

Stepping Stones at Captain Webb

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	14/01/2010
Inspector	Edgar Hastings
Setting address	Captain Webb Cp School, Webb Crescent, Dawley, TELFORD, Shropshire, TF4 3DU
Telephone number	01952 386776
Email	jessie.gupta@taw.org.uk
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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 at Captain Webb opened 2006 and operates from a purpose built building and areas within the Captain Webb School in Dawley, Telford, Shropshire. These premises are accessible for adults and children with disabilities. The setting is on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 30 children may attend the setting at any one time and there are currently 72 children on roll. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.00am to 6.00pm for 50 weeks of the year. The out of school club is open from 8.00am to 9.00am and 3.15pm to 6.00pm during school term times. There is a creche facility provided to parents who attend training which operates in the quiet room within the Stepping Stones building when a maximum of six children under two years may attend at any one time.

All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children come from the local area and school. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs five qualified members of staff and there are strong links with the host school as the setting is part of early years integrated provision.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

It meets the needs of the early years children effectively through its well planned and delivered stimulating range of activities that enable children to make good progress overall in their learning and development. It is an inclusive setting that meets the needs of all groups of children well including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. An exceptionally strong partnership with the school provides some excellent transitional arrangements, as well as good promotion of children's learning and development. Due to the high quality of the leadership the setting has an outstanding capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop tracking system in order to measure the progress children are making in all areas of learning over time.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership at Stepping Stones is outstanding. The manager and her team are aspirational and have a clear vision of what they wish to achieve, and are continually looking for ways of improving the quality of the provision. They are

now using self-evaluation to good effect in identifying their strengths and those areas that require further development. They have successfully addressed the points raised at the last inspection and have now improved the procedures to guard against the spread of infection, ensure children benefit from meals that offer a balanced diet, and have ensured that the outdoor play area is now a much safer place for children. The organisation of the setting has undergone wholesale changes since the appointment of the current manager, and now offers good quality experiences and regular routines to support children's well-being, and their learning and development effectively. Staff are experienced and well trained, work well as a team, and are deployed effectively to provide high quality experiences for their children. The setting is very well equipped with good quality resources that are extremely well organised, accessible to all children and provides them with a highly stimulating learning environment. The accommodation is used well and space used very effectively to provide for all areas of learning and to encourage children to investigate resources and to make independent choices of activity. Children feel safe because of the good arrangements made to ensure the premises are secure and regular risk assessments are carried out to make sure resources and equipment are fit for purpose. Safeguarding policies are securely in place and arrangements are effective because all staff are trained in child protection procedures. They follow safe practices and encourage children to do so. Careful vetting of applicants for employment is undertaken and thorough induction training is provided for all new staff.

The setting promotes equality through its ethos of regarding the individual needs of all pupils as of equal importance. Children with particular needs are well supported by staff who know each of their children well. Regular observations and assessments provide staff with evidence of children's needs and requirements. Effective links with outside agencies ensure children with particular needs get the support they require to enable them to make the necessary progress and to access the learning environment that is provided for all the children. Diversity is promoted well through topics and experiences provided throughout the year, with celebration of festivals of other cultures such as Diwali, and the Chinese New Year, and visits from an African storyteller.

The well integrated partnership with the school is a real strength and an outstanding feature of the setting because of the many benefits that it provides for the children. Their personal and social development is enhanced through the interchanging visits children make between the school's nursery and Stepping Stones and their involvement in many parallel activities. All children take their midday lunch in the school dining room where they come into contact with older brothers and sister and new friends they have made. Staff from both settings share progress records to ensure children get the best support for their learning and development. Children feel very much at home with these arrangements and are prepared extremely well for the time when they transfer into school.

Parents speak highly of the provision made for their children and greatly value the contribution made by the setting to their children's development. Parents are encouraged in many ways to be involved in their learning and have many opportunities to discuss their progress profiles and to view samples of their work. Good communication keeps parents well informed and their views are sought

through a suggestion box and a comments book. One parent commented that although she had moved to a house further away from the setting she continued to bring her son to Stepping Stones because she was so impressed with the progress he had made and with the high quality of the provision.

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

The bright, colourful and well-equipped learning environment ensures that children enjoy attending and engaging with others and the adults who give them a warm welcome on arrival. Resources are well organised and set out to encourage children to select and investigate the good range of activities provided for them across all areas of learning. Adult-led activities support learning effectively enabling them to build self-confidence and strong relationship with the staff as they learn to work together with other children. These activities are used well to observe and assess progress in learning by the children's key person, although systems for tracking children's progress over time are not yet in place but the leaders have identified this as an area for development. Samples of work are placed in children's 'learning journey' folders to record progress and to support a programme of regular assessment. These are shared with parents often to keep them informed of how well their children are doing. There is a strong emphasis placed upon children developing independence and on making their own choices, enabling them to follow their own interests and to develop those personal qualities that prepare them with skills for their future learning. Daily routines allow children to engage in a wide range of experiences and to develop social skills when working in groups and helping to share in tidying up and putting equipment back in its place. Even in cold weather through the free flow organisation of activities children can choose to engage in outdoor active play and enjoy the fun of playing in the snow, making snowmen and investigating icicles.

Overall, children make good progress in learning because of the enjoyable ethos of the setting. The development of small muscle skills is assisted well by the variety of activities including creative experiences where get regular opportunities to cut and stick and to use paints and brushes. Mark-making, drawing and pencil control are progressing well and children are encouraged through frequent opportunities to write their names accurately. Children's knowledge of letters and sounds are developing well through regular and enjoyable activities that enable them to know the initial sounds of familiar objects and to understand basic letter formation. Opportunities for reinforcing and developing counting skills are exploited at every opportunity during the day and children are learning to say the days of the week, and months of the year from memory. Computer programs enable children to work together and build number and matching concepts through developing skills in mouse control.

Children's welfare is promoted well through good procedures and practices. Leaders have provided a safe and secure environment that protects children well. Children have a good understanding of their own safety and that of others through the simple house rules such as not running inside the building, which are discussed with them regularly. Good hygiene practices protect their health and children

understand when they need to wash their hands. Visits from the fire service and school nurse help to highlight other aspects of safety. Children are developing an understanding of a healthy lifestyle through the good promotion of healthy eating at snack time, healthy lunch boxes and school meals, and regular opportunities to be active.

Behaviour is good and children learn to conform to the social niceties of 'please' and 'thank you' because it is promoted well. Learning to share and to take turns is supporting their personal development effectively as children work and play well together. The excellent links with the nursery class makes a significant contribution to children's social development and supports their transition very well. They are being well prepared for the future.

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?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
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	1
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	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	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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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