

Stepping Stones Children's Nursery School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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 Children's Nursery School Limited have been registered since 1989 and opened on their current site for sessions in 2009. They operate from newly built premises at the Woodton CP School which is situated in the village of Woodton, Norfolk. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor area. The nursery school provides care for children from the village and surrounding area. The provision is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.00am to 12.00am & Thursday from 9.00am to 3.00pm, during term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Occasional sessions are also offered in the school holidays for children aged three to eight years.

The nursery school is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. They are registered to care for a maximum of 20 children at any one time. There are currently 14 children on roll. The nursery school employs five staff. All of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children settle well in the welcoming and inclusive environment of the nursery school. They benefit from having their individual needs met well by staff who take time to form positive relationships with all children and their families. Children make positive progress in their learning and development as they engage in a wide range of play opportunities, some of which are planned in the outdoor environment. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision, to identify priorities for development, are being established to continue to improve the quality of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further opportunities to work in partnership with other providers delivering the EYFS to ensure progression and continuity of care for individual children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff demonstrate clear commitment to their role in safeguarding children and are effective in protecting children from abuse and neglect. They have completed safeguarding training and their practice is guided by the nursery's written safeguarding policies. Well established recruitment procedures are implemented and therefore all staff and volunteers complete the required checks to ensure their

suitability to be in contact with children. Children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment because staff carry out written daily risk assessments of all of the areas that children access. In addition, risk assessments are completed and recorded before children are taken on outings in the local area, and staff are mindful to ensure children are well-supervised at all times.

The manager and staff work as a motivated and cohesive team, and together they have completed a range of training workshops to compliment their early years qualifications. They are keen to improve the provision for children, taking time to discuss their practice at the end of each session and during team meetings. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision are being established, and to assist in identifying priorities for development, the views of all users have been sought.

The environment is planned to offer an extremely child-friendly environment. A high adult to child ratio is in place and furniture, toys and equipment are of a very high quality, many being made of natural materials. All being well organised to enable children to play in comfort and safety and make choices in their play, consequently developing their independence and decision making. Flexible settling in procedures, including home visits if requested, ensure that children are supported as they make the transition from home to the nursery. Each child benefits from a key person who takes time to understand their individual needs and routines. Children's transition into full-time school is supported by staff arranging visits to the school with the children so they become familiar with the school environment. The nursery are currently in the process of forming links with all of the other EYFS settings that children attend to aid their progression and continuity of learning and care.

Informative displays, daily discussions along with learning journey notes, monthly newsletters and regular parent consultation meetings are extremely successful in ensuring parents are kept very well informed about activities, events and their children's developmental needs and progress. Parents become involved in their children's learning through being involved with outings such as to the zoo, theatre and local church and completing topic work at home with their children, for example, the designing of shields of arms for the castle topic. Parents speak very highly of the setting.

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

The combination of high adult to child ratios and an effective key person system ensures that children experience good continuity of care and are supported well during their time at the nursery. Planning is clearly linked to staff's observations of their key children's interests and developmental needs. Staff produce detailed records of children's development, including several observations, photographs and examples of children's work, all being clearly linked to the expectations of the EYFS, and assessments of what children have achieved with targets for future learning identified.

Children are making effective progress towards the early learning goals. Staff often ask them carefully formed questions that encourage them to think. For example, as children count the number present at registration time the staff extend children's problem solving skills by asking how many adults are also present and is this number more or less than the number of children present. During snack time, staff talk to children about the food that they are enjoying, asking children whether the food items grow on top or under the ground.

Children are developing good awareness of the names and sounds of letters, supported by the meaningful print used as labels in the environment and the daily routine of finding their name cards at the beginning of the session. Some children are able to recognise the sound at the beginning of their own names. A good selection of mark making resources are provided and used systematically to support more able children in writing their own names, such as, on creative artwork, or extended to role play situations to give children spontaneous opportunities to practise their early writing skills. Children enjoy books and relax in the cosy area to enjoy them. Children are also able to take books home to share with parents and involve them in their children's learning.

Displays of children's art work and photographs throughout the setting give children a sense of belonging. As children sit together at the table to draw, they creatively bring meaning to their pictures by explaining that they are drawing their house with a member of staff standing outside it. They enjoy exploring their creativity as they colour paper crowns they have made and create their own paintings. Children have daily opportunities to take part in imaginative play. For example, following a group visit to the theatre in Norwich to watch the production 'We're Going On A Bear Hunt' and 'Robin Hood', an area of the nursery was turned into a theatre. Children also took part in their own 'bear hunt' at the nursery using props as in the story. Dressing up clothes, musical instruments and small world play resources are also freely available to children.

Children are encouraged to be independent in their routines, they pour their own drinks at snack time and some children are able to do up their own zips and buttons on their coats. Children's physical development is supported well. They are able to access the outdoor area where they play with balls and use ride on toys. They also enjoy sand and water play, digging in the mud and growing their own flowers and herbs. Nature walks are taken in the school grounds adjoining the nursery where children are able to view the chickens, birds and other wildlife. Children also take part in music and movement activities.

Good emphasis is placed on encouraging children to learn about aspects of a healthy lifestyle. Children are offered healthy snack food such as fresh and dried fruit along with milk and water to drink. Fresh drinking water is made accessible to children throughout the session. Children manage their personal hygiene routines very well. On arrival at the setting they clean their hands with anti-bacterial gel and know to wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. Children are also supported to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe by taking part in regular fire drills.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
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

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	1
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Met