

Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY331188
Inspection date	22 June 2007
Inspector	Shazaad Arshad
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Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stepping Stones Out of School Club opened in 2006 and operates from St. Josephs RC Junior and Infant School in Castleford. It is situated in the dining hall. The setting is managed by the owner and run as a private concern. A maximum of 26 children may attend the club at any one time. The club is open each weekday from 15.30 to 18.30 during school term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently eight children aged from three to under eight years on roll. The Out of School Club employs two members of staff. Of these, one holds a level 3 early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children's health is promoted because staff follow effective health and safety policies. This includes monitoring the children to ensure that they comply with the familiar daily routines, such as washing their hands. The premises remain hygienic at all times and staff take positive steps to thoroughly clean the food preparation areas, toilets and the equipment. Consequently,

opportunities for the transfer of infection are minimised. Staff have completed first aid training and there is a fully stocked first aid kit, which is taken on all outings. As a result, they are well prepared to deal with any accidents or incidents involving the children in their care.

Effective communication with parents ensures that staff are able to positively address children's personal health requirements. For example, they are knowledgeable regarding the children's allergies and food intolerances. Similarly, members of staff ensure that snack times are sociable and the children enjoy a variety of snacks. Nutritious options, such as fruit and no-sugar drinks are always available and the staff work hard to encourage the children to independently make healthy choices. For example, there are many posters on display reminding the children of the different types of healthy foods. However, the children's access to drinking water during the session is limited due to the placement of the drinks.

The children benefit from fresh air and exercise each day; staff plan physical activities, such as team games, music, drama and dance. They have the use of the large outdoor area where they benefit from using physical play items, which aids coordination, strength and balance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. They are able to safely access adequate equipment and toys. All of the resources that are provided to the children meet the required safety standards; in addition they are regularly checked to ensure that they do not pose a risk to children.

Staff are vigilant; they monitor and supervise the children as they enjoy the activities on offer. The children have a growing awareness of how to maintain their personal safety because staff practise the fire escape procedures on a regular basis and they are helping children to assess risks as part of the everyday activity plan. For example, the children are learning how to safely use equipment, such as knives and scissors, as they participate in supervised activities. In order to promote independence, the children are allowed to visit the bathroom, unaccompanied by an adult.

Members of staff have a clear understanding of their role in safeguarding children and they are familiar with some of the indicators of child abuse and neglect. A written procedure is in operation and the procedure includes the contact details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are happy and settled within the setting. They demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and they benefit from warm and friendly relationships with the staff. The children confidently make choices regarding the types of activities they wish to participate in. For instance, some children particularly enjoy music, drama and dance while others select quieter activities, such as using art and craft activities. The children are encouraged to have a say in how the club operates and they are included in making some decisions. For example, their views are collected and respected on the occasions when new themes are chosen.

The children are well supported by the staff who are skilled at encouraging children to extend their ideas by listening and talking to them. Overall, the children have access to a suitable range

of developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor play equipment. The planning system ensures activities are sufficiently organised to provide a rich experience for children of all ages.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Members of staff are able to deal with a wide range of children's behaviour sensitively. They are thoughtful and consistent in their approach, consequently, the children are beginning to develop an understanding of how their behaviour affects others and they make some positive attempts to share and take turns. Clearly written procedures help staff to address equal opportunities and deal with any issues arising from difficult behaviour. Suitable provision is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities and learning difficulties because staff have a positive attitude towards inclusion. The provision also includes some limited positive images of other cultures.

Members of staff maintain friendly relationships with the children's parents and they ensure that they have access to a range of written information about the provision. For instance, parents have access to an informative notice board, which contains helpful information about the setting, such as the complaints procedure. Policies and procedures are stored in the 'parents pack' and daily verbal communication ensures that staff and parents share the necessary information required to successfully address children's changing needs.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children's needs are met through generally effective organisation. For example, staff interact with the children and they ensure that the daily routines are suitable to address their health and welfare. Adult to child ratios are maintained appropriately and there are systems in place for the recruitment and vetting of all staff working with the children. The staff team have attended induction and they are developing the setting through sharing relevant information, which assists them to cater for the children's individual needs.

Most of the required documentation is in place to support the care of the children; registers of attendance are accurately completed, medication records are maintained and children's personal details are recorded and stored confidentially. There are appropriate procedures for recording accidents, although the system implemented to ensure that parents are informed requires some further attention. Also the visitors book has not been maintained and consequently there is no accurate record of people who have entered the setting.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, numerous actions were raised. The setting had to ensure that adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. A system has been introduced which requires all staff to have completed the regulatory checks and clearance before they commence in their posts. Further requirements on staff training and qualifications criteria being met were raised. The leader of the setting has a recognised childcare qualification and both staff have attended induction training.

Other requirements raised included procedures for a child being lost, complaints procedure for parents, child protection in compliance with latest guidance, accessibility of records and ensuring safety in the setting. The requirements have been addressed by developing the policy on lost children and developing the child protection policy which includes information on the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff have also attended an induction session and have the policy to read in order to understand how the procedures are put into practice.

Information on the complaints procedure is accurate and displayed on the notice board for parents. Parents have also been informed of the procedure to be followed if they wish to make a complaint to Ofsted.

The safety of children attending the setting has been improved as parents are not allowed to walk through the setting as an exit point. Arrangements have been made with the school that do not allow unauthorised access whilst the after school club is in operation.

All the relevant documentation is kept on site and there is a separate locked cabinet in the storage area used to keep all the required records on the premises so that they are accessible and available for inspection at all times.

In addressing the actions the setting has taken positive steps to improve and therefore minimise any risk to the children attending.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required that provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet National Standards.

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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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):

- ensure drinking water is made accessible to all children
- extend provision to include positive images of children and adults from different cultural backgrounds
- ensure accident records include all relevant details and the visitors book is maintained.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk