

# Stepping Stones Co-op Nursery Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY334496

**Inspection date**

06/10/2009

**Inspector**

Kathleen Snowdon

**Setting address**

Unit 26, Werdohl Business Park, No 1 Industrial Estate,  
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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**

Situated on a business park on the outskirts of Consett, County Durham, Stepping Stones Co-operative Day Nursery Limited was registered in 2006. It is managed by a committee comprised of staff and parents; the children who attend live in the local and surrounding communities. The nursery is on the Early Years Register and can care for a maximum of 43 children in the early years age group at any one time. Currently, there are 55 children on roll.

Children are accommodated across three rooms according to their developmental stage and there is a fully enclosed outdoor play area where the resident pet rabbit is kept. There are 11 appropriately qualified staff working directly with the children while additional staff provide maintenance and administrative support. The nursery is open all year round, Monday to Friday, from 7.30 am until 6.15 pm.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

An effective key person system enables staff to meet the individual needs of every child and creates an atmosphere that is inclusive in the main. This promotes children's welfare and enables them to make very good progress in their learning and development. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed and self-evaluation is effective as is partnership working, especially partnership with parents, which is excellent. As a result, the capacity for continuous improvement is good.

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

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

- reflect children's linguistic background, for example, display lists of words from different home languages and invite parents and other adults to contribute.

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

Very good priority is attached to safeguarding. Excellent staffing ratios keep children safe during their time at nursery while rigorous recruitment procedures and staff's good understanding of child protection issues prevent unsuitable people gaining access to the children. Risk assessments are thorough and reduce the likelihood of accidents and children are taught how to keep themselves safe. They take part in fire drills, for example, so they learn routines that help them to cope with emergencies.

The indoor and outdoor environments are very well resourced with a wide range of

varied and good quality toys and equipment. Staff are well deployed and promote equality by ensuring children are included in every activity. They also take steps to ensure that resources and the environment are sustainable. For example, they provide recycled objects, such as household rubbish, with which children make models.

Documentation is organised, readily accessible, stored securely on site to protect confidentiality and amended as soon as changes occur to keep information up-to-date and accurate. All essential records, including written parental consents, are in place which contributes to children's continuing health and safety. As well as this, the registration and public liability insurance certificates are prominently displayed to allow scrutiny, as is a poster that explains how parents can contact Ofsted.

Partnership with parents is outstanding with exceptional collaboration between parents and nursery staff. For instance, together they form a co-operative committee that plans fund raising projects and makes financial decisions. Another parent and staff group, the 'Friends of Stepping Stones', organises activities like outings which include parents, children, extended families and staff. Parents have highly positive views and say staff are 'a brilliant and special team'. They think the care their children receive is 'wonderful' and rate the nursery as 'the best ever'.

Links with others are also good. Staff liaise with teaching staff from schools the children will attend and work with other professionals, such as speech therapists, to ensure that children's specific needs are fully met. Nursery staff readily seek other people's opinions about their practice and this contributes to the effective way in which they evaluate their work and identify areas for improvement. They regularly undertake relevant training and recent courses include safeguarding, first aid and awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

The children receive excellent support from staff. The effective key worker system means that they feel secure and confident and this underpins the very good progress they make in their learning and development. The children learn how to behave acceptably through the sensitive guidance staff give them. They receive certificates for acts of kindness or helpfulness, which promotes the development of positive personal qualities and they are encouraged to consider the feelings of others. Although all of the children have English as their first language, some of them have different home languages. However, this is not reflected at all in the nursery environment.

Despite this, the children are learning to respect and value diversity when they celebrate world festivals for example, and play with toys that show vibrant images of culture, disability, gender and ethnicity. Other factors increase children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world too. They go on frequent trips to raise their awareness of the local community and they have interesting visitors, such as road safety officers, who teach the children about people who help us. Additionally, most of the children have access to computers, which helps them to

acquire technological skills.

Staff make well informed, perceptive observations and assessments of the children and use these to establish children's starting points and to plan the next steps in children's development. Planning covers all areas of learning, takes account of the children's interests and uses topics to explore new ideas and experiences. As well as this, children have easy access to a wide range of developmentally appropriate toys and equipment that helps them make progress towards the early learning goals. Routines are well balanced, flexible and offer children a good mix of indoor and outdoor play.

The outdoor play area is a key strength. Here, the children have excellent scope to have fun and enjoy themselves using a very good range of multi-purpose resources, such as crates, wheels, jugs, funnels and boxes. This allows them to investigate things that are of particular interest to them, for example, rain water. They channel this to weigh, measure and use in role play, experiences which promote the children's mathematical and creative development. They also plant and nurture vegetables and flowers and study the habits and behaviour of birds and the pet rabbit. This offers them first-hand experiences of the natural world.

The children's welfare is well promoted. After playing outside, using the bathroom and before eating the children are helped to wash their hands. This helps them to understand the importance of cleanliness and contains the spread of common illnesses, as does the sensible policy for sick children. Appetising and nutritious meals encourage the development of healthy tastes and preferences while regular drinks prevent the children from becoming thirsty. These highly beneficial early experiences help children to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for future success.

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

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