

Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY314799
Inspection date	23/03/2009
Inspector	Zoe Smith
Setting address	168 Bramhall Moor Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 5BA
Telephone number	0161 483 5475
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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 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 one of four nurseries run by Domalo Ltd who have been the registered provider since 2005. The nursery operates from the a large house in the Hazel Grove district of Stockport. Children have access to four playrooms and toilet facilities all on the ground floor. They participate in physical and outdoor play activities in the enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 49 weeks of the year. It is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 54 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. There are 12 members of staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ level 2, three who are currently undertaking training.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Staff use their good knowledge of children and their individual needs, interests and abilities to successfully promote their welfare and learning. Children are making good progress, given their age, ability and starting points. Positive partnerships with parents and specialist agencies are ensuring that individual children receive the additional support they need. Children benefit from a strong commitment to inclusion and are actively learning about equality and diversity. Good systems are in place to evaluate the service provided and to identify the most appropriate areas to target for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop opportunities for children to seek to do things for themselves, knowing that an adult is close by, ready to support and help if needed, for example by allowing children to pour their own drinks and serve their own food
- increase opportunities for children to shown an interest in Information and Computer Technology (ICT) by providing safe equipment to play with, such as torches, transistor radios or karaoke machines.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The senior management team is well established and uses staff appraisals and team meetings to effectively review, evaluate and develop practice. Parent's opinions are actively sought to enable the nursery to be responsive to current

users. For example, the organisation of the key person system has been improved in response to the comments of parents. Robust recruitment, selection and induction procedures ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. Importance is placed on additional training and attendance on courses leading to recognised qualifications. This is helping to develop the skills and knowledge of staff and improve practice.

The setting fosters positive partnerships with parents. Daily discussions, 'my day' record sheets, children's development records, notices and newsletters keep them well informed about their child and the nursery. Partnerships with specialist agencies are strong and highly effective in ensuring all children are welcomed and proactive steps are taken to meet their additional needs. Links with other EYFS settings children attend are well developed and provide children with coherence in their learning and development.

The welfare and protection of children is important at the setting. Staff have a good understanding of and are well trained in safeguarding procedures. They know it is their responsibility to take immediate action should they have concerns about a child or the behaviour of another member of staff. The staff team is well deployed and diligently supervises the children at all times. Annual risk assessments and daily hazard checks are conducted and effective precautions put in place to reduce the potential for accidents and injury.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children participate in a balanced and wide range of enjoyable activities that are designed to stimulate their interest and challenge their learning as they progress towards the early learning goals. Observations and assessments are used very well to inform the planning for the next steps in individual children's learning. Continuous learning areas and activity plans ensure sufficient emphasis is given to all the six areas of learning. Children have access to a mostly good variety of high quality age appropriate toys and equipment. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to explore and show an interest in ICT equipment. The key person system works very well in ensuring individual children receive the support they need to take the next steps in their learning and development. Positive adult and child interactions help children to form strong bonds with staff. There are lots of smiles, laughter and chatting as staff listen to, play and talk with the children.

Children are learning new words, to listen and to become skilful communicators. A love of books is fostered throughout the nursery. Children snuggle up to staff to look at books, listen intently at story times and often choose to look at a book of their own. Older more able children know that print carries meaning and label their own pictures and make meaningful marks in the letters they have written to their parents. Children enjoy imaginative and make believe play where they actively use gestures and imitate actions. They become engrossed in their play taking the dolls who are poorly to see the doctor. Children have excellent opportunities to freely explore an extensive range of sensory, messy and creative activities. Babies love to explore the properties of sand, grabbing it in their hands and letting it flow through their fingers. Children make very interesting collages and models using lots of

different materials, glue and paint. Babies enjoy exploring treasure baskets and the properties of natural materials. Children show an awareness and interest in problem solving and reasoning activities. They carefully match and manipulate pieces into the correct place to complete jigsaws and with a member of staff they count how many windows there are in different types of vehicles.

Children are learning how to keep themselves healthy and safe through good practice, activities, stories and visits from a police officer and the crossing patrol officer. They have daily opportunities for energetic outdoor and physical play activities. Children are learning to value and respect difference because they have access to a good range of activities and resources that reflect diversity. They learn about their own and the religious and cultural beliefs of others through activities about religious and cultural festivals, such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year and Mothering Sunday. Staff find out some key words from the home language of children who speak English as an additional language to help children feel welcome and communicate their needs. Children have some opportunities to develop their self help and independence skills when they manage their own personal care and put their outdoor clothing on. However, at mealtimes opportunities are not used to their full potential to promote self help and independence skills. The home routines of babies are followed to ensure they feel secure and have continuity in their care. Children enjoy learning about nature and the environment. They plant flowers and herb seeds and then tend and care for the plants as they monitor their growth.

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?	2
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

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