

Stepping Stones (Grange) Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY396390
Inspection date 03/12/2009
Inspector Linda Tomkins

Setting address Normacot Grange Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent,
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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 (Grange) opened in 2009. It is one of five provisions owned by Stepping Stones Limited. It operates from a detached single storey building in Meir, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire and serves the local and wider community. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Access to the property is on ground floor level. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6.00pm all year round.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 54 children within the early years age range may attend the nursery at any one time. Currently there are 33 children on roll aged from nine months to three years. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 13 members of staff. Ten members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a Level 3 early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where they are able to make good progress towards the early learning goals through a varied range of activities that challenge and hold their interest. This is an inclusive nursery, where each child is recognised as unique and staff ensure that their individual needs are met. There is a strong working partnership with parents, other professionals and settings that deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most of the effective procedures are well-planned and implemented to ensure the nursery reflects on their practice to monitor the care and education of children. Staff are committed to improving their skills by regularly attending training.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure records of all the unique reference numbers of the staffs' Criminal Record Bureau disclosures and the date when they were obtained are kept on the premises (Suitable people) (also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register) 17/12/2009

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

- encourage children to explore real-life problems to make patterns and to count and match together and ask, for example 'how many children'
- review staff practice in the 0-2's room to ensure they adhere to the risk assessments: this refers to washing the hands of children before food
- review policies and procedures to ensure all children undertake regular evacuation drills to enhance their understanding of how to keep safe.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery has detailed procedures to ensure children are safe and their welfare is promoted, for example, effective recruitment and vetting procedures are in place. However, the management have arranged for details and records on the vetting procedures to be stored off the premises. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children and of their role and responsibilities in reporting concerns. The nursery has systems to ensure that the majority of staff are qualified and suitable to work with the children and that their continued suitability is very well monitored. All new staff and students undertake an induction programme which includes examination of the policies and procedures. Staff regularly attend training to increase their knowledge and skills and attain higher qualifications.

Risk assessments of the premises are completed and are in regular use and review. Daily checks are undertaken on all parts of the premises that the children come into contact with and all areas are monitored by a designated staff member. The majority of the required policies, procedures and documentation are kept on the premises, together with details of the regulatory information regarding children's individual needs. The nursery implements their policies and procedures to ensure all aspects of children's welfare are protected. However, all children do not regularly practise evacuation drills to help to teach them how to stay safe in the event of an emergency.

Partnership with parents is strong and well developed. They value the nursery and the care that their children receive. They are aware of the activities their children are provided with and receive newsletters on a regular basis. Parents attend open evenings and talk to their children's key worker to discuss progress and examine their profile development folders. Daily verbal communication between staff and parents helps to keep parents informed of their children's care and well-being. Children under 12 months have a written 'shuttle book' which records all aspects of the infants daily care for parents.

The nursery has procedures for identifying any additional help required for the children and is aware of how to seek appropriate support from other agencies to ensure that each child benefits from a positive experience. A settling in and admissions procedure means that children feel reassured by the staff, who create an environment which is warm and accepting of everyone. The nursery has developing methods to extend information shared with other settings that some of the children attend to avoid duplicating activities. In addition, staff ensure a smooth transition to school. They invite school teaching staff to visit and the

children are taken to the school prior to their starting date.

The management has a strong attitude to the further development of the nursery. Through their process of self-evaluation the staff team identify their key areas for further improvement, for example, to use their use of a self-evaluation form as a working document for improvement and unpack and position the recent delivery of new equipment.

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

All children are fully included within the nursery because staff ensure children are able to access an exciting range of activities and equipment. Children cooperate with each other, sharing resources as they play together in the extensive 'home sweet home' role-play area and in the sand tray. Children choose a variety of writing materials and creative resources to make models, collages and displays. A current favourite creative activity is using glue, paint and glitter to make angels for their Christmas display.

Children can access the resources as they are stored at low level and clearly labelled. Their technology skills are developed, as they use the computer and they are competent when operating battery powered musical toys and playing shape sorting games and jig-saws. The nursery celebrates various festivals, looks at other cultures and provides children with opportunities to taste different foods from around the world. Recently the children discovered aspects of Hanukkah. The nursery has a wide range of equipment which reflects the diversity of society and children are encouraged to make choices and decisions. Staff skilfully engage with the children by talking to them and encouraging independence. For example, children access the toilet, manage their clothing and wash and dry their hands. They also help themselves to drinks, snack food and meals as they sit together with staff.

Staff have detailed records on each child's progress and preferred methods of learning and activity. They work closely with the parents and ensure they have access to their children's development folders. There is a formal method of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the activities provided for children to accurately measure children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and inform the 'next step' individual plans for children.

Children are learning about the wider world as they use and have access to natural materials such as metal and wooden items in their discovery baskets. The children have regular walks in the local areas to visit the library and local school. They enjoy finding out about their community with visits from an ambulance crew and a Police officer. However, the children do not always have regular opportunities to count and reason during daily routines such as working out how many children are in the line to go outside and holding up their fingers to count. Children use paint brushes, spatulas and scissors with increasing control and enjoy their sensory play with paint, dough and sand.

Space within the nursery is well-utilised so that children can choose their own activity such as, building large constructions from bricks and cutting-out from catalogues. They listen avidly to stories, a current favourite is, 'Where's Spot?' the children freely interact and recall the story. The development of children's literacy and communication skills is particularly good as children and staff use alliteration and rhythm's when reading a book called 'Tanka, tanka, skunk'. Voices are raised and dropped to a whisper to introduce pitch and expression.

Children are able to move freely between activities both inside and outside and generally play companionably side by side. They are taught to adopt a good standard of hygiene as they are helped to understand how and why they wash their hands before food. However, some staff practice in the under 2's room does not always teach the children about good hygiene practice. Children are provided with healthy snack-food and freshly cooked meals during the day. Food times are very sociable occasions with staff sitting with the children and chatting to them. The nursery makes effective use of the outdoor area and children have regular opportunities for physical activities such as singing and dancing to activity music. Currently the children and staff are practising dance routines and songs for their Christmas concert.

Behaviour within the nursery is very good, children understand levels of acceptable behaviour and are learning to share and take turns. They work hard as they react to the 'Mission impossible' music to tidy the toys away. Staff manage behaviour in a calm, consistent manner and use innovative methods to gain attention such as quietly saying 'fingers on lips'. Children treat one another and staff with affection and respect. The confidence they develop through their time in the nursery ensures they are active learners, prepared for the future and will contribute to their literacy, communication and numeracy skills.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
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:

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability of persons to care for, or be in regular contact, with children) 17/12/2009

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability of persons to care for, or be in regular contact, with children). 17/12/2009