

**Step by Step Private  
Nursery  
Glasgow  
12 August 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the centre. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the centre is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the centre does this. We describe how well the centre works with other groups in the community, including parents<sup>1</sup> and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the centre.

Our report describes the 'ethos' of the centre. By 'ethos' we mean the relationships in the centre, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of centre life. Finally, we comment on the centre's aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high-quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the centre's success in achieving these aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the centre, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Where applicable, the website contains analyses of questionnaire returns and descriptions of good practice in the centre.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers and carers who are relatives or friends.

## **Contents**

1. The centre
2. Particular strengths of the centre
3. Example of good practice
4. How well do children learn and achieve?
5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their centre community?
7. Does the centre have high expectations of all children?
8. Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?
9. What happens next?

### **1. The centre**

Step by Step Private Nursery was inspected in June 2009 by HMIE on behalf of both HMIE and the Care Commission as part of the integrated inspection programme. The centre caters for pre-school children aged six weeks to five years. It is registered for 70 children attending at any one session. The total roll was 100 at the time of the inspection.

## **2. Particular strengths of the centre**

- Bright, attractive and stimulating environment, in particular for babies and very young children.
- Highly-motivated three-to-five-year-old children who engage well in their learning.
- Caring staff and their very positive relationships with children and parents.
- Effective links with the local community to extend children's learning experiences.

## **3. Example of good practice**

- Developing learning zones.

## **4. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Babies and children under two years are well looked after by the caring, sensitive staff. They are happy and settled in the nursery. They enjoy a range of interesting activities during their day. They experiment and explore during 'messy' play sessions and are learning songs and making movements during action rhymes. Younger children are regularly taken for walks and outings to local parks and enjoy using the sheltered outside play area alongside older children. They can join in all activities and are beginning to develop friendships.

A few of the youngest children lack confidence and need further support from staff to adjust to the environment in the large playroom. Three to five year old children are enthusiastic, highly-motivated learners who engage well with activities. They are polite and well behaved and are supported by staff to negotiate and take turns. Almost all children are able to follow their interests and work well together to complete tasks. Children particularly enjoy painting, exploring and being energetic outdoors. They enjoy dressing-up and role-play in the playroom 'at the travel agent's'. Children are gaining confidence when using a laptop computer.

Children aged three to five years are making good progress in all aspects of their learning. They listen with interest to each other and adults, and most are able to follow simple instructions. They listen well to stories and use books to find out about things that interest them. Older children can recognise their name in print and a few can write it. Almost all children are experimenting with writing, using materials available throughout the playroom and in the outside area. Children are keen to count, sort and match objects in play situations. They are becoming increasingly confident at counting and recognising numbers in all areas of the nursery. They are beginning to develop their mathematical language to make comparisons in size and weight.

### **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and delivered through the provision of 'learning zones' which support the key aspects of children's development and learning. Staff are beginning to consider aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence* when planning activities for children. They are continuing to improve the programmes for literacy, mathematics and numeracy across all aspects of children's learning. They now need to extend early mathematical and problem-solving activities to challenge children more, especially out-of-doors. Creative and expressive art activities encourage children to express themselves in paintings and drawings. Staff provide good opportunities for children to sing, dance and play musical instruments. Children are learning about different cultures through celebrations such as Burns

Night and Chinese New Year. Staff arrange for children to visit shops, parks and museums to enhance their learning. Children have daily access to a partially covered outside play space. However, there is scope to develop further children's opportunities for physical development. Staff are very supportive and encouraging. They consider children's views and comments and use them to plan the activities within the playroom and in the local area. They use questions and conversations well to support children but need to make better use of open questions to develop children's thinking and learning.

Staff know children and families well and meet children's learning needs effectively. They are developing their knowledge of legislation in relation to children with additional support needs. They work together with parents to develop helpful support programmes when children need them. When children from two to five years are together in one playroom, activities and resources are not always at the right level of difficulty for all children. Staff should provide further support for the youngest children within the playroom.

#### **5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

Staff make parents feel very welcome and provide many opportunities for them to be involved in the life of the nursery. They keep interesting profiles to record children's progress and share these regularly with parents. Children add special artwork and photographs of their achievements. Staff organise regular informal meetings and an annual parents' evening to share children's progress. They have made a good start to developing relationships with local primary schools to support children's transition to P1. Within the nursery, staff plan careful transitions when children move from one stage to the next. They access external advice and support from other professionals to support children in their learning and wellbeing, when necessary.

They liaise well with a peripatetic teacher from the local authority to support curriculum development and bring about improvements to children's learning experiences.

#### **6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their centre community?**

The management team are committed to developing and improving the service. They have begun to work with staff to identify strengths and weaknesses of the nursery. Recently, parents have been more involved in this process. They completed questionnaires and commented about the outcome of staff evaluation of the service. The priorities in the improvement plan are beginning to have an impact on the quality of children's experiences. Staff are good at asking children about their interests and learning. They use this information well to develop the curriculum and provide appropriate learning experiences. The manager observes staff and provides guidance and support on their performance at regular review meetings. Staff are keen to gain further qualifications and undertake training. They have visited other centres and nurseries locally to gain a wider perspective and understanding of good practice. There is scope for the management team to involve them further in improving approaches to self-evaluation.

#### **7. Does the centre have high expectations of all children?**

There is a welcoming and relaxed ethos in the nursery. All children are well cared for and supported by staff as they play and learn. The management team, staff, parents and children are very proud of the nursery. Children, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and are aware of their responsibilities in this respect. Children are polite and well behaved. They show good manners and respect for each

other and their environment. They are learning about healthy lifestyles. They try different foods and are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe and well.

#### **8. Does the centre have a clear sense of direction?**

The management team and staff have a shared vision for the continued development of the nursery. They are working together well to develop their approaches to identifying the strengths and areas for improvement. They are keen to develop, improve and take on new ideas. The management team are well motivated to provide high-quality care and learning for all children. They are well supported by the enthusiastic and hardworking staff team. The nursery is well placed to improve further.

#### **9. What happens next?**

We are confident that the centre will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits following this inspection. The centre and the education authority will inform parents about the centre's progress in improving the quality of education.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the centre and education authority.

- Develop further opportunities for children's physical development through play.
- Provide further support for the youngest children within the playroom and ensure that activities and resources meet the needs of all children.
- Develop further approaches to self-evaluation.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the centre there were six recommendations and one requirement. All have since been addressed.

Quality indicators help centres, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a centre. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each centre, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish centres are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Step by Step Nursery.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the centre.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**Managing Inspector:** Jane Mason

12 August 2009

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This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

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