



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 221739

DfES Number: 595659

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 24/01/2005  
Inspector Name Emma Louise Bright

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name St Andrew's Stepping Stones  
Setting Address Church Halls, School Hill  
Histon  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB4 9JE

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Andrews Stepping Stones

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Andrews Stepping Stones  
Address School Hill  
Histon  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB4 9JE

## 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

St Andrew's Stepping Stones is managed by a voluntary committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It opened in 1984 and operates from two rooms of the church hall and is situated in the village of Histon, close to Cambridge.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open three days a week from 09:20 to 11:50 during school term times. The group also offers a lunch session from 11:50 to 12:50. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged from 2 to 3 years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The playgroup employs six staff. Five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

### How good is the Day Care?

St Andrew's Stepping Stones provides good quality care for children.

A welcoming environment is provided for children, which helps them to feel settled and secure. Children have access to a large play space so they can move about freely, and a good range of interesting activities and resources so that they are involved and active throughout the session. The staff work well together and good staffing ratios means children benefit from individual care and attention.

Documentation is clear, detailed and implemented by the staff, which helps to underpin the good practice and ensures children's safety and well-being. There is a small piece of documentation missing.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of safety issues. They are vigilant in ensuring that children are safe during their play and security is very good. Children are encouraged to learn about good hygiene practice through the daily routine. Staff ensure that children's dietary needs are met. The staff have a good awareness of

child protection and procedures are in place to ensure children are kept safe.

Staff promote an inclusive ethos and enable children to learn about other cultures. Children have limited access to a range of resources, which support equal opportunities. There are procedures in place to support children with special needs. Children's behaviour is very good. Staff are consistent, using praise and encouragement to reinforce and help children understand about good behaviour. The staff and children enjoy warm and affectionate relationships. Staff interact well with the children; they talk and listen respectfully to them, encouraging them to think and demonstrate what they know.

Good relationships between the staff and parents have been established. Parents receive a detailed welcome pack so that they know about the group's aims and activities. Verbal information is shared with parents on a daily basis so they know about their child's progress.

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

At the last inspection, the group agreed to make the outdoor area safe, conduct a risk assessment of the premises and update the Equal Opportunities policy.

Risk assessments are carried out regularly, with a safety checklist being completed daily, and hazards in the outdoor play area have been removed; this ensures children's safety. The Equal Opportunities policy has been updated and now reflects current legislation and guidance.

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

- Staffing ratios are very good. The effectiveness of the key worker system ensures that children receive good individual care and attention. This means that children are confident and feel secure.
- Interaction between the staff and children is very good and children are supported well in their activities. The staff listen carefully to what children say and respond with interest; this fosters a supportive and caring environment where children happy and confident.
- Very good safety arrangements are in place and clearly implemented. The staff are particularly vigilant and help children to understand about the dangers, which means children can play safely at all times.
- The staff have good behaviour management skills. They are consistent in their approach and set good examples so that children understand what is expected of them. Children respond well to consistent expectations and their behaviour is good.

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

- resources, to ensure that children have further access to an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and

anti-discriminatory practice

- documentation, to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

**PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)**

There are no complaints to report.

**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
7	Request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.
9	Ensure that children have further access to an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at St Andrew's Stepping Stones is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good. The staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and they plan using the stepping stones, which provide children with a range of activities and experiences. Aspects of the curriculum have yet to be developed to further enrich the nursery education provision. An effective key worker system enables children to be happy and confident in the setting. Assessments for each child are in place. Good behaviour is valued and staff manage children's behaviour well; children respond to their consistent and positive behaviour management. There is an appropriate system in place to support children with special educational needs.

Leadership and management is generally good. The manager is committed to further improvement of good practice throughout the provision. The staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. Individual staff appraisals identify areas for professional development and they participate in regular training opportunities to ensure their practice continues to develop. The system for monitoring and evaluating the nursery education provision could be further improved. The committee is supportive and this ensures the smooth running of the setting.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents receive very good information about the setting, its provision and aims for their children. Regular notices and newsletters keep them informed of coming events and topics the children are working on. Parents could have further opportunities to contribute to their child's assessment and would benefit from further information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents are comfortable to approach staff and discuss their child and relationships are good.

### What is being done well?

- Children's early mathematical skills are developing very well. Staff support maths in the daily routine, particularly counting and early calculating skills so that children are becoming proficient at counting and recognising simple numerals.
- Staff use their good questioning skills effectively. Children enjoy talking about what they are doing and staff encourage them to think and give them time to demonstrate what they know.
- Children's personal, social and emotional skills are developing very well. Children are happy and settled, displaying a confidence in their interaction

with others. The staff offer the children lots of praise and encouragement and carefully nurture their confidence.

- Children are confident communicators and staff encourage their spoken language skills well. Children have good opportunities to speak in a familiar group and to share their news or information that is important to them.

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

- organisation of resources so that children can initiate activities and select resources that support a self-chosen activity
- further opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills in a variety of activities
- opportunities for children to explore a range of natural and man-made objects and investigate how things work
- the programme for creative development so children can use their imagination in art and design
- information for parents on the Foundation Stage curriculum and opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's assessment
- the system to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education.

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

Not applicable.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children relate well to each other and adults and enjoy comfortable relationships with the staff. They are beginning to concentrate and persevere with tasks. Older children confidently express their own needs. Children are beginning to learn about working together, sharing resources and taking turns. They respond well to the positive messages given to them and their behaviour is good. Children have less opportunities to select from a wider range of resources that support a self-chosen activity.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's language skills are developing well; they speak confidently to a familiar audience and have good opportunities to practise this skill. They respond to simple instructions and staff use good questioning skills to encourage children to think. Children show a great interest in books and enjoy listening to stories, joining in enthusiastically. Children have less opportunities to develop their early writing skills in a wide range of practical activities.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show a great interest in numbers and are beginning to recognise simple numerals. They use number names in their play and they know how old they are. Children competently use resources to re-create simple patterns, sorting for colour and size. Children recognise simple shapes and demonstrate an understanding of size and position. Staff support this well by using appropriate mathematical language in a range of planned and everyday activities.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enthusiastically talk about significant events in their own lives. They are developing a sense of time through talking about their daily routine. Children are developing an interest in their world, where they live and they know their way around the setting. Visitors to the group further support learning. Children have less opportunities to explore and investigate objects and how things work, and to design and construct with a range of tools and materials.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children move confidently during outdoor play and demonstrate good coordination to pedal and steer tricycles. They are learning to climb and balance on large apparatus, jumping and landing with good control. Children's fine motor skills are developing; they handle scissors with increasing control and can thread small beads. They are developing a good awareness of healthy practices. Children have less opportunities to construct from a range of large materials.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have opportunities to explore colour and make good use of the free painting activity. They enjoy observing the patterns made during marble painting. They enjoy singing familiar songs and join in with enthusiasm. Children enjoy re-enacting familiar scenarios in the role-play area and they are developing their imagination, using the resources to support their play. Some art activities are adult-led, so children have less opportunities to create their own artwork on a regular basis.

**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 curriculum to further enrich opportunities for children so that they can select resources to develop their skills in mark-making, exploration and investigation and their imagination in art and design. Ensure the system for monitoring and evaluating the nursery education provision develops so that areas for improvement are effectively addressed
- continue to develop the system of assessment to increase opportunities for parents to contribute towards their child's assessment and ensure they have further information on the Foundation Stage curriculum.

*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.*