

# Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY393726

**Inspection date**

09/11/2009

**Inspector**

Lynne Naylor

**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).

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## Description of the setting

Stepping Stones was registered in 2009. It operates in a single-storey building in Kirkham, Preston. There are two main base rooms and outdoor play areas to the side and rear of the building. The service is open from 7.30am to 6.00pm for 51 weeks per year.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 32 children from birth to the end of the early years age group at any one time. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register and is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years. There are currently 26 children on roll. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are six staff employed, who hold recognised childcare qualifications, one of whom also holds Early Years Professional Status.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in a comfortable, inspiring learning environment. Staff value the individuality of each child. Ongoing discussions with parents about children's care and learning ensure their individual needs are known and met and they make good progress in their learning and development. Management and staff have an accurate evaluation of the setting; they understand the strengths and areas for development and have set themselves realistic and challenging targets. Policies and procedures are effective and understood by all and records, except for one aspect of the risk assessment, are also well maintained.

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

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis; maintain a record of these particular aspects and when and by whom they have been checked (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).
- 23/11/2009

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

- build on the partnerships with parents and others to make sure the provision complements the care and education received by the children at home and at other settings.

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

Safeguarding children issues are clearly understood by staff and children's well-being and good health are promoted through routine procedures. Clear recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Action is taken to minimise risks and visual daily risk assessments and steps to safeguard children are strong, which means outdoor and indoor spaces are suitable and safe. However, a full risk assessment that identifies all aspects of the environment that need to be checked is not in place, which is a breach of a statutory requirement. All other records are well maintained and policies are easily accessible in the setting.

Strong leadership provides guidance, support and supervision to a committed staff team. The management team has high aspirations for quality. All the staff are qualified in childcare and are working towards higher qualifications to enhance their knowledge and understanding. They share a common sense of purpose and meet regularly for in-house training specifically tailored to their needs.

Self-evaluation systems, which involve parents and staff, highlight ongoing improvements for the nursery, and plans for the future, particularly the development of the outdoor area, are well targeted. Staff work closely with parents to successfully promote the welfare of all children and to foster an inclusive environment in the setting. Links with local schools have been instigated and systems to share information with providers of other settings are developing.

Parents comment in questionnaires that they are very happy with the care and education their child receives. The parent pack, newsletters and noticeboards provide good quality information about the setting and the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Parents and carers are regularly informed about their child's progress. They supply useful verbal information, which helps staff provide appropriate learning experiences, and some parents also add their observations, photographs and comments to their child's written diary. However, this information is not clearly transferred to their child's achievement folders to be used when planning the next steps in children's learning.

The nursery rooms are exceptionally well organised and attractively resourced with high quality equipment to support children's independent thinking and learning across all areas of the curriculum. Excellent provision of natural and everyday objects and materials and a range of information and communication technology equipment in the room enhance the quality of learning opportunities for the children.

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

Staff have a confident knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements. Indoors, they set up both rooms with a great deal of

care and insight into how to stimulate babies' and children's interest and there is a balance of adult-led and child-led activities that fosters active learning. Babies investigate a range of manufactured and natural materials; their senses develop well as they crawl into the cushioned tent and feel a range of fabrics and as they sit in the mirrored triangle and look at themselves from a range of angles.

Children achieve very well; they work well independently and in small groups. In the art area, children freely access a wide range of craft materials, paints and papers. Children learn about their local community on outings to the library, post office and park. They learn about the wider world through the sharing of festivals and through resources that reflect difference and diversity, such as displayed photographs, instruments from India and cultural resources, such as authentic place mats and napkin rings brought from China and chopsticks from the local take-away, successfully integrated in to the role play areas. Children initiate their own activities and are successfully enabled by staff to extend their learning through effective questioning and support. For example, children were helped to work out that they needed string attached to their balloons to stop them flying away outdoors. Children's achievements are observed and noted by staff and then used to identify next steps in their learning. Staff provide enjoyable and challenging experiences which are well matched to children's interests and needs. During most weathers, older children are able to choose whether to play indoors or outdoors due to the provision of appropriate outer clothing and boots. The outdoor area is being further developed to enable purposeful play and exploration.

Children are cared for in a clean environment. Staff implement effective policies and procedures to promote children's good health and well-being. Throughout the day, children help themselves to fruit from the fruit bowl and drinks of water. They enjoy healthy snacks and sit together with staff at lunch and snack times to eat meals made mainly from fresh ingredients. Experiences, such as food tasting and games and stories from themed story sacks, teach children about healthy food choices. Children take turns to look after the health needs of 'Toby' the bear; they select and pack appropriate clothing for the weather and care for him at their house using his accessories, for example, brush and flannel.

Children demonstrate a clear sense of confidence and security as they move around the setting communicating with each other, staff and visitors. Children care for each other and notice when help is needed; for example, children are quick to help other children struggling to put on aprons at the water tray. Staff involve children in practising fire evacuations, which helps children to learn about keeping themselves safe. They also develop children's confidence to make decisions and support children to take some risks, such as walking across a row of crates in the garden.

## 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	2
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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

### 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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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