allow opportunity for the children to self-select. Plans for new toilets, including a disabled toilet, storage and a new kitchen door will alleviate concerns regarding the areas currently unused by the children.
- A daily risk assessment is undertaken. The follow up action and outcome is documented.
- Fire drills are held regularly. Each term a week is set aside and the children evacuate each day. This ensures all children have an opportunity to participate.
- The children can help themselves to water at any time. They are provided with drinks and snacks which are healthy and nutritious. The policy stipulates, 'healthy, nutritious food free from additives, fat and sugar'.
- Staff are heard using lots of positive reinforcement, praise and acknowledging the children's feelings. Consequently the children are well behaved and the noise level in the classroom is pleasant.
- Parents interviewed were extremely happy with their children's care. The

parent involvement is excellent and parents feel part of their children's development.

- The pre-school has comprehensive policies and procedures which are reviewed and updated annually.

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

- the attendance records
- children's access to unused areas.

#### **Outcome of the inspection**

Good

#### **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   | Ensure registration arrangements show when children, staff and visitors are present. |

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Pre-School provision is acceptable and of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The pre-school provides children with a warm, caring and welcoming environment.

The overall quality of teaching is very good. Staff work positively and enthusiastically with all children, encouraging them to be confident, independent and very self-assured. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. They plan a comprehensive and balanced range of activities and set very good challenges for children allowing them to make rapid progress through the stepping stones.

Activities and staff's time management of activities are generally well organised. Children are encouraged to use their imaginations and initiative throughout the session. Staff are working towards providing opportunities for children to use numbers practically throughout the session and for children to be able to move freely between the inside and outdoor area. The outside environment is generally used daily.

The effectiveness of assessment and curriculum planning is very good. Staff have introduced a comprehensive assessment system and make detailed observations of children's progress. Staff know children well, and information from assessment is used effectively to inform the planning of activities.

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. Staff are led by a positive and enthusiastic leader. All staff work together to identify weaknesses within the setting. Clear procedures have been implemented in order to evaluate and review the effectiveness of the pre-school practice.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are greeted warmly when they arrive at pre-school and receive very good opportunities to be informed about their children's attainment and progress in learning. Staff provide parents with detailed information about the setting and its provision.

### What is being done well?

- Staff support children very well. Children are confident and independent, they work well together and have formed very good relationships.
- Children communicate well together. They speak confidently as they play freely throughout the session.
- Children receive very good opportunities to take part in a broad range of creative activities. They have access to a broad selection of equipment that allows them to express and communicate their ideas freely.

- Staff plan the daily routine well. Children explore a wide range of imaginative and free-play activities that effectively extend children's learning through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.
- The pre-school is managed by a positive and enthusiastic leader. Staff work effectively together as a strong team, regularly challenging and extending children through each of the areas of learning.

**What needs to be improved?**

- opportunities for children to count and recognise numbers throughout the session
- the use of the outside play area
- time management of 'tidy up' and 'snack time'.

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

Not applicable.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have developed good relationships and their behaviour is very good. They work positively and enthusiastically together to complete a range of activities. Children are encouraged towards personal independence, and confidently select from resources placed out by staff. They are introduced to positive images of other cultures, traditions and beliefs through well-planned activities.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children speak confidently together in groups, communicating their ideas during free-play. Staff make very effective use of planned discussion activities to develop and extend children's language skills. Good opportunities are provided for children to write freely and imaginatively as part of free-play activities. Children enjoy reading sessions and actively use and enjoy the books displayed.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have access to a good range of mathematical equipment and staff make effective use of these to encourage children to solve simple problems as part of practical and free-play activities. Children confidently recognise and form shapes as part of their play. Staff have begun to introduce activities that encourage children to use and recognise numbers. However, numbers are not displayed within the pre-school.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children receive very good opportunities to explore the local and wider world and to discuss their home and family life. Staff provide a very good range of planned investigation activities that allow children to explore the properties of different materials. Very good use is made of activities to allow children to look closely at the differences, patterns and changes to materials. Children skilfully use a range of materials for construction.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children receive daily opportunities to move safely and freely. Staff carefully plan the programme of activities to allow children to access a wide range equipment. Children skilfully use the large and small equipment, showing co-ordination and confidence. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their small manipulative skills.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| Judgement: | Very Good |
|------------|-----------|

The children receive very good opportunities to respond to a variety of experiences as part of the daily programme of activities. Children are encouraged to use their imaginations to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Children respond freely to music, moving imaginatively through dance and movement.

**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 opportunities for children to count and identify numbers throughout the session
- the management and organisation of 'tidy up' and 'snack time'.

*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.*