

Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

19/10/2009

Inspector

Katy Elizabeth Wynn

Setting address

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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.

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Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery School opened in 1995 and has been owned by the current owners since 2006. It is situated in the Roundhay area of Leeds. It operates from four playrooms and there is a secure outdoor area. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open Monday to Friday 7.30am to 6.30pm for 51 weeks of the year.

There are currently 72 children on roll, who are all within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age range. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery employs 12 full-time staff and three part-time staff. Of these, 13 hold an early years qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled. Inclusion is well promoted and staff have a growing awareness of the EYFS. As a result, children make steady progress in their learning and development. Activities provided are suitable and age related and most areas of learning are promoted. Good relationships have been established with parents and agencies to ensure children get the support they need. The setting demonstrates a positive attitude towards continuous improvement, recognising that key areas for further development centre around the development of the outdoor area and developing and extending resources.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- use the information gathered from observations and assessments on individual children to inform planning of the next steps in learning
- develop children's ability to value what they do themselves and what others do through staff acknowledging achievements and valuing children's efforts
- improve the organisation and maintenance of resources to enhance children's opportunities to independently access a wider range of activity choice in their daily environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded because the management have appropriate recruitment procedures and vetting systems to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and remain suitable through an induction process, training and development, and formal supervision. Additionally, controlled entry at the door,

closed circuit television cameras and a visitors' books help to ensure that children are kept secure. Staff are familiar with the procedures for protecting children from harm and know what to do if they have concerns about a child in their care. Children's safety is appropriately managed through the use of written risk assessments that identify potential hazards on the premises and on outings.

Systems for promoting children's good health are effective in ways which minimise the risk of cross-infection or germs. For example, anti-bacterial solution is used regularly and protective clothing is worn by staff when serving food and changing nappies. Food safety procedures are promoted in the kitchen and cleaning schedules ensure that the nursery maintains an appropriate standard of cleanliness.

The management team and staff team work well together and demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm to promote continuous improvement. The staff team reflects diversity and children gain a good knowledge of different cultures and religions through staff. Children with English as a additional language use visual pictures and photos to reinforce communication in the nursery. Parents are very involved in how to find effective ways to communicate and assist the children's progress in their learning and development. Parents share cultural foods and snacks at special events, further improving knowledge and understanding of diversity and other cultures. Staff work closely with other agencies to support children with specific needs and implement care plans and strategies that enable children to progress. Consequently, equality and diversity are effectively supported.

Resources are adequate, supporting the care and learning of children. Contingency arrangements in the event of unexpected or planned staff absences are in place to ensure staff ratios are maintained. The management and staff have a clear understanding about the importance of working in partnership with other agencies and, together with health professionals and other support staff, they provide for children with additional needs. The management team and the manager know and understand their responsibilities with regards to managing the care and education for children and supporting staff. This includes the owners attending appropriate training courses and working jointly with the manager. Procedures for self-evaluation are in the early stages of being developed. The management team and staff are beginning to critically analyse practice, taking into consideration the views of parents. For example, they have correctly identified a need to enhance the outdoor provision to promote better learning opportunities for all children. An annual appraisal system is in place and staff are encouraged and are keen to attend some relevant training courses to develop their knowledge and skills. Overall, the management and the staff team are keen to improve the quality of care and outcomes for children.

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

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory and supports children's progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas. Staff work well together and form a supportive team. The assessment of children's achievements and

progress is recorded in individual profiles. Staff record observations but have not started to look at how these can be used to inform planning to ensure that children's next steps are identified and planned for. Children's observations are accompanied by photographic evidence of the child during the activity. This captures the moment and provides a greater relevance to parents and supports their understanding of the learning outcomes of each activity, thus promoting a stronger partnership. Children are able to make some choices about how they spend their time. However, the storage and maintenance of resources limit choices and spontaneous play on some occasions. Children are offered a range of suitable and worthwhile activities, indoors and outdoors, which helps to promote their learning and development; additionally, this meets the needs of children who enjoy learning through active physical and outdoor play. Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe through gentle reminders and they respond to requests to help with tidying up.

Staff have loving and caring relationships with children, who form strong attachments to adults and other children within the nursery. Children's behaviour is good. They share play items and co-operate with each other, offering praise when another child accomplishes a task. Children's positive self-esteem is promoted by most of the staff team; however, some staff do not always value children's achievements. Children learn about others through planned activities, such as Eid, Diwali and Christmas. Staff are respectful of the diversity within the setting and the language skills of individual staff are effectively deployed to communicate with children and their parents.

Children develop good skills for the future, which promotes their economic well-being. Staff extend children's language skills through the use of open-ended questions and interactive story and singing times. Children are encouraged to self-register during circle time using individual name cards, which enables some children to recognise letters of the alphabet and their name. There are plenty of examples of the written word around the rooms to promote their understanding that marks have meaning. Children are proficient on the computer and role play extends children's understanding of the wider world, offering them the provision of equipment such as telephones and keyboards. Children are able to count, and correctly sequence numbers, and they talk about size and shape.

Children's physical development is promoted through the use of balancing equipment, bicycles and interactive singing games. Children use the equipment proficiently and gain much enjoyment from singing songs with related body movements. Children are beginning to gain a clear understanding of how to promote a healthy lifestyle in relation to the foods they eat. Children grow a variety of vegetables and flowers. Growing the items themselves encourages children to try foods they may otherwise avoid. It provides them with a clearer understanding of where their food originates and they observe the changes to the various items during the growing process. Staff further support children's health through the provision of fruit at snack and mealtimes. Staff are aware of the children's individual dietary requirements and adhere to these. In the main the daily routine centres around the needs of the children. For example, children are allowed to sleep and rest according to their needs. Children learn about keeping themselves healthy through effective daily routines and appropriate expectations,

such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Staff also explain why it is important to wash germs away and help the children to understand the possible consequences of not keeping clean.

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

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2
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

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