

Inspection report

Step By Step Pre-school Nursery Day Care of Children

Fairview Street
Danestone
Bridge of Don
Aberdeen AB22 8ZP

Inspected by: Doreen Lowe
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 14 July 2006

Service Number

CS2003001764

Service name

Step By Step Pre-school Nursery

Service addressFairview Street
Danestone
Bridge of Don
Aberdeen AB22 8ZP**Provider Number**

SP2003000339

Provider Name

Aberdeen Step By Step Nursery Limited

Inspected ByDoreen Lowe
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Unannounced

Inspection Completed

14 July 2006

Period since last inspection**Local Office Address**

Introduction

The service was registered with the Care Commission in 2002 and is currently registered to care for a maximum of 26 pre-school children within the main unit and 15 children within the baby unit.

The service operates 50 weeks a year from its premises within Danestone. The nursery operates from 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Basis of Report

The report was written following an unannounced inspection by one Care Commission Officer. The inspection took place on 14 & 17 July 2006. Feedback was given to the 2 Managers and baby unit supervisor following the inspection.

During the inspection the Care Commission Officer spoke with the 2 Managers, nursery staff from both units, the service cook and children.

The Care Commission Officer looked at a range of policies, procedures and records including the following:

Child protection

Medication procedure & records

Emergency procedures

Behaviour Management

Complaints

Admissions and settling in policy

Parental involvement policy

Parents handbook

Recruitment policy

Service user records

Staff records

Fire Drill records

Accident/incident reports

Registration certificate

The inspection included an examination of the premises.

The Care Commission Officer also spent time observing how the staff worked and interacted with the children.

The inspection focused on the sections of The Regulation of Care (Requirements as to Care Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2002, Statutory Instrument 114 and took account of the following National Care Standards:

Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

Standard 4: Engaging with Children.

Standard 7: A Caring Environment.

Standard 10: Involving Other Services.

Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Report

Following the integrated inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of education and the Care

Commission the service had produced an action plan and was continuing to work towards meeting the recommendations. A number of changes were evident within the setting including positive changes to the layout in both rooms and the format of medication forms.

Comments on Self-Evaluation

A detailed Self-Evaluation form had been completed prior to the inspection this document was found to be consistent with the findings on the day of the inspection.

View of Service Users

Children who spoke with the Care Commission Officers during the inspection appeared happy and confident within the setting.

One child commented that she enjoyed stories and another stated that;
"I love my lunch".

View of Carers

Overall parents who responded to the service user questionnaires were very happy with the service, however, one parent would prefer changes to the way the service rotates its menus to take account of the patterns of attendance for those children who attend on a part time basis.

Regulations / Principles

National Care Standards

National Care Standard Number 3: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Health and Wellbeing

Strengths

The service had a range of policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies, health and safety, child protection, and behaviour management. The Managers were the first point of contact for child protection concerns. Staff had recently undertaken training on this subject and understood the procedure to be followed in the event of any child protection concerns.

Staff were observed encouraging good hygiene procedures by supporting children with their toileting needs and encouraging hand washing.

Children also had the opportunity to learn about healthy lifestyles through a range of planned activities. During the course of the inspection one child engaged the Care Commission Officer in a discussion about healthy and unhealthy foods contained in a story book.

The service had employed a cook who took responsibility for ensuring meals and snacks were suitable for the children attending the nursery. The cook had a copy of the best practice document, "nutritional guidance for early years: food choices for children aged 1 -5 in early education and childcare settings" and had reviewed the current practice to ensure it was in line with the guidance. The service no longer provided juice within the 2-5 unit and provided a choice of milk or water in line with the guidance. Staff stated that children were offered a choice of snack which always included fruit. On the day of the inspection children were offered sandwiches, accompanied by melon and raisins. Children were encouraged to be independent at snack time and were observed spreading their own bread. Staff offered help and encouragement as appropriate and sat with the children at snack time to encourage social interaction and good manners.

Within the baby unit staff demonstrated a good understanding of the differing abilities of the children present and offered help and support at meal times appropriately.

The service had access to an enclosed outdoor play area which had an excellent range of suitable play equipment. During the course of the inspection children within both rooms spent time outdoors. Children within the baby unit were also taken out for walks in a double buggy around the local area.

Within the baby unit staff had a good understanding of the children's routines and sleep patterns.

An effective procedure was in place to ensure children had good opportunities to sleep and bedding was changed after each child.

The service had reviewed its medication policy and had amended the record keeping procedure to ensure clear prior written consent and detailed records of any medication administered.

Staff had attended training in food hygiene and first aid.

Fire drills and alarm tests were carried out regularly, and recently appointed staff had received instruction regarding emergency procedures.

Areas for Development

Although children wore hats and staff were careful to apply sunscreen to the children prior to going outdoors in the morning, attention should be paid to the individual needs of the children to ensure that sunscreen is reapplied frequently throughout the course of the day. The service should review their procedures for outdoor play to ensure they are in line with the most recent guidance in terms of sun safety. Details of the recommended precautions are available from the National Health Service and Cancer Research UK at www.sunsmart.org.uk. (See recommendation 1)

The service was not participating in the National Tooth Brushing Scheme, but was advised to contact the community dentists to identify whether their current facilities will support the implementation of the scheme. The service was advised to access a copy of the Standards for Nursery and School Tooth Brushing Programme 2006 document for guidance and to implement the programme if possible. (See recommendation 2)

The service was advised to develop their informal "absent child" procedure into a formal policy to be shared with staff and parents. (See recommendation 3)

Parents provided the milk feeds necessary for their children throughout the course of the day and staff took account of parental wishes when feeding the babies. Staff were aware of the need to store feeds appropriately and a fridge was available within the baby unit for this purpose. However, on the day of the inspection milk feeds had been stored out with the fridge following a parental request. The service should therefore review their procedure for storing milk feeds in line with the most recent guidance which suggests feeds should only be made up as they are required and not prepared in advance. Advice on this subject can be accessed from the department of health on their web site at www.dh.gov.uk/publications. (See recommendation 4)

National Care Standard Number 4: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Engaging with children

Strengths

Within both units staff demonstrated a good understanding of the ages and stages of development of the children. Staff related very well to the children and had created a warm, caring atmosphere. Staff were particularly sensitive to children for whom separation from their parents was difficult and were observed offering additional support and encouragement.

Staff within the baby unit appeared to know the children well, they were aware of their favourite activities, routines and temperaments. Staff engaged warmly with this very young age group and were aware of their different developmental needs.

Changes had been made to the layout in both playrooms which allowed children greater access to the available resources. Children were observed moving freely between activities and staff interacted effectively with them to extend their learning or offer praise and encouragement. Children within the main playroom could now mix more easily with each other and staff had greater opportunities to engage with the different age groups.

Staff within the service had a good mix of skills and experience with the majority of staff having completed a Scottish Vocational Qualification in Early Years at level 3. Additional training was accessed through a range of training providers in addition to the Aberdeenshire

Childcare Partnership.

Children were happy and familiar with the nursery routines and staff were sensitive and caring in their interactions with them.

During the course of the inspection children enjoyed celebrating a child's birthday and in addition to sharing a birthday cake which had been provided by the parent, they took great pleasure in helping staff to choose a birthday card.

Good use was made of praise and encouragement and staff were observed encouraging children to persist with tasks which they at first found difficult. In addition children were given the opportunity to exercise choice throughout the course of the inspection and staff were observed supporting children to pursue their own interests, this was particularly evident during the outdoor play sessions.

The service had a copy of the best practice guidance "Birth to 3 supporting our youngest children" and the associated training materials and was working through the guidance and training materials in conjunction with their regular training schedule.

Areas for Development

None identified during this inspection.

National Care Standard Number 7: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - A Caring Environment

Strengths

Parents and carers were issued with relevant information prior to starting at the service; the service also produced regular newsletters to keep parents informed of the events within the nursery. The service had also collected a range of information from parents and carers to ease the child's settling in process and had developed a "child passport" to enable children to be involved in compiling the necessary information. The entrance hallway had a good sized noticeboard where staff placed a range of information for parents. The addition of photographs of the staff ensured parents and children could easily identify who would be working in each room.

Parents were encouraged to contact the service if they had any concerns and a suitable complaints policy was on display.

Staff were aware of the need to keep parents informed and were observed communicating with parents about the children's day. During the course of the inspection several calls were made to the service and staff provided a detailed account of children's experience to provide reassurance. Within the baby unit staff compiled daily reports to further keep parents informed about their child's day.

Staff demonstrated a lovely caring manner and a sense of fun in their work with all the children.

Additional support was offered when required in a sensitive manner to support children settling in to the group.

The service had a suitable behaviour policy in place and staff stated that children had been involved in drawing up the "golden rules" which were on display in the main playroom. During the course of the inspection minor behaviour issues were handled in an appropriate manner and children were also observed resolving minor disagreements without the need for staff intervention.

Recently appointed staff stated they were supported well and all staff members appeared to work well together and had created an efficient staff team.

During inspection the staff were observed responding in a caring, supportive manner to the

children. The children appeared happy, confident and secure in the environment and were clearly familiar with the nursery routine.

Areas for Development

None identified during the course of the inspection.

National Care Standard Number 10: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Involving other Services

Strengths

As a partner provider the service had links with the local authority through the local development worker.

The service was developing links with the local primary schools and had recently invited the Primary 1 teachers to the nursery to meet the children who were enrolling in school. The service had also attended the sports day of the neighbouring primary school.

The nursery was supportive of the local community gala day and had involved the children in making items to sell during this event.

The service was registered with the Childcare Information Service and had access to training through the Aberdeenshire Childcare Partnership.

The service was also a member of the Association of Quality Nurseries.

Appropriate procedures were in place to support children with additional support needs including inter agency working involving a range of professionals involved in the children's care.

Areas for Development

None identified during the course of the inspection.

National Care Standard Number 12: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Confidence in Staff

Strengths

The service had an appropriate procedure in place for advertising and recruiting members of staff.

This included the provision of application forms, interviewing candidates, carrying out enhanced disclosures and the taking up of written references from previous employers and general practitioner.

The staff in post at the time of the inspection had a good mix of experience and qualifications.

A detailed induction process was in place and the Management maintained a list of training accessed by the staff.

Staff had access to an annual appraisal and Managers were available to provide additional support when necessary.

The Managers of the service were aware of the requirement to register with the Scottish Social Services Council and had made staff aware of their requirement to register in the coming year.

Areas for Development

Although regular meetings took place between staff and Managers to discuss the service and identify training needs, the service should consider implementing a more structured approach to support and supervision. Opportunities should be developed to ensure staff training is planned to support the overall aims of the service.

Enforcement

There has been no enforcement action taken in relation to this service.

Other Information

No other information was supplied at the time of the inspection.

Requirements**Recommendations**

1. The service should review their procedures for outdoor play to ensure they are inline with the most recent guidance in terms of sun safety. (Standard 3)
2. The service was advised to access a copy of the Standards for Nursery and School Tooth Brushing Programme 2006 document for guidance and to implement the programme if possible. (Standard 3)
3. The service was advised to develop their informal "absent child" procedure into a formal policy to be shared with staff and parents (Standard 3)
4. The service should review their procedure for storing milk feeds in line with the most recent guidance (Standard 3)

Doreen Lowe

Care Commission Officer