



# Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY320375
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 July 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Sarah Jane Wignall
<b>Setting Address</b>	Bishop Bronescombe C of E VA School, 84 Boscoppa Road, St. Austell, Cornwall, PL25 3DT
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<b>Registered person</b>	Stepping Stones Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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 Pre-School is a committee run group and is one of three pre-schools run by the Stepping Stones pre-schools in the St Austell area. It opened in 2006 and operates from one main room in Bishop Bronescombe C of E VA School. It is situated on the outskirts of St Austell town. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 until 11.30 and 12.45 until 15.15 during term times only. They also operate an after

school facility each weekday from 15.15 until 17.45 during term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed play area.

There are currently 53 children from two to four years on roll. Of these, 34 children receive funding for early education. Children mainly come from the local area. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. Over half the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is currently working towards qualification. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from Family Services. They are members of Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by staff that have a good understanding of suitable health and hygiene procedures. They follow good practice as they encourage children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Children are made aware of the reasons for this, saying that it is to prevent getting germs. Children are provided with paper towels and hand wash which limits the risk of cross infection. Children are protected from the dangers of the sun as they follow the example set by staff and wear hats as they go out to play. Staff ensure the setting is kept clean and tidy and tables are wiped and prepared before snack time. Appropriate record systems are in place, and used to keep parents informed of accidents and medications. Children's health is protected by staff who hold current first aid and food hygiene certificates.

Children benefit from access to a healthy range of midday snacks, which include fresh and dried fruit. Children make choices from the items available and also pour their own drinks of milk or water. During session times children can help themselves to water from a jug and cups available within the play room. Information about special diets and allergies is recorded and displayed in order that all staff are fully informed.

Children enjoy daily timetabled access to a good sized outdoor play area. They gain physical skills as they pedal and push when using ride on toys, or balance when walking on beams or stilts. Children confidently move in different ways as they gallop, march and tiptoe when following instructions on a music and movement tape. Children show good spatial awareness as they move within the play room, line up and sit at circle time. Children develop small muscle control as they use a range of one handed tools such as scissors, pencils and glue sticks.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in a generally safe and suitable environment.

Staff undertake daily checks to ensure the premises are safe and suitable to use. Some measures are in place to minimise risks to children such as external doors being locked once the session begins, however the outdoor play area is not always fully secured when pre-school and out of school sessions are taking place. Children learn about fire safety as they practice regular fire drills, and have occasional visits from the fire service. Children follow safe procedures as they line up sensibly when going outside to play, and they move safely within the playroom. Staff supervise children well as they move around the setting and when playing outdoors.

Children have access to a good range of toys and resources which are safe and suitable. Staff select and rotate resources which are suitable and age appropriate. Small items, which could be dangerous, are not available when younger children are present. Children are able to self select some resources, but limited storage facilities mean some items are not available at each session. Staff supervise children well when using climbing or balancing equipment.

Children are well protected by the staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. A designated child protection officer liaises regularly with the group to discuss any concerns or issues that arise. A written policy is in place, and staff are aware of what to do if concerned about a child in their care.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled at the pre-school. They confidently enter and separate easily from parents and carers. Sessions are well organised with children having daily access to a wide range of activities which include role play, craft activities and construction among others. Use of the outdoor play area is timetabled and shared with the school. Generally this area is under used with the focus mainly on the development of physical skills. Staff support children well as they play. Children attending the Out of School club clearly enjoy attending and have developed good relationships with staff. Sessions after school are informal and relaxed with children being encouraged to self select from the available resources and follow their own particular interests.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and they plan a varied and interesting curriculum. Staff recognise that children enjoy and learn from practical activities and they ensure sessions offer a good balance between focussed activities and free play. Effective planning is in place ensuring a balance across all areas of learning. Children are keen to learn and try new experiences showing good levels of concentration and interest. Daily routines such as snack and circle time are used effectively to reinforce children's understanding of maths and literacy.

Children are gaining some independence as they pour their own drinks and help themselves at snack time. Older children are learning personal independence and self care as they change for PE in readiness for starting school. Children have good

relationships with both staff and each other. Children confidently ask for help if needed, and contribute answers at circle time. Children have lots of opportunities to draw and make marks. Younger children enjoy painting lines with water while older, more able children are encouraged to write their name on their work. Children enjoy listening to stories and staff help bring the stories to life as they use puppets and other props. Children have access to factual books and staff use these to demonstrate pictures and text when discussing different creatures that live in the sea.

Children learn to count and recognise numerals through planned activities and daily routines. Many children can confidently recognise numerals to five and some beyond. Children learn the principal of addition as they count and collect the correct numbers of plates and cups for children seated on their table, and calculate if they have collected enough. Children learn about size and shape as they compare the longest and shortest piece of driftwood, and they complete jigsaws and construction games. Children learn about technology as they have access to the computer and use the mouse to navigate around simple computer programmes. They learn a sense of time as they discuss days of the week during circle time. Children learn how magnets work as they make a fishing games using paperclips and magnets to hook the fish. Children enjoy using their senses to explore different materials. Several children showed great interest as they felt the texture of wet spaghetti. Children enjoy listening to music and following instructions to move in certain ways. Daily access to paint and drawing materials allows children to use their imagination and be creative.

Staff make regular observations and assessments of children's progress and use this information to set individual targets for development. Staff's knowledge of individual children help them focus key learning intentions to help children make progress.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a small setting where staff have a good understanding of their individual needs. All children are welcomed, and designated key workers act as a point of contact for parents settling new children in. Children are confident and settled and enjoy attending. Children with learning difficulties are well supported by staff and fully included in all activities. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals in planning for their needs. Children learn about the local community as they have occasional visits from professionals working in the community such as the fire and school crossing patrol services. They learn about the wider world as they celebrate traditional festivals such as St Patrick's day, and they play with resources such as puppets, puzzles and books. Good links with the adjoining primary school benefit older children as they spend time in school preparing for the transition into the reception class.

Children behave very well. Staff manage behaviour in a calm and consistent way and they reward children with lots of verbal praise and encouragement, helping to raise self esteem and confidence. Children are fully aware of the expectations for behaviour and they respond well. Sessions are well organised following set routines and structure and offering a good balance between adult led and child initiated play.

Children respond well to requests for help to tidy up and when chosen to be special helper at snack time. Children learn the importance of good manners as staff gently remind them to say please and thank you.

The partnership with parents and carers is good and this contributes to children's overall progress and development. Parents are provided with a detailed welcome pack covering most operational aspects of the setting, and they are invited to welcome meetings where they are fully informed about the pre-school. Parents are encouraged to look at policies and procedures and they have access to a good sized notice board displaying relevant information. Parents are kept informed of children's progress through verbal feedback from the key worker and an annual written report. Regular newsletters keep parents informed of current and future topics planned within the curriculum. There is no formal system in place for staff and parents to share ongoing information about children's progress. Parents complete an initial entry profile of their child's abilities on entry, giving staff a good starting point to plan for their individual needs. Staff have good relationships with parents and carers and offer support and advice when requested. The pre-school fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by a consistent and committed staff team. The setting is well organised with all staff demonstrating a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities. The overall management team encourage and support staff in keeping their knowledge and skills updated and attending regular training courses and events. A key worker system ensures shared responsibility for observation and assessment tracking on designated children. Daily sessions are well organised allowing children time for both free play and more structured activities. The play room is suitably organised allowing children to make some independent play choices. The overall manager of the setting has a good understanding of the requirements of the national standards, and ensures policies and procedures are updated as needed.

The leadership and management of the pre-school are good. While the setting is committee run, a designated overall manager takes responsibility for many managerial aspects of the setting. The manager is keen and committed to developing good practice at the setting and in supporting staff in their roles. Comprehensive induction procedures are in place and new staff are well supported and monitored. Regular staff appraisals are supplemented by team well being questionnaires which are used to establish staff satisfaction. On a day to day basis the person in charge leads the staff well, ensuring they are fully aware of planned activities and learning intentions for each session. The setting makes effective use of advice and guidance on good practice from Family services. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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 to Ofsted

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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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):

- improve the organisation of the room and children's access to resources through the provision of additional storage space
- ensure the outside play area is safe and secure at all times.

### **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):

- develop the use of the outside play area to incorporate wider areas of learning within the curriculum
- establish a formal system to share information with parents about children's ongoing progress and development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)