

Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY400334
Inspection date 10/05/2010
Inspector Mauvene Burke

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery is a privately owned day nursery situated in a residential area in Brixton, in the London borough of Lambeth. It opened in 2009 and operates from three rooms in a converted house. A fully enclosed play area is available for outdoor play. The nursery is open five days a week and operates from 8:00 to 6:00, 49 weeks of the year.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 32 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 12 children on roll, some in part-time places. The setting supports children who are learning English as an additional language. The nursery employs five members of staff, including the manager, three of whom hold a suitable childcare qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

On the whole, staff have an insecure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has resulted in a number of breaches of the welfare and the learning and development requirements not being adequately met. The setting promotes inclusion to a satisfactory level. Staff are informed of children's individual needs through satisfactory relationships with parents. Systems are developing to continually monitor and review the provision, resulting in the ability for continuous improvement to be effectively maintained.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure that people whose suitability has not been checked do not have unsupervised contact with children who are being cared for (Suitable people) 25/05/2010
- develop staff's understanding of the safeguarding policy and procedure (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 25/05/2010
- ensure that adult:ratios are maintained at all times (Suitable people) 25/05/2010
- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs (Organisation) 25/05/2010
- ensure that children are provided with meals that are 25/05/2010

healthy, balanced and nutritious and that drinking water is available at all times (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

- improve the record of risk assessment so that it includes information on who conducted it, date of review and any action taken following a review or incident (Documentation)

25/05/2010

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further the quality of teaching through conversations and questions to extend children's thinking, vocabulary and understanding.
- further develop partnerships with parents and carers to ensure that there is a two-way flow of information regarding children's achievements and progress
- ensure that all staff are familiar with the procedures to conduct sensitive observational assessments in order to meet children's individual needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Regulations and duties to ensure that children are safeguarded have not been met. Managers have not made certain that robust systems are in place and implemented to ensure that staff whose suitability has not been cleared, are not left unsupervised whilst caring for children. This is a breach of specific legal requirements. Most staff have not attended safeguarding training for a while and demonstrate insufficient knowledge in relation to signs and symptoms of child abuse and the procedures to follow should they have concerns for a child in their care, or if an allegation is made against them. Deployment of staff is often inadequate. For example, ratio's are frequently not met first thing in the morning to ensure the efficient management and safety of children. Risk assessments of the setting are generally in place, but these lack the required detail and although daily visual safety checks are conducted, these are not fully effective in identifying potential hazards to children from, for example, low level uncovered sockets and broken toys.

All regulatory documents, policies and procedures are in place and are sufficiently maintained as required. Like the setting, the staff team are relatively new and most currently demonstrate a lack of knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Managers are actively encouraging staff to attend developmental training provided by the local authority such as safeguarding. Systems for evaluating the quality of the provision and its impact upon children's development and learning are still in their infancy. Management have devised a questionnaire for staff and parents to complete in order to obtain their views about the setting.

Resources promoting diversity are limited, as a result, children do not have many opportunities to develop their awareness and understanding of differences. However, the setting is mostly committed to promoting inclusive practice and welcomes all children regardless of their background, age of ability. Information

about children's individual needs are gathered at the start of the placement, providing the setting with valuable knowledge about each child. Planning for children's individual learning is not yet in place. The setting is fully committed to supporting those children where English is a second language. Staff demonstrate how they value children's first language by using words they have learned from parents, in order to communicate with the children. This helps children to feel valued and respected.

The setting has a generally positive relationship with parents and carers and partnerships are satisfactory. There is a regular exchange of information conducted on a daily basis where staff inform parents and carers about their child's day. However, systems to inform parents and carers about how well their children are achieving and developing are not yet in place. Currently, there are no children attending the setting who have special educational needs. Staff, however, demonstrate a positive attitude to working with other professionals, such as speech therapists, to meet any specific needs.

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

Children are very happy in this bright and welcoming setting. They interact positively with the friendly staff team and settle extremely well into the daily routines and enjoy opportunities to make choices and play independently. However, children's learning is not always effectively supported because of the staff's limited understanding of the learning and development requirements. Children's learning is not extended because staff do not ask open-ended questions to broaden children's thinking and vocabulary. Activities, particularly those for the older children, lack sufficient challenge and stimulation and are often meaningless as staff are unaware of the learning intention. Children quickly become bored and flit quickly from one activity to another. Adult-led activities are not currently being evaluated. Observations are in place, but are not used to inform plans for individual children's next steps of learning. As a result, children are not making as much progress as they can towards the early learning goals. The manager has identified this as an area for improvement.

Children of all ages in this setting, particularly enjoy listening to familiar songs and join in with them by using hand movements. They show their delight through uncontrollable giggles and smiles. Babies enjoy exploring their stimulating environment choosing musical instruments; showing curiosity as they push the buttons and watch the animals pop-up and feeling the different textures of material in the treasure basket. Children develop their physical skills as they enjoy regular outdoor play where they develop coordination and balance on the climbing frame and manoeuvre their sit-and-ride moving forwards and backwards. They also develop their fine motor skills as they use mark-making equipment, such as, pencils and pens in the mark-making area. They learn about numbers as there are opportunities to recognise numerals in the environment and through songs. There are limited opportunities for children to explore information technology using equipment such as a computer. They do however have opportunities to learn about the world we live in through exploring living things such as plants and mini-

beasts. Children enjoy imaginative play as they play in the home corner, dressing up as animals and going shopping.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment which contributes to their health and well-being. They have a strong sense of belonging and show how they feel safe by confidently accessing resources for themselves and moving around the setting. Children are learning how to keep safe in emergency situations as they regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure. Children generally learn to adopt healthy lifestyles as they are reminded about everyday hygiene routines, such as washing their hands before eating. However, children are unable to access drinking water independently and are unable to wash their hands by themselves as the sink unit is far too high for them to reach. They enjoy some healthy snacks such as bananas, apples and oranges. The setting does not currently employ a cook and so staff are responsible for the preparation of meals. Meals are not always healthy. For example, on the day that the inspection was carried out, children were offered frozen chips, frozen fish and baked beans. Cakes and biscuits are regular options on the menu. Children behave well and are considerate towards others, such as a willingness to share the shopping basket.

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?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	4
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
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	4
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	4
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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