

# Stephens Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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131571

**Inspection date**

27/01/2010

**Inspector**

Sylvia Shane

**Setting address**

Oakley Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO16 4LG

**Telephone number**

023 8078 4069

**Email**

**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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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).

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## Description of the setting

Stephens Early Years Centre opened in 1990. It operates from a dance studio in Shirley, Southampton and serves the local community. Entrance and facilities are accessible on the ground floor.

The provider is registered on the Early Years register for 38 children. There are currently 75 children on roll, aged from two to five years. This includes children who are funded to support their educational needs. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The centre opens five days a week during school term time. A breakfast session runs from 8.00am to 8.30am; morning session from 8.30am until 11.30am; lunch session from 11.30am to 12.00pm and afternoon sessions from 12.30pm until 3pm. A fit kids session runs on Fridays, 3pm until 3.30pm and a holiday play scheme is offered during the summer holidays.

There are nine full-time staff and two part time members of staff that work with the children. Of these, one has Early Years professional status and all others have qualifications in line with their roles and responsibilities, including one certificate of higher education level 4; three National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in Childcare and Education level 3; four NVQ level 2 and an apprentice studying NVQ level 2. Stephens Early Years Centre receives support from the Head of Special Educational Needs for Southampton and the Early Years partnership.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The provider promotes children's welfare and learning well in a safe and very inclusive environment. The children are happily engaged and occupied through a stimulating range of play activities and experiences. Overall, they make good progress in their learning and development and offer excellent support packages of learning and development for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The staff team have a highly successful partnership with parents; they are consulted and involved and kept well informed of their children's daily routines, care and learning. Well developed links with schools and other professionals promote excellent continuity of education and care. The setting demonstrates a good capacity for continuous improvement and self-evaluation brings about positive outcomes for children.

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

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

- evaluate the impact of the daily routines to ensure that no area of learning

and development is delivered in isolation from the others so that all children have opportunities to take their play to a natural conclusion

- further develop the use of ongoing observational assessment to plan around the individual needs and interests of all children

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

The provider and staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children and all staff attend regular training. They have good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and have robust procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's welfare. Robust recruitment and induction procedures mean that all adults currently working with the children are suitable to do so. The building is secure and a record of visitors is well maintained, regular risk assessments and daily checks ensure children's continuing safety.

A dedicated, well established staff team have developed and continue to promote an inclusive service to children, parents and carers. A real strength within the group is the excellent system to promote work with other agencies. This ensures that children receive a holistic and complementary package of care and education to suit their diverse needs. For example, staff ensure that children have the correct resources, such as specialist chairs and walking frames. The provider works proactively within the community. For example, the setting works with the speech therapy department to deliver various initiatives for parents and children to highlight the importance of good communication and implement speak and talk sessions for children who would otherwise have to wait for speech and language appointments. As a result, children's communication and language skills have improved. The provision has been successful in grant aid to improve the outdoor area and therefore the experiences for outdoor play have improved.

Through a range of well implemented policies, procedures, displays and newsletters, made available to parents, children's welfare and learning needs are well supported. An open door policy means that parents can access their children records on request. Parents are asked to contribute their comments and ideas. They are invited to share their skills and their contributions are valued. In addition, special events in families' lives are enthusiastically celebrated. For example, parents are asked to contribute home made books to give children an insight into differences in family lives. These are then easily available in the book corner, so children can proudly show them off. Parents are very happy with the excellent service and regular meetings with children's key carers ensure parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress. Staff encourage parents, who have English as an additional language, to support each other and provide a translation service. This all contributes to making an exceptionally successful partnership with parents.

The provider and staff team show a strong commitment to ever improving practice and bringing about positive outcomes for children. Staff are motivated and all staff participate in the self-evaluation process. They identify gaps in their knowledge

and attend training on a regular basis. and they successfully narrow the gap in learning for all children

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

The key worker groups work effectively across all rooms and, as a result, children are developing confidence and feel safe and secure. Planning and observations for children with special educational needs is excellent and therefore children are able to fully integrate and are making exceptional progress through personalised targeted learning opportunities. Staff use the information they receive from parents through the individual record forms and 'All about me' booklets as basis to start their planning and future observation. However, although the staff know all the children really well and use this information to progress their learning, written plans and observations for some children are not sufficiently robust to show how each child will achieve the next steps in their learning.

The environment is busy and provides areas of interest and stimulation, staff have developed a good range of accessible resources to help children to explore and investigate and fully promote diversity. Children experience a mixture of adult and child initiated activities. For example, children explore other cultures as they use woks and learn to follow recipes as they make Chinese food. Staff encourage them to talk about the Chinese dragon and to think about what makes it move. Children celebrate a number of festivals and staff work closely with parents to ensure that these reflect their views and culture and religious requirements. Children show increasing independence as they put on and take off their coat to go outside. They take it in turns to help prepare snacks. They respond very well to the ringing of the bell and recognise they must give their attention to staff as they are about to be asked to do something or something is about to change. Although these structured routines give the children order to the day, they do impact on the children learning as they stop children from bringing their play to a natural conclusion. Children are kind to each other, for example they help each other take off their helmets when they have been riding their bikes. Children receive clear messages about expected behaviour and as a result, the children are polite and very well behaved.

Children are confident and developing good communication skills. For some children, colour coded, picture enhanced timetables help children understand the routines of the day. This system has been adopted because it matches the one children will have when they start school, providing continuity for children. They are encouraged to make marks, recognise letters, read and use sounds and signs. Children explore a wide range of books, such as stories and rhymes, in a variety of ways, for example visual touch and sound. They cover many important issues about life events and help children come to term with their feelings and to understand their behaviour and that of others. In addition, staff use dolls and other props to help children understand and express their emotions. Makaton is used on a regular basis, helping all children communicate with each other and staff. This is thoroughly embedded in circle time activities. Children of all abilities thoroughly learn and enjoy the action, rhymes and songs and are thrilled to be talking part.

Children develop an awareness of numbers through a wide range of activities, including cooking and weighing, sorting, dice games, rhymes and everyday activities. Children explore a range of textures and materials, both man made and natural. For example, large shells are placed in the sand and children are encouraged to talk about how they feel. They manipulate and roll out dough, feeling it squish between their fingers. Role play areas are well resourced and enjoyed by children as they act out adult roles. Staff have enhanced the experience by providing them with first hand experiences, for example, children play with real vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots and are beginning to understand that they need to be washed, staff use this opportunity to re-enforce healthy eating messages. This is further enhanced as they enjoy cooking activities, such as making soup; parents are encouraged to share recipes and ideas for cooking activities.

Children are involved in the regular fire drill and participate in a large variety of topics, such as stranger danger. They routinely put on cycle helmets when riding the bikes with stabilisers and understand this is to protect their heads. They are developing healthy life styles as they regularly access the outdoor area, here staff create the six areas of learning. They practise throwing and catching and skipping. They climb in and out of the cars and tents with increasing mobility. Staff are very aware of the children that are unsteady on their feet and are close by to offer support, offering them lots of praise. Mobile chunky activity frames attract the children's attention and encourage them to manipulate and experiment with the equipment.

## 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>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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