

Stepping Stones Nursery & Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY274200

Inspection date

29/01/2009

Inspector

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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).

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 and Pre-school is privately owned and has been registered under the present owners since 2003. It is situated in the Aigburth district of Liverpool. There is no lift access to the first floor. It has its own fully enclosed outdoor play areas.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 33 children at any one time and there are 28 children on roll. It is currently registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year from 08.15 to 17.30. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are currently 28 children on roll. Eight staff work with the children. Of these, six have NNEB or NVQ level 3 qualifications whilst the remaining two staff have NVQ level 2 and are working towards their level 3.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The nursery and pre-school work well in partnership with parents as the staff recognise that children are individuals and ensure their needs are met. The nursery has comprehensive policies and procedures in place that ensure children are safe. Children enjoy their time at the nursery and have good relationships with staff and each other.

Staff have begun to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and learning and development is suitably organised and delivered so that children make satisfactory progress. Staff have also started to maintain individual profiles for each child attending and these help to monitor their progress and development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to increase understanding of the assessment part of the EYFS framework and the development of the children's profiles
- review the arrangements for snack and mealtimes and ensure that prepared food is not left uncovered and hot meals are served at a suitable temperature
- extend the current risk assessment to ensure it covers the different venues visited by the children

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting promotes inclusive practice. Staff gather useful information from parents when children first begin to attend the setting with regard to sleeping and feeding routines of babies, and discussion takes place to identify what children already know and what they like to do. This helps to ensure that individual care needs can be met. Staff plan a varied range of activities to promote all areas of development and to ensure that activities provided for children are challenging and extend their learning. Safety within the setting is a high priority; children are signed in and out of the nursery by their parents and a daily risk assessment of the premises is carried out to ensure that children can play safely both indoors and outside. However, the risk assessment documentation does not cover the different venues outside the nursery, which staff take the children to. Toys and equipment are clean, safe, and suitable for their purpose. Toys are stored to enable children to self-select what they wish to play with or the activities they want to participate in. Toys and an excellent selection of posters displayed throughout the nursery are used to promote positive images of culture, disability and gender and help children develop positive attitudes to others.

Some practices regarding the serving of snacks and meals are not appropriate. Meals are plated out and left uncovered whilst children finish their game then wash their hands before sitting down to lunch, thus resulting in dinners being served that are cold and uninteresting. For some of the children the absence of a plate or placemat means that their snack is sometimes put straight on to the table, even though the table has been wiped down beforehand. However, children are learning about the importance of good hygiene, for example, they can easily reach tissues to wipe their noses and are taught how to dispose of them appropriately.

Records, policies, and procedures that promote positive outcomes for children are in place. The management of children's behaviour is calm and consistent and promotes a friendly atmosphere. Children receive lots of positive interaction and praise from the staff team. All staff are suitably qualified to work with children and are keen to attend further training to improve their knowledge and skills. Staff are provided with appropriate information regarding safeguarding children and are aware of the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child in their care.

Effective hygiene procedures are in place along with procedures to support children who are ill. Staff always obtain parental permission before medication is given. Partnership with parents has been developed so that they receive feedback about children's care and progress and staff ensure they can access their own child's development profile at any time. Parents receive a leaflet regarding the aims and objectives of the nursery and pre-school prior to care commencing and are given a copy of the policies and procedures.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff support the play and learning of children through being actively engaged in their activities. For example, they take the children on outings into the local environment to the nearby park or to the local library for story time sessions. Children are building good relationships with each other and play harmoniously. For example, a small group of children initiated imaginative role play in the home corner where they had a birthday party for one of the children present, who proudly put on the 'birthday hat' whilst the others sang happy birthday to her. They are learning to share and take turns in the calm, gentle environment in which they are all valued. Children sit as they play picture lotto and wait as they try to recognise the pictures held up by a member of staff and match it to those on their board.

Space is organised well to enable children to have areas in which to be active and areas for quiet times. Outdoor play takes place daily, weather permitting, thus children are developing an awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle. They are taught to keep themselves safe, for example, they hold the handrail when walking up or down the stairs. Staff as much as possible use open-ended questions to encourage children's thinking and learning, as they read a story or look at a book, for instance.

Very young children have great fun as they explore the treasure basket and experience the feel of the different objects it contains. They also enjoy the sound of the musical instruments as they confidently wave them around and listen to the sounds they make. Children learn to think creatively as they enjoy making their own colourful, imaginative creations with an extremely varied range of art and craft resources. Their art and craftwork is displayed attractively around each room.

Children make satisfactory progress through the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. Staff have some understanding of this framework, for example, they know which areas of learning link to which activities. Observational assessments of children are carried out and staff use post it notes and charts for each individual child, which indicate the activity undertaken and how it relates to the EYFS framework. This is then used to plan the next steps in children's learning. Planning systems are appropriate and provide a variety of activities for children to participate in.

Children are comfortable and confident in the setting. They develop their self-care skills, for example, pouring their own drinks, putting their own gravy on their lunches and putting their own aprons on before playing in the water trough. The very competent children were observed helping others to do the same tasks. Children develop their social skills, as they are encouraged to chat to staff and to each other during meal and snack times. Children have many opportunities to count and engage in problem solving activities as they play with jigsaws. They learn about shape, space, and measure by playing with jugs and containers in the water and sand trays. Children enjoy mark making and writing resources are freely available in the pre-school room where they have their own 'office' table and

associated resources. They enjoy playing on the computer and learn to control the mouse to operate simple programmes.

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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	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?	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?	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

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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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 visit.

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.