

Care service inspection report

Stepping Stones Nursery School

Day Care of Children

7 Saline Street

Airdrie

ML6 9BE

Inspected by: Ann Dornan

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 22 April 2013



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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Service provided by:

Stepping Stones Nursery School (Airdrie) Limited

Service provider number:

SP2010010818

Care service number:

CS2010238277

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support	5	Very Good
Quality of Environment	5	Very Good
Quality of Staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership	5	Very Good

What the service does well

The service provides a nursery environment which is well planned, clean, and very well maintained. Staff are committed and enthusiastic, and work well together. Children are content and engaged within the nursery. Both children and their families are regularly asked for ideas and feedback. Information is used to improve the service.

What the service could do better

The service should continue to address the issues identified within their improvement plan.

What the service has done since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection, the service has continued to ensure that the nursery environment has been maintained to a very high standard. Some policies and procedures have been reviewed and staff have attended a variety of training events suited to their roles within the nursery. The service has made very good progress in relation to the health and well-being of children, and the implementation of Eco principles.

Conclusion

The nursery continues to offer a caring, supportive service to children and their families. Staff are professional, enthusiastic and motivated. They feel well supported

by their managers, and work effectively to provide a service that meets the needs of the children in their care.

Who did this inspection

Ann Dornan

1 About the service we inspected

Before 1 April 2011, this service was registered with the Care Commission. On this date, the new scrutiny body, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) took over the work of the Care Commission, including the registration of care services. This means that from 1 April 2011, this service continued its registration under the new body, SCSWIS.

Stepping Stones Nursery School offers early education and childcare for up to 11 children aged from 6 months to under two years, fifteen children aged from two years to under three years, and thirty two children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. The service operates during term time and holidays, between the hours of 7.30am and 6.00pm.

The nursery is located in a detached building within its own grounds in the Coatdyke area of Airdrie, and comprises three playrooms. Playrooms for younger children are located on the ground floor, while the playroom for children aged three and over is located on the upper floor. Each playroom has its own toilets and changing area, as well as a snack preparation area. There are well resourced outdoor play areas for all children. A secure entry system is in place, and there is ramp access to the building. An office is available for private discussions with parents or visiting agencies.

The service's statement of aims and objectives is available to parents and families, and aims to provide a 'high quality childcare and education in a caring and stimulating environment, to work in partnership with parents and keep them informed of their child's development and wellbeing at all times". The full statement of aims and objectives is available to families.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of Environment - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of Staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of Management and Leadership - Grade 5 - Very Good

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0845 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

This report was written following an unannounced inspection by Ann Dornan, Inspector. The inspection took place on Thursday 11 April and Friday 12 April 2012. Feedback was given following receipt of care standards questionnaires. As requested by us, the service sent us an annual return form. They also sent us a self assessment form.

We issued twenty five questionnaires to parents and carers who used the service. Thirteen completed questionnaires were returned.

In this inspection, we gathered information from various sources, including the relevant sections of policies, procedures and records. Some of these are listed below.

- * certificate of registration
- * certificate of insurance
- * policy on working in partnership with parents and children
- * information relating to additional support needs
- * evaluations and questionnaires
- * policies on child protection, whistle blowing and confidentiality
- * procedures relating to infection control and health and safety
- * risk assessments
- * minutes of staff meeting
- * monitoring procedures
- * Staff training files
- * accident and incident records
- * complaints procedure
- * children's floor books and profiles.

We spoke to the owner/managers of the service, staff members and trainees. We spoke to children informally during the inspection process. The nursery environment and some resources and equipment were examined.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firelawscotland.org

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Following a recommendation made at the previous inspection, the service had further developed their monitoring procedures.

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

We received a fully completed self assessment document from the service. We were satisfied with the way they had completed this and with the relevant information they had given us for each of the headings that we use to grade the service.

The service identified what they thought they did well, some areas for development and any changes they planned. The service told us how the people who used the care service had taken part in the self-assessment process.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We visited each of the playrooms and found all children to be happy, relaxed and confident with staff. Children in all rooms were offered individual attention from staff, and were encouraged to take part in activities they enjoyed, and which they found interesting and enjoyable.

Taking carers' views into account

Thirteen parents and carers returned our care standards questionnaires. This gave them the opportunity to comment on the service in terms of our quality themes - care and support of children, the nursery environment, staffing, and management and leadership. The nursery had also issued parents with a wide ranging questionnaire,

and a positive response had been received. Comments from parents are included throughout the report.

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service strengths

Based on the evidence we sampled as part of this inspection, we have awarded a grade of 5 - very good, in relation to this quality statement..

We awarded this grade after we had spoken to parents and read some of their comments. We also spoke to the two owner/managers of the service and staff. We observed children in each of the playrooms during our visits and listened to what they had to say about their nursery. We looked at how the service involved parents and children in assessing and improving the quality of care and support within the service. They did this in a variety of ways, some of which are listed below:

- * encouraged parents and carers to be involved on the parents' committee
- * provided families with an informative handbook which included information about how they could be involved within the service
- * requested information from parents through questionnaires on issues relating to each of the quality themes
- * provided regular newsletters which contained useful information and requested feedback
- * encouraged parents to comment on, and evaluate, the content and progress of children's profiles
 - provided a comments and suggestions box
 - encouraged parents to comment on floor books
 - provided open days and evenings where discussions with individual parents could take place
 - encouraged participation by children through 'talking and thinking' books
 - provided children with opportunities for discussion at circle time

- involved parents, carers and children on committees such as the 'health promoting nursery'.

All questionnaires and responses were evaluated, and the results fed back to parents verbally, at meetings, and through newsletters and displays. Private meetings were arranged if these were requested by parents. Parents told us that they were encouraged to be fully involved in the care and education of their children, and their thoughts and ideas were regularly requested. Parents told us:

"The staff make time daily to share information with me regarding my daughter's care and development. In addition, a daily record is sent home detailing sleep times, nappies, eating and activities participated in"

"The nursery actively seek parental comments and feedback, and are always happy to listen to any ideas parents may have".

"Really like the daily sheets - very informative and a good way to share information".

Children were provided with a wide variety of opportunities to help develop the programme of activities and the service in general. Staff responded positively to children's interests and ideas, and used them to develop activities that children found interesting and stimulating, and extended their learning. Staff used children's floor books and profiles to record suggestions, to monitor progress, and to encourage evaluation by families. Planning records were displayed so that parents could extend learning topics at home with their children.

The parents and carers we spoke to told us that they were delighted with the opportunities offered by the nursery for them to be involved in developing the service, and participating fully in their children's care and learning. They said that they found the managers and staff to be approachable and welcoming, and felt that they were genuinely interested in involving them and their children in the life and development of the nursery.

We felt that the systems employed by the nursery to involve families in assessing and improving the quality of care and support within the service, resulted in positive outcomes for children.

Areas for improvement

The service should continue their very good practice in relation to this quality statement.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 3

We ensure that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met.

Service strengths

Based on the evidence we sampled during this inspection, we have awarded a grade of 5 - very good, in relation to this quality statement.

We spoke to the owner/managers and staff, and asked them how they met the individual needs of children. We looked at planning records, children's profiles and floor books. We spoke informally to older children about what they were learning at nursery, and observed staff working with younger children. We asked parents and carers about how well the nursery was meeting the needs of their children. We talked to staff about the training they had undertaken, and reviewed some staff training records. We reviewed how the training and professional development undertaken by staff met the needs of the children they were looking after. We looked at the information the nursery recorded about individual children.

We made visits to all three playrooms, and observed how staff interacted with children. We found staff to be very knowledgeable about the individual needs of the children in their care. They spoke confidently about children's stages of development, how they recorded their progress, and how they planned for children's next steps of learning and development. There were clear links between the information recorded about children, and the plans devised for each child. For younger children, staff also used information recorded in 'all about me' forms, and this was updated regularly with information provided by parents verbally or through two way communication diaries. Staff used information provided by children about their current interests when planning activities. We observed staff providing care that met the needs of individual children.

We reviewed a number of policies employed by the nursery and spoke to staff about how these were implemented. Staff described correct procedures for recording and acting on any areas of concern they might have about the welfare of any child in their care. They had been trained in child protection, and information was updated annually by the manager who was the child protection co-ordinator.

Staff had been trained in first aid and food hygiene. They ensured that the health and well-being of children was given a high priority, and one staff member had been allocated to co-ordinate many aspects of how this was embedded within nursery practice. Staff followed safe procedures in relation to food preparation and nappy changing. They also ensured that children had access to regular physical and outdoor play. Several play areas had been developed for children, and these were very well resourced. We saw children playing outdoors, and planning records and photographs showed that children regularly took part in outdoor and physical play. The nursery had developed an outdoor 'mud kitchen', which encouraged children's independence

and decision making skills. Children said that they enjoyed playing in the garden and taking part in physical activities.

Parents provided the food for children's main meals, but the nursery ensured that healthy and varied snacks were offered, including daily fresh fruit, milk and water. Snacks were varied, and menus had been decided after consultation with children and families. Staff encouraged children's independence during snack time, and sat with them to encourage social interaction and positive behaviour.

The nursery took part in the 'child smile' project, and ensured that children learned about the importance of taking care of their teeth. Children were also encouraged to take care of the environment, and participated in the Eco programme.

Staff recorded information about children's needs in relation to health, culture, diet, likes and dislikes, and favourite activities. They used this information when planning children's care. Medication records were found to be completed satisfactorily.

Ongoing discussion with families and observation by staff assisted the service in determining where they felt children would benefit from support from outside agencies such as speech and language, and learning support. Very good procedures were in place for accessing these services, and the staff worked closely with parents and support agencies in these circumstances.

We found that the procedures followed by the service resulted in very positive outcomes for children in terms of their health and well-being.

Areas for improvement

The service should ensure that staff write their full names when completing accident sheets.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service.

Service strengths

Some of the procedures used by the service to ensure families had opportunities to assess and improve the service were similar to those described at quality statement 1.1.

Children and their families had been consulted about all aspects of the nursery environment, and said that staff took account of their views. One parent said:

"Plenty of opportunities are given to parents to submit their comments, and suggestions would appear to be welcomed".

Areas for improvement

Please refer to quality statement 1.1.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 2

We make sure that the environment is safe and service users are protected.

Service strengths

Based on the evidence we sampled as part of this inspection, we have awarded a grade of 5 - very good, in relation to this quality statement. We awarded this grade after we had checked the nursery environment and observed how it was used by children. We looked at the nursery's records on health and safety, infection control and risk assessments. We spoke to the owner/managers and staff about the safety measures they had put in place to ensure children's safety. We asked parents for their views of the nursery environment.

The nursery operated from a large detached building set in its own grounds. The car

park was safely fenced off from the nursery's outdoor play areas. There was a secure entry system in place, with CCTV. Visitors were required to sign the visitors' book, and to be accompanied at all times. We were asked to provide evidence of identification before being admitted to the nursery.

Children were accommodated in three playrooms, depending on their ages. Children aged under three were accommodated in playrooms on the ground floor, with children aged three and over accommodated on the upper floor. Playrooms were very well organised, with space for children to play together or on their own. The playroom for children aged under two provided ample space for babies and toddlers to explore their environment. Playrooms were bright and airy. Each room had direct access to its own toilets and changing area. The whole building was very well maintained and decorated to a high standard. There were very good standards of hygiene apparent throughout the nursery, and we noted that cleaning took place regularly throughout the day.

Equipment within the nursery was well maintained and safe. Restrictions were in place in relation to computer access. Staff were deployed to ensure that children were well supervised at all times. Risk assessments had been carried out in relation to both the indoor and outdoor areas. Outdoor areas were checked for safety before being used by children. The accommodation was suitably heated, and had appropriate lighting and ventilation. Procedures were in place for staff to identify and report any maintenance issues, and records showed that these were acted on timeously. In questionnaires, one parent said:

"The latch on the front gate started to get a little stiff and was replaced almost immediately".

The service had developed policies on health and safety and infection control. One of the owner/managers had undertaken an additional qualification in infection control, while other staff members had been trained in fire safety awareness, and nutritional awareness. Our observations and discussions with staff showed that they were familiar with these policies, and implemented them appropriately. Staff members had been trained in Elementary Food Hygiene and first aid. First aid boxes were regularly checked and replenished, and any out of date items were discarded.

The service recorded all accidents and incidents that occurred in the service. These were audited monthly to identify any consistent factors, and to ensure that any identified factors were addressed.

Parents who returned care standards questionnaires told us that they strongly agreed that the service provided a safe, secure, pleasant and stimulating environment for children, and that there was sufficient space for children to be involved in a variety of activities. Some comments from parents included:

"The nursery is immaculate and has everything a child needs".

"Excellent outdoor areas that are regularly used".

We found that the procedures devised and implemented by the service ensured that children were cared for in a safe environment.

Areas for improvement

The service should continue their very good practice in relation to this quality statement.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of staffing in the service.

Service strengths

Some of the methods used by the service to involve families in assessing and improving the quality of staffing within the service were similar to those identified at quality statement 1.1.

Areas for improvement

Please refer to quality statement 1.1.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 3

We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.

Service strengths

Based on the evidence we sampled as part of this inspection, we have allocated a grade of 5 - very good, in relation to this quality statement.

We awarded this grade after we spoke to staff and reviewed planning records and children's profiles. We observed how staff interacted with parents and children. We asked them about their roles and responsibilities and looked at training files and continuous professional development records. We spoke to parents and reviewed questionnaires.

Staff had developed positive relationships with parents and children. Parents told us that found staff to be approachable and professional, and were happy to discuss any aspect of children's development and welfare. Staff were sensitive and caring in how they related to families. Parents commented:

"Staff are friendly, and obviously know the children well"

"Both of my children are comfortable and confident with staff".

"Staff are amazing to parents and children in everything they do".

Staff had attended training relevant to their roles, and had also undertaken additional training that would extend their knowledge and understanding and assist them in providing additional experiences for children such as 'Eco' and 'Health and Wellbeing'. They were committed to the nursery, and to improving the service for children.

All staff members were registered with their relevant professional bodies, including the Scottish Social Services Council. (SSSC) They completed records to indicate the training they had attended and any additional reading they had undertaken. They also recorded the ways in which their learning would impact on their daily practice. The staff we spoke to were familiar with the codes of conduct and practice governing their registration, and told us they would be confident about reporting any poor practice they witnessed from registered workers. The service had developed policies on whistle blowing and confidentiality. Staff were familiar with these policies, and told us that they had read these as part of the induction process.

The owner/managers had developed comprehensive monitoring procedures. They spent time in the nursery every day and it was clear that they were familiar with all aspects of the service and all of the families who used it. The managers ensured that staff had access to training that would assist them in carrying out their roles. Our care standards questionnaires indicated that parents were confident that staff had the skills and experience to carry out their roles effectively. One parent said: "The staff are all helpful. I feel confident in the staff care towards my child".

We felt that the conduct and approach of staff resulted in positive outcomes for the children being cared for.

Areas for improvement

The managers told us that staff training would continue to be given a high priority within the service.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service strengths

Many of the procedures used by the service to ensure that families were able to participate in assessing and improving the quality of management and leadership within the service, incorporate the issues described at quality statement 1.1.

The service took full account of the views of staff, children, parents/carers and other stakeholders when looking at how the service could be further improved. It was apparent from discussion and a review of documentation, that the owner/managers were fully committed to ensuring that the service reflected the needs and views of the families using the service.

Areas for improvement

The service was committed to involving families in all aspects of service development.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

Statement 4

We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide

Service strengths

Based on the evidence we samples as part of this inspection, we have awarded a grade of 5 - very good, in relation to this quality statement.

We asked children, parents and carers about how they were involved in evaluating the service. We asked the acting owner/managers and staff how the nursery evaluated the information provided by families, and how they used it to improve the service. We discussed the improvement plan for the service and how priorities were identified. We discussed how staff were involved in this process. We reviewed minutes of staff

meetings and planning records, and assessed how the nursery took account of the ideas and suggestions made by children, parents and staff. We looked at the aims and objectives of the service, and asked staff about the documents they used when evaluating the nursery's performance.

It was clear from discussion and documentation that staff had taken the views and ideas of children into account when planning play and learning experiences. They encouraged children to confidently contribute their views and ideas, to decide how they wanted to spend their time in nursery, and to tell staff about what they wanted to learn. The priorities within the improvement plan had been decided after consultation with families, and their views were considered when the development of the plan was being reviewed.

The staff told us that they met regularly to plan programmes and evaluate children's progress. They used relevant documents such as 'Child at the Centre 2' to evaluate their progress.

Since the previous inspection, the owner/managers had further developed detailed monitoring procedures, which assisted them in evaluating the progress made in relation to the identified priorities in the improvement plan. Their observations also assisted them in carrying out staff's continuous professional development reviews, and in identifying training priorities. They were aware of the legislation governing the registration of the service, and the notifications required by the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Social Services Council.

We felt that the service had clearly identified priorities within their improvement plan which had been decided following consultation with families, staff and other stakeholders. We felt that they were making very good progress in achieving these priorities through regular evaluation, resulting in very good outcomes for children using the service.

Areas for improvement

The service was performing well in relation to this quality statement, and the owner/managers told us that they would continue to refine their methods of quality assurance to ensure that children's individual needs would continue to be met.

Grade awarded for this statement: 5 - Very Good

Number of requirements: 0

Number of recommendations: 0

4 Other information

Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

Additional Information

Action Plan

Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension, where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in the Care Inspectorate re-grading a Quality Statement within the Quality of Management and Leadership Theme (or for childminders, Quality of Staffing Theme) as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme being re-graded as unsatisfactory (1).

5 Summary of grades

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 3	5 - Very Good
Quality of Environment - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 2	5 - Very Good
Quality of Staffing - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 3	5 - Very Good
Quality of Management and Leadership - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 4	5 - Very Good

6 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
27 May 2011	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very Good Environment 5 - Very Good Staffing 5 - Very Good Management and Leadership 4 - Good

All inspections and grades before 1 April 2011 are those reported by the former regulator of care services, the Care Commission.

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