

Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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28/10/2010

Inspector

Jenny Walker

Setting address

17 Whitehall Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 6AF

Telephone number

0208 689 8001 mob 07815 951 610

Email

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 run nursery. It opened in 2004 and operates from a converted house, located in a residential area in Thornton Heath, within the London Borough of Croydon. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery opens each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 49 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 25 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 16 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery has a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff, including the manager; of these three hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a small nursery environment where they receive caring attention from staff who know them well. Most aspects of practice are inclusive and children experience a range of worthwhile activities. Overall, the policies and procedures in place promote the children's welfare soundly. However, some information is not consistently shared with parents and staff awareness of safeguarding children procedures has not been fully developed. Partnerships with parents and the local school ensure that children's needs are identified. The provider, who is also the manager, recognises the importance of continuous improvement. She is working with the staff and the local authority early years department to evaluate the provision and ensure better outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- strengthen the use of ongoing observational assessment to inform planning for each child's continuing development
- clarify the information for parents regarding the procedure for the administration of non prescribed medication
- enhance opportunities for children who do not speak English as their first language to participate fully in activities and provide well organised play experiences and adult support to promote children's learning
- develop practitioners understanding of safeguarding children issues so that they are able to implement the safeguarding children policy and procedure appropriately.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Satisfactory management systems are in place to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Most aspects of recruitment procedures are sound and ensure that staff are appropriately vetted. Written safeguarding procedures are in place and staff are aware that they should discuss any concerns that they have about a child's welfare with the provider. However, some staff do not have a secure knowledge of safeguarding issues and the agencies to whom they should refer matters, if after discussion with the provider, they are still concerned or if the provider is not available. The provider has made arrangements for training for these staff, who are relatively new to the nursery. Records that are required to safeguard children's welfare are generally well kept and regular safety checks of the premises ensure that the environment is safe for children.

Generally, practice in the nursery promotes an inclusive environment for all children. Consequently, children quickly develop a sense of belonging and settle well. Children have access to a range of resources and the deployment of staff ensures that children are well supported. Staff and children are from diverse backgrounds and diversity is celebrated through displays, resources and variety of cultural events. However, children who do not speak English as a first language are not consistently well supported to participate in activities. Currently, there are no children with special educational needs and/or disabilities attending the nursery but satisfactory systems to support these children are in place.

Relevant steps are taken to engage parents in their child's care and overall, this supports continuity in meeting children's individual care needs. Parents report that they are satisfied with the care that their child receive, although some do not know who their child's key person is. Some information for parents in the nursery's prospectus is not consistent with the requirements regarding non prescribed medicines and therefore does not give parents an accurate view of what the nursery can offer. The nursery has links with the local authority early years department, which affords good opportunities for staff training. Additionally, an early years advisor from the department visits the nursery and gives feedback on its practices. The nursery also has links with the local school and staff visit to observe and discuss the needs of children who are transferring to the school; this supports continuity in meeting children's individual needs when they move on.

The provider is aware of the importance of ensuring that the nursery is continuously improving and she regularly meets with the staff to review the provision and to plan the activities. Some relevant areas for improvement have been identified and work is in progress to address these and the areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection and from additional visits by Ofsted.

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

Most children show a strong sense of security and belonging in the nursery. They move around confidently and they have good relationship with the staff and each other. Older children help with familiar routines, including clearing the table at meal times and tidying up when they finish their activities. Children show a developing awareness of how to behave responsibly and most are keen to show that they can handle routine activities independently, like pouring the drinks and serving themselves at meal time, dressing and toileting. Staff are increasingly supportive of children's growing independence.

Children feel safe in the nursery and they approach staff easily. Babies benefit from having their own comfortable and separate rooms where they play and rest with the constant supervision of the staff. Older children are taught how to keep themselves safe and about behaving in ways that does not endanger themselves or others. Generally children behave well and they show consideration for others.

There is good attention to promoting children's health and to helping them to adopt healthy lifestyles. All children are supported in adopting good personal hygiene practice through the daily routines. Children enjoy freshly prepared meals that take account of their individual needs. They sit together in small groups at mealtimes, chatting and socialising as they eat. Consequently mealtime is a relaxed and enjoyable occasion for children. Children delight in playing outdoors and engaging in physical exercise although some children are not helped to fully enjoy the benefits as the activities are not well organised.

Children take part in a mix of free play and focused staff led activities, which relate to the six areas of learning. Most children show interest in the activities and the capacity to concentrate well, when they are engaged and their thinking is encouraged. However, practice is not sufficiently focused on helping children to extend their learning through thinking and not all staff are skilled in fostering children's learning through questioning, so learning outcomes for individual children are variable. Some activities encourage children's learning through rote. Children disengage as the activity is repetitive and lack meaning for them. Some staff are beginning to ask children open questions, helping them to think and express their ideas. Children are keen to communicate and show developing skills to think and to articulate their ideas clearly.

Staff keep a record of observations of children's progress and they plan activities for children's learning in the six areas, with an individual plan for each child. However, while planning ensures that children experience a variety of learning opportunities, the next steps for children's learning are not always clearly linked with the observations and it is unclear how they are identified. Planning does not indicate how activities are differentiated for more able children and individual plans are not specific about which aspect of the areas identified for children's learning, requires focus. Consequently planning is too general to ensure that children children's learning needs are always met fully. Children make satisfactory progress as staff know them generally well and the experiences that they have establish a

satisfactory foundation for their future learning.

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	3
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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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	3
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	3

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