

Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	ISP Inspection

Setting address	Sure Start, Randolph Centre, Stones End, Evenwood, BISHOP AUCKLAND, County Durham, DL14 9RE
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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 Nursery opened in April 2010 and is run by Core Care Limited. It operates from three rooms within a building which is situated adjacent to the Randolph Centre in Evenwood. There are enclosed outdoor play areas for children to use. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. They are registered by Ofsted on the Early Years register, and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register for a maximum of 38 children in the early years age range at any one time. There are currently 65 children from nine months to four years on roll, some in part-time places. In addition there are creche facilities for children whose parents attend courses in the Randolph Centre. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language. The nursery employs 11 staff who all hold an early year's qualification. The provision is registered to accept government funding for three and four-year-olds and for the 2 year-old pilot. The nursery receives support from the Durham Early Years Support Team.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The nursery provides a warm, welcoming environment where children participate in a good range of interesting activities that meet their individual needs and successfully promote their learning and development. Sound procedures for the safe management of the provision are in place. The leadership group demonstrate a willingness to develop the provision, but as yet are not successfully using self-evaluation systems to help identify and prioritise areas for development. Consequently, the capacity to maintain continuous improvement is satisfactory.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- Develop quality improvement processes as a foundation for ongoing internal review

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. Checks are carried out on all staff to make sure that they are suitable to work with children and sound arrangements are made to protect children. Staff have a secure understanding of how to safeguard children including the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child. The new manager is currently developing systems for induction, staff supervision and appraisals to help ensure staff development. Although there are suitable staff available to act as deputy manager, and who do

so in the absence of the manager, these arrangements are not sufficiently clear to show who has overall responsibility for this. Detailed risk assessments and continual checks ensure that children remain safe, both in the setting and on outings. Good arrangements are in place for security to ensure maximum safety. Effective procedures are in place to gather and record information in order to meet all children's individual needs, such as children's personal details, routines, and likes and dislikes. As a result, children settle quickly into the nursery. Accidents and administered medication are clearly documented. However, the system to inform parents of administered medication is not sufficiently robust.

Some systems for self-evaluation are in place, for example, staff evaluate activities and seek verbal feedback from parents to help them improve outcomes for children. As yet, other forms of evaluation such as parent's questionnaires and self-evaluation forms are not used to help with driving and securing improvement and to help maintain the good practice evident in the nursery rooms. The nursery is welcoming and is maintained to high standards. All areas are brightly decorated, are inviting to children, and provide a rich environment which is conducive to learning. Easily accessible, high quality toys and child sized furniture help to promote children's independence and ensure equality and inclusion for all. Their work is proudly displayed which helps to raise their self-esteem and ensure all are valued. Staff are warm and caring and obviously enjoy working with children.

Partnerships with parents and carers are sufficient to promote children's care. Positive relationships are in place and parents spoken to at the inspection stated that they are happy with the care their children receive. Regular verbal exchanges of information and written information for children under the age of two years provide them with information about most aspects of their care, learning and development. Staff are aware of the benefits of partnerships with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop links when this is appropriate. They work well with other professionals to help support and safeguard children.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to promote children's learning. They plan exciting activities that are based on children's interests and individual needs, and build on what they can already do. As a result children are developing many skills for the future. Observations and assessments are used to identify the next steps in children's learning. However, summative assessments are not completed so that children's progress can be tracked and the information used to help with planning.

Children are happy and settled. They have developed very good relationships with the adults who care for them and the key worker system is effectively implemented to ensure all children feel secure. Children enjoy each others company and play happily alongside and with one another as they get older. Their behaviour is good and they have an increasing understanding of what is expected

of them. For example, they remind each other when it is appropriate to speak at circle time when they are sharing their news. They love singing and music; even the babies join in with 'Row, row, row your boat' screaming when they 'see a crocodile'. Children take great delight in being outdoors and successfully use a wide range of good quality equipment to promote their physical development. Wet weather clothing and umbrellas, which are readily available allow them to benefit from fresh air all year round and they thoroughly enjoy splashing in puddles. Number, shape and alphabet displays and signs around the setting, promote literacy and numeracy skills. Older children confidently use numbers and mathematical language throughout play and day to day routines. For example, they count how many children are present and play with dominoes and dice. Staff caring for younger children talk to them about 'big', 'small' and the shapes of things to help develop their knowledge and understanding. All enjoy books and can often be found sitting quietly looking at the pictures or snuggled up to a member of staff whilst she reads to them. The children participate in many activities, and have access to resources which help them begin to explore and question differences in backgrounds, ethnicity, religion, culture, and the world in which they live.

Children confidently follow the daily routines implemented to reduce the risk of cross infection. As they get older they know when it is appropriate to wash their hands and watchful staff ensure they do this effectively. Stringent procedures are in place for nappy changing and the cleaning of resources which helps to prevent the spread of infection. Food is healthy and nutritious and is freshly cooked on the premises. Children get involved with food preparation such as making fruit kebabs which helps to raise their awareness of what foods are good for them. They also grow their own vegetables, most recently carrots, which they took home to share with their families. The children learn about keeping themselves safe through instruction and everyday practices; for example, using tools such as dough cutters and cutlery and through planned role play sessions about road safety.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	3
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