

Millom Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Valerie Block

Setting address Millom Pre-School Playgroup, St. Georges Road, MILLOM,
Cumbria, LA18 4LE
Telephone number 01229 775 834
Email stepstones@tiscali.co.uk
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

Millom Stepping Stones nursery was registered in 2008 and is run by a private limited company. It is managed by a management committee made up of the parents of children who attend the setting. The setting is part of Millom Children's Centre and provides childcare for the community of Millom. The setting previously ran under a different management structure since 2002 at this site. It first opened about 40 years ago in different premises.

It operates in a purpose built nursery unit owned by Cumbria County Council which is attached to the local education authority nursery school, located near to Millom town centre. The premises consists of a large open plan activity room with adjoining cloakroom, WC and kitchen facilities. There is a baby playroom with adjoining sleep area and nappy change area. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. Children have occasional use of the kitchen.

The setting is registered to provide childcare for up to 36 children. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register, the compulsory part of the childcare register and the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are 70 children aged three months to eight who attend at present. Children attend at variable times throughout the week. The setting provides funded nursery places. The setting is open from 07.00 to 17.00 on weekdays. The setting is open every week apart from two weeks over the Christmas period and two weeks over the summer period. There are 13 members of childcare staff, 10 of whom hold early years qualifications. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are well settled and are making good progress at this welcoming, inclusive setting, as staff work well with parents to exchange information to understand each child's unique personality and needs. In the main, staff encourage children's learning through play and introductory links have been established with other Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) providers to establish continuity in children's learning. Children are in the main safe and secure due to the setting's robust procedures and staff's vigilance. Although self-evaluation tools have not as yet been fully completed the setting shows a good capacity for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further improve the exchange of relevant information with other providers to improve continuity and coherence for the child and further improve all staff's understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and assessment methods to determine children's next steps in learning

- ensure that the kitchen door, that is a designated fire door, is always kept closed as directed.
- further improve opportunities for all children to develop independence and support children to develop their understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy through everyday practical events.

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

- ensure that information about who has legal contact with the child; and who has parental responsibility for the child is obtained in advance of a child being admitted to the provision. (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare; information and complaints)

23/02/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children benefit from the setting's robust recruitment and staffing practices. There is a very effective key worker system in place that ensures that children's individual needs are known and met. Children receive extra individual support, where appropriate, to make progress at their own pace to fulfil their potential and to be fully included in the life of the setting. The setting are very mindful of their responsibilities to have inclusive practices at their setting. For example, there is ramped access to the building as well as welcoming posters using different languages to welcome everyone.

Risk assessments are comprehensive in identifying dangers indoors and outdoors. Staff vigilantly supervise children, however, the fire door to the kitchen is routinely propped open and this is a risk to children's well-being. The premises are kept to a high standard of cleanliness and there are good procedures in place to prevent cross-infection. Key staff have recently undergone refresher training in child protection procedures so ensuring children are kept safe from harm.

Required documentation is mainly kept well and the setting have developed other records, such as diaries, to help them meet children's needs. Some necessary information about individual children has not been collected as required. Parents advise that they are very happy with the service they and their children receive and feel very welcome. Notice boards are full of information for parents about a good range of relevant issues including information about healthy eating as well as information about the setting's procedures, information about the children's activities and EYFS information. Although there are established links with other providers, the parties do not systematically exchange information that is relevant to establish continuity and coherence for each child's learning and development.

Although self-evaluation tools have not fully been used, staff meetings and information from local authority advisors and professional bodies inform the setting's practice. For example, an identified area for improvement is to give

children better quality continuous outside play and to use a template questionnaire to assess parents' views of their setting. Staff show a commitment to and capacity for improvement as they regularly attend training courses to improve their practice and required training, such as first aid training, is refreshed on a regular basis.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are making progress and show a good amount of self-confidence and interest in exploring their play environment. The learning environment is organised to give children a good amount of choice and activity planning follows children's interests. For example, children are interested in tree bark when outside, so the staff bring bark into the play room for further investigation. Children enjoy playing outside in their safe, secure play area where they use balls and hoops to play with their friends and develop physical skills. Babies and children under two years have safe outdoor play also and regularly have fresh air. Babies are diligently and warmly cared for by regular staff, who communicate very closely with parents to ensure that babies are settled. Older children help themselves to mats to sit attentively at story time and enjoy their story, asking questions and taking a full part in this event. Staff know their key children well and staff are aware of children's profiles and their next steps in learning. Although most staff have a good understanding of early learning goals some show they are unsure about using observation and assessment to plan for future activities. Although all areas of the curriculum are provided for, there are some weaknesses in providing for children to increase their self-help skills through everyday activities, such as helping themselves to tissues and pouring their own drinks. Also although mathematical principles such as counting and matching shapes are taught, there are few opportunities for children to apply reasoning and calculation in everyday activities. Staff help children to value diversity as they have ensured there are many toys available to children that show positive images of diversity including disability. They have been learning about the Chinese New Year and there is an interest table displaying Chinese items to stimulate their interest.

Children eat healthily as the setting encourage healthy eating and have recently organised a lunch club where school dinners are provided for the children. Staff know children's health needs, such as any allergies and so children's health is protected. Children learn to keep themselves healthy as they are reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. There are cartoon posters near to the taps to remind them to do so and children know they are washing away dirt that could make them feel ill. Children also are reminded to keep themselves safe in everyday ways and so learn safety principles. For example, staff remind children not to swing on chairs. Children learn to behave well as the staff model good polite behaviour and use praise to reinforce good behaviour. Children know to say please and thank you showing social skills. The setting provide computer equipment and other equipment such as electronic toys, telephones and binoculars that help children to become knowledgeable and skilled in using technology to promote economic well-being in later years.

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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
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?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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 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 registration.

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.