

Early STEPS Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY386602
Inspection date	13/07/2009
Inspector	Karen Cockings

Setting address	648 Manchester Road, Stocksbridge, SHEFFIELD, S36 1DY
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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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

Early STEPS Nursery opened in its new premises in 2009. It is run by the STEP Development Trust, which is a voluntary organisation managed by a board of trustees. It is located in Stocksbridge, to the north of Sheffield and serves families living or working in the area.

The nursery operates from the ground floor of the purpose built Stocksbridge Children's Centre which includes office and meeting room facilities on the first floor for other users of the building. Children are cared for in three rooms and are grouped according to age. They have access to a fully enclosed area for outdoor play. The nursery is open each weekday throughout the year from 08.00 to 18.00 and is registered to care for a maximum of 52 children in the early years age range. There are currently 68 children on roll and the provision supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The setting is also included on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Children are cared for by a team of 11 staff, all of whom have a relevant early years qualification. Two additional part-time staff are employed to provide administrative support and to cover lunchtime periods. The provision receives support from the local authority and is currently updating work completed in their previous setting in relation to the local quality assurance scheme, Pathways to Quality.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Very positive measures are taken to promote children's health, safety and well-being in a secure and welcoming environment. Children are cared for by committed and caring staff, who work in close partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure that children are fully included in the life of the setting. Staff are developing effective systems of observation to ensure that planning is tailored to meet the needs of individual children. Methods of self-evaluation are used well to target and act upon areas for further development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to explore additional ways of involving parents in their children's learning
- review and update aspects of the complaints procedure in line with current requirements
- continue to consolidate the use of observations to inform planning and consider further ways of supporting children's imaginative play.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management of the nursery is strong, with a firm commitment to the further development of the provision and to the enhancement of outcomes for children. Staff work effectively together to meet the challenge of establishing the provision in their new premises and to create a stimulating environment, that is welcoming to children and their families. Although this is technically a new registration, recommendations from the inspection of the previous setting have been fully addressed. Methods of self-evaluation are used well to help staff reflect upon their practice. They meet together regularly, have opportunities to visit other settings and attend relevant training to further develop skills and knowledge. They work closely with local authority advisors to enhance the provision and are updating their quality assurance portfolio to reflect what they are now offering. Feedback is actively sought from parents and used in planning for continuous improvement.

Close liaison with parents helps staff to meet children's individual needs effectively. Systems of communication, such as notice boards, brochures and displays, are used well to share important information with parents about the setting. Daily communication between parents and key staff at arrival and collection times ensures that all are kept well informed about children's needs. Parents of the younger children also value the daily diary, making use of it to pass on significant information to help staff provide effectively for their children. An information board near the 'autumn' and 'winter' rooms lets parents know what their children have been enjoying that day, prompting lots of conversation and involving parents in their children's learning. Books and story sacks are also loaned to parents and helpful leaflets are readily available for them, such as a collection of nursery rhymes they can share with their children at home. Families are invited to take the nursery teddy bear on holiday or home with them, to share and record family experiences with the children. Parents' evenings are organised and children's development folders are readily available. The nursery is exploring further ways of inviting parents' contributions, for example, by producing a 'home nursery' book where parents can also record their own observations of children's play experiences at home. The setting works closely with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists and health visitors, to ensure that children are fully included in the provision and are enabled to achieve their full potential.

All required records, policies and procedures are maintained well to promote children's health, safety and well-being, although, the complaints procedure lacks some detail to fully reflect current regulations. Risk assessments and daily checking systems are thorough and help to ensure that children are kept safe within the setting. Staff take prompt and appropriate action to deal with any identified hazards. Importantly, children's awareness of safety is raised through discussion and as part of everyday experiences. For example, they know that they need to wear helmets when riding their tricycles and learn how to cross roads safely during their visits to the library and local shops. Systems for the recruitment, vetting and induction of staff are rigorous, which ensures that children are cared for by suitable persons. Safeguarding training is given priority, so that practitioners have

a good understanding of their role and responsibilities with regard to child protection.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a bright and stimulating environment, which is well organised to promote children's learning. Attractive resources are set out at child height or within the reach of babies, so that they are keen to explore and begin to make independent choices about their play. Younger children are fascinated by the shells and fir cones hanging near the low window and spend time standing quietly investigating them. Babies delight in the different sounds they can make as they vigorously shake the plastic bottles filled with a variety of materials and colours. They develop physical skills and grow in confidence as they crawl around the playroom, pulling themselves up and learning to stand and walk, with the support of attentive staff. All children thoroughly enjoy the outdoor environment. There is direct access to the outdoor play space for the older children, which means that for a good part of their day they are able to access this area freely. Staff working with the babies and toddlers ensure that these younger children also have regular opportunities to be in the fresh air. Older children are eager to show how well they can jump, climb and balance. They play in the willow den, confidently use balls and hoops and enjoy painting large scale pictures on the fence. They steer tricycles and scooters into the numbered parking spaces and take a keen interest in helping to plant vegetables in their garden. All these activities contribute to children's learning, while also promoting their health and well-being.

Children build warm, trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. Staff intervene sensitively to provide comfort and reassurance to children who are upset, cuddling and talking to babies until they feel ready to play. There is a good awareness of individual children's interests, gained through discussion with parents and through gathering observations of children as they play. Staff are becoming increasingly confident in using what they observe about individual children to guide their planning and help them to identify the next steps in children's learning. They use tracking systems to monitor the progress children are making and to contribute to children's individual learning profiles.

Children share experiences and communicate confidently with each other and the adults who care for them. They love books and stories, listen intently and join in with familiar rhymes and actions. Their growing awareness of number is nurtured through many interesting activities, such as matching the numbered 'vehicles' into the appropriate parking spaces. They make paper aeroplanes as part of a transport topic and fly them along the corridor, measuring and comparing how far each have flown. Children learn about the world around them and are observant about their local community. They are very interested in the passing traffic they can spot from the low windows, confidently identifying whether the bus is a single or double decker and looking out for the delivery vans and the fire engine. Staff plan outings to the library and the local shops, making use of these opportunities to extend children's learning as well as raising awareness of safety issues. They provide activities and resources to teach children about the wider world, such as involving children in learning some words in other languages and tasting different foods.

Children use their imaginations as they play with small world figures or pretend to make each other drinks in the home corner. At times, however, these areas lack stimulus to fully engage children's interest.

Children's health and welfare are given high priority at the setting, where excellent standards of hygiene are maintained to protect children from the spread of infection. Children become independent in managing their own personal care, learning about the importance of hand washing and protecting their skin from the harmful effects of the sun. Younger children needing to sleep during the day are made comfortable in a calm and tranquil environment. Healthy eating is promoted effectively as children enjoy nourishing meals and snacks, which include fresh fruit and vegetables. Children are learning how foods are grown and produced as they help to plant runner beans and pumpkins in the garden, to use later in baking and food preparation activities. Children's emotional well-being is also fostered. They develop a sense of responsibility as they help with daily tasks, such as setting the table and taking care of the nursery's guinea pig. They know that they need to take turns with some resources, such as the computer, and use a large egg timer to help them. Staff warmly acknowledge children's achievements, which encourages children to feel proud of themselves and what they can do. This culminates in a 'graduation' ceremony when children leave the setting to move on to school, complete with home-made certificates and mortarboards.

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

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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