



## Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY321490                          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 12 October 2006                   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Adelaide Griffiths                |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | 12 Stoney Road, COVENTRY, CV1 2NP |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 02476 222287                      |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Stepping Stones Nursery           |
| <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 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 Nursery opened in 2006 and operates from the ground floor of a converted house very close to the city centre of Coventry. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens each weekday from 08:15 to 17:30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children aged from five months to under five years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for early years education. The children come from all areas of the city as most parents travel to work. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Authority early years service.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are clearly learning about hygiene matters as part of the daily routine and effective procedures are in place to minimise the likelihood of cross-infection. For example, the premises are clean and clear nappy change guidelines are implemented. Comprehensive policies for exclusion for children who are infectious, sickness and emergency medical treatment promote children's health.

Children are gaining a good understanding of healthy eating due to a daily menu of freshly cooked and well-balanced meals. Their self-reliance is promoted as they select portions of fruit during open snack sessions and attempt to pour drinks at dinner time. Children are well-informed about the effects of some drinks, for instance, that coke rots teeth and that water is beneficial. All staff adhere to children's individual dietary requirements and established feeding patterns as agreed with parents. All children drink frequently.

Children have opportunities to participate in daily exercise as they access a large selection of play equipment. Young children are developing their large muscles through crawling and the use of push-along toys. They sleep according to established patterns in a quiet room.

The outside play area is divided into different sections to promote children's physical skills. They run confidently and have fun whilst splashing in puddles. Children's sense of space is developing as they vigorously brush away water with brooms although others have not grasped the concept totally. Play equipment such as climbing frames supports children's balancing skills and some children are developing the co-ordination of movements. Their use of small tools is substantially promoted through manipulating watering cans and spades outside and paint brushes when playing indoors. All children benefit from a balance between vigorous and quiet activities.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which is bright and cheerful with displays of children's work and personalised pegs. Children move around freely indoors while accessing safe toys and secured facilities provide a stimulating environment for outside play. Children's independence is promoted in a hazard free toilet area and they are clearly learning to take responsibility for their environment by disposing of paper towels correctly.

Owing to established rules children are gaining a good understanding of personal safety. For example, they are aware that they are not allowed to access the kitchen. However, this awareness is not followed through in care rooms with slippery floors that pose a potential hazard. Children's security is competently maintained due to controlled entry to the premises and constant supervision. Children's ability to leave the building in an emergency is reinforced through participation in fire drills and related discussions.

Children's welfare is safeguarded due to staff's substantial understanding of child protection issues. A detailed policy informs staff's clarity in regard to relevant procedures and their knowledge is updated frequently.

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

The provision is good.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used effectively to plan activities which promote the care of younger children positively. All aspects of children's development are consistently assessed to monitor their progress. Younger children are benefiting from play opportunities with interesting resources. For example, children experience a variety of sensations by playing with sensory boards and they can feel the simulated wind effects in the 'sensory recess'. Children are encouraged to use their initiative to access an inviting book corner and they enthusiastically participate in activities in the soft play room. Children are enjoying stimulating activities in this nursery.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and all have accessed relevant training. Planning and assessments are linked to all areas of learning and used effectively to promote children's individual development.

Owing to staff's commitment children are genuinely interested and remain focussed during activities and at times take the initiative to extend these. For example, they fetch books with pictures of dinosaurs while sorting animals in an activity. Children's independence is promoted as they develop trusting relationships with staff who have created an atmosphere in which they feel secure to explore, investigate and to take responsibility for aspects of self-care. Staff's interaction encourages children to develop confidence in expressing their ideas.

Staff are alert to children's individual preferences which are considered when planning and implementing activities, for example, when using information technology they work with children's strengths and preferences. All children including those with special educational needs are stimulated to promote their learning and significant aspects of children's cultural backgrounds are included in activities.

Children are making good progress in counting with adult guidance and they recognise numbers as labels in the environment. They are gaining an understanding of different textures through indoor and outdoor activities. Children are learning about the wider community as they visit the local amenities such as the library and the park.

Children benefit from a variety of teaching methods and assessments which work together to encourage progress. The positive approach to the management of behaviour and the enthusiasm projected by the staff support children's learning and development.

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

The provision is good.

Children have a sense of belonging due to staff's thorough knowledge of their individual needs and preferences. All children including those with additional needs benefit from care by experienced staff. Children are clearly learning about other cultures through activities and resources including a colourful selection of toddler-size dressing up clothes. Their understanding of the local community and social issues is meaningful. For example, they contribute to appeals and participate in making cakes at harvest time for residential homes.

Children are well-behaved due to the positive management of behaviour. They are encouraged to adhere to rules and are rewarded with praise and stickers for effort and achievement. All children are developing self-reliance as the younger ones are encouraged take responsibility for feeding themselves and older children help with clearing away as part of the tidy-up routine. They are encouraged to show caring attitudes towards others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through activities and resources.

All parents are supplied with clear information about the nursery before children are registered and information is consistently shared about children's daily experiences. Children's settling-in period is tailored to their individual needs and if required facilitated with comfort objects. All parents have access to policies and additional materials on the parents' board. They receive a monthly newsletter which sets out forthcoming events.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are clearly supplied with information about the educational programme and they have opportunities to obtain detailed information about their children's progress at open evenings. They are encouraged to participate in children's learning through discussion and by providing home based resources which children can use for planned learning activities. Children's care and education benefit from the partnership with parents.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are protected due to substantial procedures to ensure the suitability of all persons working in the nursery. There is good organisation and experienced staff work well together and take responsibility for specific aspects of care. A vast bank of policies is available to underpin practice and staff are empowered to support the care and development of children as they plan a wide range of enjoyable and stimulating activities. Staff are led by the enthusiastic registered persons who facilitate input from external professionals to enhance the provision for children. Their commitment to improving practice is commendably maintained by accessing courses to extend their understanding of children's care and development.

Leadership and management of the nursery is good. The trusting relationship built up between the registered persons and the staff creates an atmosphere in which staff feel free to organise and deliver the educational programme. Although staff have good understanding of the Foundation Stage there are some areas in which they have not received training to support the assessment of children's learning. Staff collaborate in planning for and observing children

progress and work together on the assessment process. The strong leadership and management supports staff in delivering the nursery education. Overall, children's needs are 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 by 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 good.

### **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):

- take positive steps to promote safety within the setting and ensure proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents

#### **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):

- improve staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage in relation to assessments to support all aspects of children's learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)