

Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY221441
Inspection date	16/06/2009
Inspector	Rachael Flesher
Setting address	Blossomgate, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 2AJ
Telephone number	07970 021116
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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).

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 privately owned and was registered in 2002. It is one of three nurseries owned by the same provider in the area, and operates from a church building in Ripon. The accommodation consists of two rooms for the children, separate toilets and a kitchen. There is an enclosed outdoor play area to the front of the building. There are nine members of staff who work with the children. Three of whom have a level three qualification, one is working towards a level three qualification and two are working towards a level two qualification.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for 24 children aged three to five years old and there are 27 children on roll. The nursery is also registered on both parts of the Childcare Register to provide out of school care. Opening times are Monday to Friday from 07.45 to 18.00 all year, with the exception of bank holidays. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The manager effectively communicates an ambitious vision shared by the whole team, who work hard to achieve the best outcomes for all children through their outstanding commitment to self evaluation, reflective practice and continuous improvement. A safe and stimulating learning environment is carefully planned and provided, that successfully promotes children's welfare and good health and supports the uniqueness of each child. This is further promoted by the effective engagement with parents and others, and together ensures each child makes good progress towards the early learning goals, in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the current procedures followed by staff and children during parents arrival to collect children before lunch, to ensure the individual needs and learning styles of all children are fully considered and met
- continue to develop partnerships with other providers where children also attend to further ensure progression and continuity of their learning and care.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager is extremely motivated, has high aspirations for the nursery and strives to achieve the best outcomes for all children. This ambitious vision is shared by the whole team, who collectively engage in highly effective self-evaluation and reflective practice. They rigorously review and monitor all aspects of their practice

and the provision, including policies and procedures and their own professionals development and training needs. The views of the children, parents and external professionals are also meaningfully sought. Areas for development are clearly identified in order of priority and acted on accordingly, to ensure continuous improvement. The development plan and current practice and provision clearly demonstrates the positive impact improvements made to date have had on the outcomes for all children, and those for the future are well targeted to ensure further improvement.

Effective systems, policies and procedures are in place and implemented to ensure children are safeguarded, included, their needs met and their welfare promoted. The manager and staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, are generally well deployed and are warm and welcoming to all. A very good systems for observing, assessing and planning for the individual needs and interests of each child has recently been introduced, and staff are beginning to use this effectively to ensure each child is supported to make good progress. This includes seeking ongoing information from parents regarding what they know about their child to further inform their development files. Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress and the provision through the good information sharing systems in place and are encouraged to be involved in their learning and development. The nursery liaise with external services to ensure each child gets the support they need. Strong partnerships and information sharing systems are in place with schools. However, these are not yet fully in place with other providers where children also attend to fully ensure progression and continuity of their learning and care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are happy and settled and participate eagerly and with enjoyment in a safe and stimulating environment. Staff work well together as a team, providing a welcoming environment and promoting children's welfare and learning. Warm, caring relationships are established and children readily seek out staff for comfort and support. They are forming friendships with their peers and play cooperatively, taking turns and sharing. They are developing a good understanding and awareness of their local and wider community through the activities, experiences and resources provided and are learning to value and respect those who are different from themselves. Children's independence is fostered extremely well. They are given responsibility for small tasks, such as, preparing their own snack, clearing away, washing up and setting the table. Staff encourage children to make their own choices and to lead and direct their play and learning. All resources are stored to ensure they are accessible to all, and they can free flow between the indoor and outdoor learning environment, transporting resources with them. Staff listen to children intently and are skilful at following their interests and supporting them to see an idea through to the end. For example, when a child decides to make a kite, and use effective dialogue and questioning to extend their learning. As a result children have highly developed confidence and self esteem.

Good quality planning and organisation ensures that every child is suitably challenged by the learning experiences provided across the six areas of learning,

and that they are personally meaningful and interesting to them. Staff carry out daily observations which are used along with information provided by parents and discussions with children to identify their interests, learning styles, stages of development and to plan the next steps in their learning and development accordingly. Staff also track how children use the areas of provision on a daily basis and consider any enhancements they can make to further their learning and to encourage children into areas they may not currently access. For example, successfully encouraging boys to access mark making and pre-writing activities. As a result children are motivated and interested to learn and all are making good progress. Their individual needs and learning styles are, on the whole, provided for well. However, the whole group time activity provided during parents arrival to collect their children before lunch does not fully consider and provide for these.

Children are developing a deep understanding of how to be healthy. They take care of their own personal care needs, and know to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. They enthusiastically brush their teeth after lunch and know to wear a hat and sun cream when playing outdoors when it is hot, and why they need to do this. They have ample opportunity for fresh air and physical exercise through daily outdoor play and walks. Children pour themselves a drink of water when they are thirsty, enjoy their healthy meals together and are beginning to grow and harvest their own produce. They also regularly visit the local market and sample foods with different textures and flavours. Children are developing their understanding of dangers and how to stay safe as they talk about road safety when out on walks, and have visits from the community support officer. They use scissors and knives safely and with confidence, and have opportunities to take risks as they climb and balance on equipment outdoors.

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.	1

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?	1
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?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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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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