

Stepping Stones Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	120124
Inspection date	07/10/2010
Inspector	Louise Bonney
Setting address	Milford Baptist Church, New Road, Milford, Godalming, Surrey, GU8 5BE
Telephone number	01483 427325
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

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).

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery School has been registered since 1990 and has been established in the village of Milford for many years. It operates from a large room within the Baptist church hall building, in the centre of Milford and serves the local rural area. Children have an enclosed outdoor area and access to the larger hall. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 9:00am to 12:00 noon, with some days extended to include lunch and afternoon sessions.

The nursery is registered under the Early Years Register only. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery with no more than 12 under three at any one time. There are currently 29 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who have English as an additional language. The nursery is registered to provide free early years education to children aged three and four.

There are four members of staff who work with the children, all of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at Level 3 and above. The nursery operates in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage educational philosophy.

The provision receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress in their learning and development through participating in exciting and purposeful activities. Staff know the children well and new systems for observational assessment help them methodically build on children's interests and skills. Staff safeguard children effectively through careful risk assessment, the reduction of most hazards and their good understanding of child protection procedures. Staff develop an inclusive environment and reflect diversity in many aspects of their provision; children's special educational needs and/or disabilities receive strong support through staff working closely with parents and other professionals. The nursery shows commitment to continual development as it introduces effective changes that benefit the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure the risk assessment covers anything with which a child may come into contact, with particular reference to the temporary gate on the fire exit
- develop further the partnership with parents by sharing information about children's next steps in their learning to enable them to be fully involved in

- their child's learning and development
- develop displays and resources further in order to promote and value diversity and to prompt discussion.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The voluntary management committee and staff develop and review policies and procedures to ensure they meet current legislation. New committee members and staff undertake prompt and rigorous vetting to ensure their suitability. Staff show good understanding of child protection procedures and all have attended relevant training. They record any injuries children arrive with and share this record with parents. Staff maintain most records well; parents are informed of accidents at handover and changed routines help ensure records are always signed in future. They record risk assessments of the children's environment and outings and identify most risks that need more frequent checking. This safeguards children well. The fire officer agrees to the occasional use of a temporary gate across the fire exit, but staff do not include it in their daily risk assessment check list to ensure its removal when not required.

The management team and staff demonstrate ambition and continually develop the nursery. Staff follow advice from local authority advisors as they begin to more systematically evaluate their provision. This has led to particularly effective systems now being introduced for the observational assessment of, and planning towards, children's learning and development. Staff act upon feedback from parents and are considering how to replace the discontinued day books with more effective ways for sharing children's progress. Staff act upon recommendations raised at previous inspections, which leads to increased opportunities for children to practise independence, more regular staff appraisals to help promote continued professional development and improvement in policies and procedures. Staff show commitment to continued professional development; they are well qualified at Level 3 and above and identify additional training provided by the local authority, such as for food hygiene.

Staff organise the children's environment well. They provide a good range of toys and resources and there are colourful displays of children's work, which provide a welcome to children and parents. Staff plan activities and provide resources that promote children's awareness of diversity, but there is little on display to further prompt discussion and awareness. Staff use the outdoor area well, varying the types of activities available to promote learning in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children access outdoors as a whole group, but staff are considering ways to provide freer access. The staff are a valuable resource for the nursery, providing children with enthusiastic and knowledgeable support and they form a strong and committed team.

Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure all children receive the support they need in order to thrive. At handover parents share information about children's learning and welfare. This means staff know to provide children with a quiet morning after they have an injection, or provide parents with

information and books when they seek advice and support. Staff send newsletters home and write a resume of the days activities on a notice board. However, staff do not inform parents of their children's next identified steps to further enable them to support learning at home. Staff give good support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They liaise closely with parents and other professionals involved with the children. They attend inter-agency meetings to share information and documentation. They learn sign language, introduce and develop new resources that children find helpful. This ensures children receive appropriate support so that they make good progress from their starting points.

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

Children show enthusiasm for their activities and have good relationships with each other and staff. Staff ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in activities, and that those less confident when separating from their parents are comforted so that they quickly settle. Children with little language use photograph books which reflect the activities available, and these books are used effectively to support their independent choices. Children enjoy the interaction they receive from attentive staff, and often have their ideas and conversations extended through skilful questioning and support. This is shown as children collaboratively make a ramp with a plank, when staff encourage them to solve the problem of how to make the structure more stable; children show delight as they use two bricks to successfully achieve this.

Staff provide a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. They are introducing systems to observe and assess children's progress which are most effective, and staff show clear understanding of where children's development is at. They use these observations to plan each week for children's next individual steps in a way that is very responsive to children's changing needs and interests. As well as supporting children's freely chosen activities effectively to extend their learning and development, staff plan adult-led activities with clear learning intentions. They stimulate children's interest in counting and comparing number as they introduce golden coins and sieves to the sand tray. Children enthusiastically join in to find coins, match them to numerals, count carefully and compare amounts. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities join in as staff show them how to use the sieve with gestures, words and sign language. This ensures all children are fully included and leads to their making good progress in their learning and development from their individual starting points.

Children show good levels of independence. They develop confidence as they make choices about their activities from those set out or as they help themselves to resources from low storage units. They decide when they are ready to have a snack, wash their hands, find a cup and bowl and serve themselves to fruit, pita bread, and drinks of milk or water. This promotes awareness of healthy practices and eating as well as developing their confidence and independence. Children develop strong understanding of how to play and behave safely. They receive clear safety guidance from staff as they carry and build with planks, and children remind

each other of the rules. This supports their understanding of risk and how to manage it.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

