



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 129056

DfES Number: 516627

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 16/09/2004
Inspector Name Silvia Richardson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones Montessori Nursery Ltd
Setting Address 39 Kitto Road
London
SE14 5TW

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Montessori Nursery Limited 03224800

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Stepping Stones Montessori Nursery Limited
Address Church of God of Prophecy
Kitto Road
London
SE14 5TW

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 Montessori Nursery opened in 1996. It operates from ground floor rooms of church and community premises and serves the local area.

There are currently 31 children from six months to two years on roll. This includes four funded 3 year olds and three funded 4 year olds. Children attend mostly on a full-time basis.

The setting supports children with special needs and several children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times and is open for periods of the school holidays. Sessions are from 08:00 to 18:00.

Seven full-time staff and one part-time work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Montessori Nursery provides satisfactory care for children. The setting is spacious and organised and staff create a calm, structured routine with well planned activities for the children. There is a good range of nursery equipment to meet the varying developmental needs of babies and a broad range of Montessori equipment for children, affording them variety and choice. Most toys and equipment are easily accessed by children who are able to self-select from the range available. Toys and play materials for babies are less accessible and staff generally choose these for the babies.

Children are encouraged to have some freedom of movement around the nursery and are closely supervised, limiting independence but ensuring their safety with a few minor weaknesses in this area. Self-discipline is encouraged and children

generally co-operate well with guidance from staff. Children express how they feel through behaviour and staff provide a range of suitable activities to channel feelings and help children express emotions appropriately. All children are valued and differences are respected.

Babies follow a familiar routine that is structured around management of the group as a whole. Key workers are appointed to observe and monitor progress although they are not mainly responsible for individual care and well-being throughout the day or for following individual routines. Staff carry out most tasks on a rota basis while babies frequently watch and wait for their turns at activities as staff provide individual attention at these times. There are weaknesses with records in accounting for which staff are looking after babies, who is providing personal care and when treatments are given.

A daily record of the names of the children looked after is kept, although not the hours of attendance or those of staff and visitors to the premises. Other records are reasonably well recorded and those intended for parents, provide some helpful information.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Good progress has been made since the last inspection.

The providers have improved their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, through obtaining written guidance and procedure details and attending a course of training, enabling them to make an appropriate response should concerns arise.

Vetting procedures are in place, ensuring the suitability of those having contact and working with children.

The providers have improved their knowledge and understanding of how to respond to situations where children present with special educational needs, through attending an appropriate course of training, enabling them to take action by following correct procedures when concerns arise.

What is being done well?

- The Nursery environment and outside play area are well organised and space and resources are utilised effectively so that children's play and learning needs are met appropriately.
- The baby room has a comfortable carpeted area for floor play where babies may move around freely, promoting their development.
- There is good provision of nursery furniture and Montessori equipment, appropriate to babies' developmental needs and facilitating children's learning and acquisition of skills.
- A good range of topics, religious and cultural festivals are introduced with practical, hands-on experiences for children to learn about differences and

develop knowledge and understanding.

What needs to be improved?

- variety and choice of accessible play materials for babies;
- opportunities for babies to follow individual care routines with identified staff primarily responsible for well being and record keeping;
- the procedures for recording which adults are responsible for the care of the babies and accountability for children, staff and visitors on the premises;
- some safety and precautionary measures;
- a partnership approach with parents regarding recording and sharing observations, reports and other information;

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	keep a written record of the times babies and children are in the care of the nursery and times when staff and visitors are on the premises;
3	provide a variety and choice of accessible play materials for babies and create opportunities for continuous exploratory play to promote their all round development;
3	make arrangements for babies to follow individual routines with identified staff who are primarily responsible for their care and well being and for keeping accurate and up-to-date daily records;
6	ensure all rooms and areas not used by the children are made inaccessible, glass panes are made safe, tripping hazard removed and fire notices displayed;
12	review the methods and procedures for recording and sharing information

	and records with parents to ensure you adopt a positive partnership approach;
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INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Montessori Nursery provides a warm, friendly atmosphere where children's progress towards the early learning goals is generally good, with very good aspects relating to Mathematics, Knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Teaching is generally good. Staff's understanding of the early learning goals is very good, with activities planned and available that cover all areas of the early years curriculum being in balance with the Montessori curriculum. Staff need to extend the challenges set for children to ensure more frequent opportunities are provided for children to develop their literacy skills and extend their personal independence. Staff use their assessments of children's progress to aid future planning. Teaching methods are very good. The daily routine allows for structured activities such as news/circle and story times, Montessori focus and inside/outside free play. Children who use English as an additional language are supported well within the general routine that includes lots of opportunities for group discussions. Behaviour management within the nursery is positive and consistent, as a result children are well behaved and respond cooperatively to the daily routine.

The leadership and management are effective and help support good teamwork. The managers' and staff are suitably qualified and show a strong commitment to ongoing staff development and improving the quality of service. All staff are actively involved in planning, evaluation and children's assessments. They work cooperatively together throughout the day creating a calm and productive atmosphere.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are provided with a variety of information about the setting, activities that are taking place and their child's progress. Staff could do more to involve parents in the daily events of the nursery and extend opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress more frequently.

What is being done well?

- Children enjoy, and benefit from, a wide range of interesting and exciting activities aimed at improving their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children are developing very good creative skills. They enjoy action songs and music sessions. They show free imaginative expression and have good opportunities to explore using a variety of media.
- Children make excellent use of resources aimed at developing their mathematical skills and are supported well by staff.
- Staff make good use of time and the nursery environment, enabling children to benefit from the varied daily routine.

What needs to be improved?

- Challenges set for children, to ensure more frequent opportunities are provided for children to develop their literacy skills and extend their personal independence.
- Partnership with parents, to extend opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress more frequently and become more involved in the events of the nursery.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the setting was asked to consider ways of introducing reading and writing opportunities into play situations, such as role play.

The setting has made very good progress by providing resources in the home role play room, such as writing materials and a cash register with note writing area and by providing a desk/office with phone and writing materials etc in the creative area. Staff have also encouraged children to write notes and labels.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's personal, social and emotional development is generally good. Children are interested to learn, show confidence and respond well to the daily routine. They are developing good skills of independence and select and use resources well, however opportunities to develop personal independence are limited. Children have good relationships with adults and other children. Activities that promote positive self-image are excellently presented allowing children to explore their identity.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's progress in communication language and literacy is generally good. Children use books purposefully and enjoy stories, songs and rhymes. They are developing good writing skills and make good attempts at writing letters, however they are not encouraged enough to make independent use of writing materials throughout the day. Children communicate well, are confident speakers and engage easily in conversations with each other and adults, especially during their sociable meal times.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's progress in mathematical development is very good. Children are developing good counting and calculating skills through a variety of activities, including songs/rhymes, practical experiences and Montessori equipment. Children use mathematical language to describe shape and size. They are developing very good problem solving skills and show a good awareness of pattern and size, for example when ordering bricks by length and grading cups and Russian dolls.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Children are able to explore and investigate objects and learn about nature and the environment outside the nursery, supported by a range of exciting outings and activities. Children are developing a sense of time. They have good opportunities to develop awareness of cultures and beliefs through music, instruments and activities relating to festivals. Children design, construct and use technical equipment confidently.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children's progress in physical development is very good. Children move confidently and show a good awareness of space while participating in music and movement sessions and using wheeled toys. They use equipment and tools appropriately, developing good coordination and balancing skills. Children make good use of the outside play area and use balls, hoops, wheeled toys and climbing equipment effectively. Children are developing an awareness of their bodies and good health.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children make very good progress in creative development. They are able to explore using a variety of media and materials such as paint, collage and playdough. Children express themselves imaginatively through a variety of activities including role-play, music, action songs and art activities. They have good opportunities to experience a variety of types of music and are able to sing simple songs from memory.

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

- Ensure children are encouraged to make frequent use of resources that aid their communication, language and literacy development.
- Develop opportunities for children to gain a greater sense of personal independence.
- Extend opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress more frequently and become more involved in the events of the nursery.

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.