

Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY298689

Inspection date

05/11/2008

Inspector

Gillian Cubitt

Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery is a privately owned day nursery situated in a residential area in Thornton Heath, Surrey. It opened in 2004 and operates from a converted house with a self-contained baby unit for children under two years. There is a secure area for outside play. The nursery opens each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 49 weeks of the year. It is registered on the Early Years register.

There are currently 18 children from five months to five years on roll. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are five members of staff, including the manager; four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The nursery provides a welcoming environment for children and babies where their learning needs are acknowledged and staff are working towards meeting children's individual needs using the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children attend the nursery with diverse cultures and backgrounds which the nursery appropriately supports although children's different stages of learning are not yet fully observed. Some steps have been made towards evaluating practice by consulting with staff and parents. This, however, is in its early stages of development and aims and objectives on how the nursery can be improved are not yet formalised.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that all policies are kept up to date so that staff and parents are fully informed of current procedures
- ensure that all staff are fully conversant with the latest procedures to safeguard children
- organise activities that include all children and link to their individual level of understanding and stage of learning, providing more opportunities to extend the growing independence of older and more able children
- develop parental involvement by engaging them more in supporting their children's learning; providing them with more information about the role of the key person and giving them the opportunity to have regular feedback with individual sessions to look at and discuss their children's progress through the use of their individual profiles
- develop the daily organisation to give children more free access to all activities throughout the day including role play areas and access to books

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- obtain prior written permission for each and every

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medicine from parents before any medication is given
(documentation)

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider has developed a friendly, small nursery environment which runs to a daily routine with appropriately qualified and vetted staff. The provider who is also the overall manager plays an active role in the day to day running of the nursery working closely with staff who work together well to provide suitable support for children. There is not a completed self evaluation document but the provider is mindful of the importance to reflect on how the nursery is progressing. A suggestion book for parents has been established and questionnaires for staff and parents plan to help the provider to make future improvements. Also, the provider has acknowledged and endeavoured to address the recommendations from the last inspection. Appropriate training is organised for staff and they are aware of the EYFS who refer to clearly displayed posters. Future plans are also in place to extend their learning using this guidance. The provider also takes initiative to attend key training to keep herself up to date with requirements such as working with children with special educational needs. A recent course for safeguarding children has been completed and as a result a policy has been updated. This, however, has not successfully been shared with staff who are uninformed of the key changes and how it impacts on them. Many policies and procedures for the nursery are not current. This means that staff and parents are not kept fully informed and some policies do not reflect daily practice such as the administering of medication for children.

The bright reception area showing children's photographs, staff qualifications, daily routines and welcoming greeting from staff make parents feel welcome. Registration processes inform staff of children's personal details and parents are invited to complete details of children's likes, dislikes and what they enjoy doing. This information, however, is not effectively used to detail children's starting points as they start their nursery learning and education.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are generally well supported in their learning partly because this is a small nursery where staff are caring, attentive and know children well. Children see their work attractively displayed as well as informative posters and pictures that relate to areas of learning. Key staff make observations of what children do and have started to make links to children's next steps in their learning which are recorded in the children's individual files. However, information supplied by some parents about their children's abilities are not effectively recorded in their individual records to enable key staff to reflect on children's starting points. Furthermore, there is a lack of purposeful one to one sessions with parents to update children's progress.

Most children are very sociable and some display confidence. They sit and chat about what they are doing, talk about current events such as Halloween which help

them understand what happens during this period. Children are eager to become independent and enjoy making choices in their activities during their play. Staff encourage children to put toys away but children do not always listen and leave toys around. This is not helped because older, more able children, are not engaged in more responsible tasks that extend their capabilities and independence. This is apparent especially when children have snacks. Here staff usually lay the table and put pieces of fruit on each plate thus removing consistent opportunities for children to develop skills and life experiences such as pouring drinks and organising place settings. Younger children benefit because the nursery has a cosy atmosphere making them feel secure although some group activities where they learn numbers by rote, as well as the alphabet, do not acknowledge their level of their comprehension. Consequently younger children do not become engaged in activities that lack meaning for them.

The organisation of the nursery supports children's safety and welfare. Meals and snacks are nutritious and a risk assessment of the building is completed daily by the provider. Staff are conscious to safeguard children's welfare both in observing procedures what to do if they are concerned about a child as well as ensuring the nursery environment is safe. Not all staff, however, are completely secure in the updated procedures for safeguarding children and staff are also not consistent with teaching children to think of how keep themselves safe when playing outside. Too many children climb into a tent making it fall over and collapse.

Children use paints, pencils, construction toys play dough and sand during their free choice sessions as well as having access to a computer. This aids some free flow play. However, some resources, such as books and role play areas are only available in the room where younger children sleep which limits choice during certain periods of the day. At this time staff make choices for the children with table top toys, board games and dinosaur figures. Some children show interest but this quickly fades as the children seek alternative activities. Children's behaviour is generally good although at times more dominant children take control overshadowing the needs of the younger children.

Babies and children under two benefit from having their own snug separate rooms and are supported by two qualified staff. Babies settle quickly and thrive well, listening to gentle music, playing with many soft toys and receiving affectionate cuddles and constant interaction from warm attentive staff.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	Satisfactory
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	Satisfactory
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	Satisfactory

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	Satisfactory
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	Satisfactory
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	Satisfactory
How well are children safeguarded?	Satisfactory

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	Satisfactory
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	Satisfactory
How well are children helped to stay safe?	Satisfactory
How well are children helped to be healthy?	Satisfactory
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	Satisfactory
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	Satisfactory
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	Satisfactory

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

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

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.