

# Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	317402
<b>Inspection date</b>	21/09/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Stephen Andrew Blake
<b>Setting address</b>	Stepping Stones Day Nursery, 58-62 Wood Street, Maryport, Cumbria, CA15 6LD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01900 812773
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	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.

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## **Description of the setting**

Stepping Stones Day Nursery was established in 1991 and is located within the centre of Maryport. The Nursery is registered on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Children have access to the whole of the ground floor except the staff office, kitchen, utility room and staff toilet. An additional pre school room is available to children on the first floor. The nursery has a rear yard and a large first floor balcony available to children for outdoor play. A maximum of 65 children may attend the nursery at any one time. Stepping Stones Day Nursery is open from 7.30am to 5.30pm each weekday for 51 weeks of the year.

Stepping Stones Day Nursery has entered into partnership arrangements with local schools and child care providers. There are currently 90 children on roll and of these, 84 are within the early years age range. The nursery serves children from the immediate and extended areas.

Stepping Stones Day Nursery is privately owned and managed and employs a total of 10 staff. Nine staff hold appropriate early years qualifications to National Vocational Level 2 or above.

The setting is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Staff have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of each child's individual needs and have established appropriate systems for the observation and assessment of children's learning and development. However, the systems for planning a balance of adult led and child initiated activities and the post lunchtime routines for children have not been reviewed recently. Staff have established a strong partnership with parents and share a good range of written and verbal information about their child's needs and routines. Policies and procedures necessary to safeguard children on the premises are generally in place although the procedures relating to children's health have not been reviewed recently. Regular risk assessments ensure that children are generally safe and secure at all times. Staff have started to identify aspects of their provision they would like to develop further and this commitment to ongoing self evaluation demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- review the system of planning for children's learning and development to ensure that all areas of learning are delivered through planned, purposeful

- play, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities
- ensure the provision meets the needs of all the children as both a place to feel at home and a place to learn, with regard to the post-lunchtime routine
- develop the system of self-evaluation to ensure that a programme of continuing professional development is applied
- ensure the first aid boxes have appropriate content to meet the needs of children, with regard to the out of date items
- ensure that necessary steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, with regard to the storage of soiled nappies, the torn changing mat and the provision of clean linen for children sleeping in cots.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

There is a satisfactory emphasis on safeguarding. Policies and procedures necessary to safeguard children's welfare are appropriately written and implemented by all staff. Clear vetting procedures ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Documentation relating to children's individual needs and care routines is well maintained and reflect an appropriate level of confidentiality. Written risk assessments are undertaken across the provision and are generally robust.

Staff are suitably qualified and work well together as a team. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have an appropriate understanding of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. Staff have begun to establish a system of continuous improvement to ensure their practice supports children to make satisfactory progress. For example, they recently obtained funding to develop a well designed first floor outdoor play area and have identified training events for later in the year. This helps to improve the overall quality of the early years provision and the outcomes for children. However, the system for self-evaluation is not yet fully in place and staff undertake their self-evaluations infrequently. This means that identified areas for improvement are sometimes delayed. Resources are suitably deployed and this enables children to make satisfactory progress in their learning and development. An effective key person system ensures that all staff have a thorough understanding of children's individual needs.

Staff have a good partnership with parents. Parents are valued as partners and are confident in the ability of staff to meet the individual needs of their child. Parents report a secure relationship in which staff understand children's individual home circumstances and provide them with appropriate and sensitive support. Staff provide parents with written policies and procedures and regular written and verbal information about children's learning, development and care routines. Staff have established appropriate links with other childcare and education providers to ensure that children's needs are met and there is continuity in their learning.

The setting promotes equality of opportunity and works with parents and other agencies to support and meet children's needs. Positive images, welcome signs and symbols around the nursery give children and families a sense of belonging

and of being valued. Staff have organised the available space well to ensure that each child is fully included according to their ability and stage of development.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Staff have created a calm, welcoming environment and have effectively organised the three nursery rooms to provide an appropriate range of resources according to children's ages and stages of development. This enables children to make satisfactory progress across all areas of learning. For example, children participate in craft activities to extend their creative development and use a range of tools in sand and water play to support their physical skills and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff ensure that resources are accessible and this supports children to make their own choices and promote their independence and self esteem. During activities staff stimulate children's thinking by asking a range of questions to support their learning. Staff have a generally appropriate understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and an effective key person system ensures there are efficient methods for observation and assessment of children's learning and development. They use this information effectively to identify the next steps in children's learning. Staff have begun to establish plans for children's learning across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, these are not yet fully developed and do not sufficiently show how staff plan for a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

Staff have a warm and caring relationship with children who form appropriate attachments to adults and other children within the nursery. They apply clear and consistent boundaries, so that children develop knowledge of what is expected and display positive behaviour. Staff know individual children well and provide them with a suitable level of sensitive and appropriate support.

Children enjoy their time at Stepping Stones Day Nursery. Younger children take pleasure in creative play as they use a range of sponges to make pictures and explore the texture of paint with their hands. Older children independently use the accessible information technology to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world and problem solving skills. The youngest children are supported effectively by staff as they explore a range of textured resources, explore the sounds from a variety of musical instruments and count the number of beats on the drum. This further supports children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their numeracy skills. Children use a range of equipment and tools safely, for example, when cutting and sticking during a craft activity.

Children understand how to keep themselves safe from harm by participating in a regular fire evacuation practise and listening to staff talk about how to stay safe in the setting and on outings. Staff have established generally appropriate systems to help children stay healthy for example, by explaining the importance of hand washing and of eating healthy snacks and meals. However, the systems for ensuring that children sleep on clean linen to reduce the risk of cross contamination in cots, for the effective monitoring of the nappy changing mats and for the hygienic storage of soiled nappies are not robust. Additionally, there are

out of date items stored in each of the three first aid boxes within the nursery. Staff provide children with healthy snacks according to their individual needs and drinks are accessible throughout the day. They implement generally effective lunchtime routines where children from the pre school and toddler rooms sit together to enjoy their packed lunch and talk about their day. However, following lunch there is a period of child initiated play which is not sufficiently monitored by adults. This means that older children become noisy and boisterous in their play and younger children find this distracting and unsettling. Children are developing independence and contribute towards the welfare of others, for example, as they help staff to clean up at the end of an activity. They are developing skills that will contribute to their future economic well being as they use information and communication technology, visit the local library and use role play to support their learning.

Children's understanding of diversity and difference is enhanced as they celebrate festivals and special events from around the world. They access resources that reflect positive images of people from different cultures and with physical disabilities. This ensures that children learn to value aspects of their own lives and the diverse society in which they live.

## 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*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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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