

# Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY276264

**Inspection date**

26/11/2008

**Inspector**

Jill Milton

**Setting address**

55 Glanville Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX4 2DD

**Telephone number**

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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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery is a privately owned setting that has operated under the current management since 2003. The nursery operates in a converted detached house situated in East Oxford. The accommodation comprises of a series of playrooms over two levels. Access to the rooms on the first floor of the nursery is limited. An enclosed outside area is available for all children. The intake of children is from the local communities in and around Oxford city. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register as well as the Compulsory and Voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery is open on weekdays from 08:00 until 18:00 all year round. A maximum of 25 children under eight years may attend the nursery at any one time and there are currently 25 children in the early years age range on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and support is in place for a number of children who speak English as an additional language. After school care is provided from 15.30 to 18.00 in term time for eight children and a holiday club operates during school holidays. The nursery employs 15 staff, of whom nine hold appropriate early years qualifications. Five staff are working towards a qualification.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The nursery is promoting an inclusive caring environment that is meeting the needs of the children attending. Children make steady progress in their learning and development, showing eager responses to the tempting range of daily activities. Overall staff promote children's health and safety to acceptable standards though do not identify all potential hazards. Staff are building sound partnerships with families by maintaining a two-way flow of useful information to support care of the children. Staff are bringing about steady improvements to the nursery though have yet to formalise systems to identify and address issues.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- make more effective use of risk assessments to identify and address potential hazards to children's health and safety
- co-ordinate the systems used to monitor standards in the nursery so that key areas for improvement can be identified and implemented
- support staff to develop confidence at using observations to plan activities that relate to children's individual interests and abilities

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The manager and team of staff at the nursery are working together to improve the setting. There are a number of examples where this is having a direct positive impact on the children's learning. For example, refurbishment of rooms now ensures the older children have better access to a wider range of daily activities and more space for enjoyable creative play. Senior staff recognise the need to formalise the way they monitor standards though have yet to implement robust systems to ensure this happens consistently. There are sound procedures in place for the recruitment of new staff with an awareness of the need to obtain checks to show adults are suitable to work with children. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of child protection procedures, with recent updates to training and reinforcement of understanding of what to do if they have concerns for the welfare of a child. Staff are deployed appropriately around the nursery so that the children receive the support they require. There is a reasonable understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy though current risk assessments are not thorough enough to identify and address all issues. Many parents speak positively about their satisfaction with the levels of care their children receive. Staff respect family wishes and develop a friendly rapport with parents to share information about the care and the progress of the children.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children are secure and happy in the setting and have confidence to leave their carers once they establish bonds with key staff. Staff offer children play in a variety of rooms during the day, helping to maintain the children's interest and curiosity in activities. Children are often using their senses to experience different textures, sounds and flavours. A cooking activity to make chapattis is popular with the children and demonstrates one way the nursery promotes respect and inclusion. Staff interact appropriately with the children and offer support in small groups to foster enjoyment of storybooks or early mark making. Children have access to suitable resources at their own level to encourage independence and provide opportunities for making choices and decisions. Children play amicably in most areas and staff intervene appropriately to encourage sharing. Older children co-operate readily with small tasks and show good manners when requesting items from staff. Children progress with their understanding of technology as they access more challenging equipment in the pre-school rooms. Staff support their understanding of number by sharing counting and introducing new vocabulary relating to shape.

Although not all staff are fully confident at new methods of planning activities, they all demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They ensure children receive an appropriate variety of play opportunities so that they can make steady progress in their learning and development. Regular dated observations for each child form the basis for planning their next individual steps in learning. An observation by staff in the baby room, for example, that a child is showing an interest in music results in more activities in the weekly planning sheet to encourage this area. Meal times are sociable

occasions where children receive positive messages about healthy eating as they eat generous quantities of chopped fresh fruits. Children are enthusiastic about playing outdoors and staff are beginning to develop the garden as an area to promote a wider range of learning beyond physical development. Children receive reminders from staff about how to keep safe when playing outdoors. Children experience trips into the local community and photographic records of outings provide reminders of these occasions for later conversations. Older children are beginning to record things for themselves with name writing and letter shapes. They enjoy using materials and tools in creative ways and staff encourage imagination. A child dressed in his cloak and freshly made paper crown proudly announces 'I am a king' when preparing props for the forthcoming Christmas celebrations.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	3
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

## **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**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.