

Inspection report

Step by Step Private Nursery Day Care of Children

5 Gails Road
Carrickstone
Cumbernauld G68 0JJ

Inspected by: Isobel Sheridan
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 19 February 2007

Service Number

CS2003044454

Service name

Step by Step Private Nursery

Service address5 Gails Road
Carrickstone
Cumbernauld G68 0JJ**Provider Number**

SP2003001250

Provider Name

Step By Step Private Nursery Limited

Inspected ByIsobel Sheridan
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Unannounced

Inspection Completed

19 February 2007

Period since last inspection

12 months

Local Office AddressPrinces Gate
60 Castle Street
Hamilton
ML3 6BU

Introduction

Step By Step Private Nursery in Cumbernauld is registered to provide care for 12 children aged 0 - 2 years, 10 children aged two years to three years and 19 children aged three to those not yet attending primary school.

The Nursery is in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council to provide pre school education for children aged from three years. The Service operates Monday to Friday between 7.30am and 6.00pm all year round.

The service aims to treat all children, parents and carers with dignity and respect. They intend to provide children with "...the opportunity to enjoy a full range of social relationships, with other children and with staff members". "Children will be encouraged to make informed choices and they will be encouraged to respect the right of others to do the same".

The provider operates two other nursery services in Glasgow trading under Step By Step Nurseries Limited.

Basis of Report

This service was inspected after receiving a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) to determine what level of support was necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the CCO which considers: complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service, action taken upon requirements etc.

This service was required to have a medium level of support that resulted in an inspection based on the standards, inspection themes and any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaint or other regulatory activity.

Before the visit the service was sent notice that an unannounced inspection would take place and details of how to access and update their annual return and self evaluation.

During the unannounced inspection on 19 February 2007, the Care Commission Officer spoke with the manager, the supervisor for children under two, and three early years' practitioners. Children were spoken with informally throughout the inspection. The Care Commission Officer did not look at the full range of policies, procedures and records as these had been checked at previous inspections and any issues addressed. The following were checked:

- Child protection procedure / absent child procedures
- Complaints policy
- Tooth brushing procedures
- Communication with parents
- Accident and incident records
- Staff files
- Staff selection and recruitment procedures
- Evaluating and monitoring records
- Continuing development and review records
- The nursery handbook
- Fire alarm and fire drill records.

The Care Commission Officer spent time observing how staff members worked with the

children. The condition of the premises and how the areas were used was also examined.

The Care Commission Officer took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting the themes inspected within the following National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:

- Standard 3: Health and well-being
- Standard 4: Engaging with children
- Standard 7: A Caring environment
- Standard 10: Involving other services
- Standard 12: Confidence in staff.

A particular emphasis was placed on the following themes and documents:

Child Protection

Birth to Three (published by the Scottish Executive- learning and teaching Scotland)

Nutritional Guidance (published by the Scottish Executive - Healthier Scotland)

Safer recruitment practices

Anne Jenkins co inspected the service.

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Report

The previous inspection was an integrated inspection by the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education in February 2006.

No requirements were identified.

Plans were developed to action the four recommendations made for improvement. Work is now underway to meet them.

Comments on Self-Evaluation

The manager provided the Care Commission with a clear and comprehensive self evaluation document which was completed prior to the inspection. A number of major strengths were identified and some key areas for continued development. These were discussed with the manager during the inspection.

View of Service Users

Children were very happy and relaxed in the nursery. Not all the children had opportunities to experience robust outdoor play. Opportunities were provided for sleep and rest.

Staff interacted with very young children quietly and sensitively. They provided fun activities to stimulate their curiosity in a setting that provided good space and some good resources.

The older children were very enthusiastic and enjoyed the games and activities provided to stimulate their learning. They spoke very confidently to the Officers. They had built good relationships with staff, their key workers and their peers.

View of Carers

Eight care standard questionnaires were received from parents prior to the publication of this

report. Several parents wrote comments about the quality of the nursery staff. Some parents wrote of the positive impact the new manager had made in such a short time to staff and parent morale. Staff were generally commended that they took time to get to know the children and provided a quality care experience.

However, one parent thought the nursery should employ a cleaner rather than leaving this area to care staff. Another parent felt "I cannot see where the very high price of the nursery is reflected in the fabric of the building. I would like to be made aware of how the money is reinvested."

The manager had identified plans to replace a large range of resources through grant funding and reinvestment by the provider.

During discussion with the Officers the manager acknowledged the need to further improve and develop the outdoor play area for children. This would be a clear priority for the nursery development plan in 2007/08.

A comment reflecting dealing with challenging behaviour was highlighted by a parent. The Officer explored this with the manager and was satisfied that appropriate action had been taken. Staff had sought expert advice and had developed a care plan to support the needs of the child after observation by staff of play and reviewing the environment. The manager recognised the need to share information with all parents involved while being mindful of the obligations under confidentiality. She intended to develop a formal system to feed back information to parents.

Regulations / Principles

Regulation :

Strengths

Areas for Development

National Care Standards

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

Strengths

Effective communication links were in place with relevant support services, including learning support and health services. Staff had a good understanding of child protection procedures and training was updated regularly. All staff had copies of the nursery's child protection procedures. The nursery had shared information in respect of their role in protecting children with parents through the nursery handbook and other written materials. Staff monitored children's absences effectively and the nursery had introduced clear procedures for absent children. This information had been incorporated into the child protection policy.

The service effectively participated in the national tooth brushing initiative and staff had received the relevant training.

Healthy lifestyles were promoted in the nursery curriculum and this included opportunities for daily outdoor play. The Nursery did have a copy of The Scottish Executive's Nutritional Guidance for early years and intended to use it to further improve the service. The nursery encouraged parents to provide healthy lunch boxes for their children. Staff were aware of any allergies, dietary or cultural requirements. All staff had been trained in food hygiene and first aid. There were good procedures for monitoring sleeping children. Staff were clear on their role regarding emergency procedures.

Areas for Development

The nursery should continue as planned the development of the key worker system for children under two. Staff used the car park to provide some outdoor play activities. However, this was not a safe play environment and unnecessary as there was a dedicated secure outdoor play area. This required further development to meet the physical needs of the children. (see Recommendation 1).

Staff spent time throughout the day on house keeping matters and cleaning to reduce the risks for cross infection. However, the Officers discussed with the manager and senior practitioner a number of areas that needed to be addressed to ensure that infection control procedures were robust and met best practice guidance. (see Recommendation 2).

During the examination of accident records it was noted that one record had been changed using correction fluid. (see Recommendation 3).

Several emergency policies are being reviewed and will be cascaded to staff shortly.

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

Strengths

Staff were good role models. Parents were warmly welcomed and given time to speak to staff if they wished. Staff kept parents well informed about their child's progress through regular discussions, both informal and formal and provided helpful written reports. Staff were confident and caring.

The service operated a key worker system for older children to maintain continuity of care. Positive relationships between staff and children were observed. Children were happy and confident in their play.

Staff had created a warm and caring environment, and were responsive to children's physical and emotional needs. They planned a broad range of activities which provided an appropriate balance between activities children could choose for themselves and those which adults directed. Staff consulted with children about their views and ideas using a range of strategies such as circle time. They actively involved them in decision making. Parents were also encouraged to take part in the life of the nursery.

Staff working with children under three had created an environment which was warm, relaxing and comfortable. Space opportunities and resources were provided which supported the children's learning development and needs. Resources were suitable and attractive. Staff interaction was warm and supportive. Children enjoyed the variety of play experiences provided. Children's learning and development was monitored and assessed. Staff used this information to plan next steps.

Staff implemented the Birth to Three document and local guidance to underpin their planning of young children's learning and development.

Areas for Development

To continue accessing quality in-service training and development to enhance children's experiences.

After covering the post for maternity leave the manager had now been appointed on a permanent basis. Both she and the supervisor for children under two years were supporting all the staff until the return of the second supervisor for children aged two years to five years.

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

Strengths

An informative handbook provided parents with a range of relevant information, including the aims and objectives of the service and policies and procedures. The staff worked well as a team and worked effectively with parents and carers in sharing information about their children's development and progress. Regular newsletters, the informative notice board and

daily diaries provided parents with up to date information about the service and their children.

Staff took account of children's views on an ongoing basis and incorporated ideas and choices into curriculum planning. Their approach was sensitive and caring, using encouragement and praise to develop children's self esteem. Children had built up positive relationships with staff and friendships with other children.

Children were observed to be happy and confidently enjoying the activities available.

A complaints policy had been developed and appropriate systems for recording complaints had been established. Parents were confident in raising issues with the manager and staff. The management and staff were viewed as approachable by parents. Complaints had been dealt with effectively. Parents were encouraged to take part in the life of the nursery through the health promoting nursery initiative and through charity fund raising events.

Areas for Development

The nursery should continue to explore consultation strategies with children. The nursery hope to develop personal staff profiles with photographs to hand out to parents to share further details on staff caring for their children.

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

Strengths

Working in partnership with a range of visiting services and external agencies, the service continued to provide children and families with appropriate support systems to enhance their nursery experience.

Areas for Development

The Officers acknowledged the nursery's difficulties in establishing relationships with primary schools in the area. The manager had informed the Officers they had received no feedback from the transition reports they produce.

The nursery should continue to work to establish relationships with local primary schools through the transition process.

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

Strengths

The policy statement reflecting recruitment and selection set out clear robust procedures. Practice was not consistent with this (see areas for development).

The nursery complied with adult: child ratios. Staff had a range of qualifications relevant to the aims and objectives of the service. The manager had introduced a very effective system for identifying and monitoring staff development. Training needs were given high priority and staff had the opportunity to attend a range of courses throughout the year. Staff were aware of their responsibility to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The

manager was undertaking the Scottish Vocational Qualification level 4 in Management. All staff were either qualified or undertaking a relevant qualification in childcare in order to meet the criteria for registration with SSSC.

Areas for Development

A number of points for action were identified in relation to safe recruitment practice. The selection and recruitment procedure did not refer to the register of the Scottish Social Services Council (see Recommendation 4). Some enhanced disclosure records remained in staff files (see Recommendation 5). The information held on staff files did not reflect the procedure. Where information was held centrally there was no system or information reflecting this (see Recommendation 6).

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken by the Care Commission.

Other Information

Following the introduction of Part 3 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 on 1 October 2006 the enforcing body for all Fire Safety matters is the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Care Commission still has a role in ensuring the National Care Standards are met but will no longer issue fire safety related requirements as part of the inspection. If fire safety measures are found to be possibly deficient then recommendations can be made. Any serious fire safety deficiencies will be communicated to the local Fire and Rescue Service in writing.

Requirements

None identified at this inspection.

Recommendations

1. The nursery should now develop clear plans to upgrade the quality of the outdoor play area to meet the physical needs of children. These plans should be shared with the Care Commission.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3.5: Health and Wellbeing.

2. The manager and senior staff should now review the procedure for the control of infection and implement the changes highlighted in ways that reflect the guidance given at the feedback session.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

3. Staff should ensure that when altering accident records they do so by scoring out the error in information. Correction fluid should not be used on original records.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

4. The policy and procedure for selection and recruitment should now make reference to the Scottish Social Services Council.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 12.1: Confidence in Staff.

5. Disclosure records should be stored in line with best practice guidance issued by Disclosure Scotland.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 12.1: Confidence in Staff.

6. Information held in staff files regarding selection and recruitment should reflect the written policy and procedure. Where information is held centrally at head office systems should be in place to reflect this.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 12.1: Confidence in Staff.

Isobel Sheridan

