

Stepping Stones Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

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Inspector

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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 school opened in 2007. It operates from five rooms within a house in the Southsea area of Portsmouth, Hampshire. Toilet facilities are available on three floors and there is a fully enclosed area for outside play. The provider is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The setting serves families from a large geographical area and has good links with local schools within Portsmouth and Southsea.

The setting is registered to provide care for 60 children from three months to eight years. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language. There are currently 74 children on roll, 26 of these children are in the early years age range.

The setting opens five days per week from Monday to Friday from 7:45am to 6:00pm with the exception of Bank Holidays.

There are 14 members of staff including the manager who work with the children. Of these 12 have a recognised Early Years qualification. Four members of staff are attending an Early Years training programme. The manager currently holds an NVQ4 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Management and staff work hard to create a welcoming environment and they meet each child's individual needs well. Children are extremely safe, secure and settled. They take part in many enjoyable learning experiences both indoors, out in the garden and in the local community. Extremely good links with parents ensures that every child is well supported. Management and staff have made many changes since their last inspection ensuring that continuous improvement takes place.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the use of assessments and use these to plan the next steps in all areas of learning to ensure that each individual child makes the best possible progress
- improve the planning of activities, to ensure that children are able to make choices and initiate their own learning and as a consequence, enhance their

- ability to think critically and ask questions
- increase the range of positive images and resources available to help children embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disabilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery manager and staff work well together to ensure the setting is organised efficiently, operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis and is welcoming to all children. Management successfully evaluate the provision's strengths and identify any areas for development. Staff turnover is low and this is reflected in the coherent way staff work together. They are very clear about their roles and responsibilities and deploy themselves effectively providing support for all children. Implementation of a wide range of policies and procedures and accurate completion of well organised records ensures children's individual needs are successfully met and that they are fully safeguarded.

Effective systems are in place to ensure that all staff are suitably qualified and appropriately vetted. All staff receive regular appraisals which help to identify their future training needs. Staff organise the learning environment in each of the rooms so that all children can easily access resources or take part in activities both indoors and outside in the enclosed garden area. They make good use of the local area, taking children to look at the sea or to the shops. However, sometimes activities are over organised and children miss out on opportunities to make choices and initiate their own learning.

Parents are kept extremely well informed about their children's routines, menus and the Early Years Foundation Stage via newsletters, notice boards, the settings website and through daily discussion with staff. They have opportunities to discuss their child's welfare and learning and to link in to the many community events organised by the nursery.

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

Children and babies are settled and secure in the nursery environment provided. They clearly understand the routines of the day and arrive at the setting happy and keen to participate. Children are provided with a broad range of resources and activities which enable them to make good progress in all areas of their learning. Babies and toddlers are well supported as they learn to crawl and take their first steps within the extremely safe surroundings. They use their senses as they explore the contents of the treasure baskets or feel the texture of the paint. Older children use their imaginations as they play with their friends and set the rules and boundaries for their made up games. They confidently complete the threading activity or fit the pieces of puzzle together with the support of a member of staff. All children enjoy listening to stories and are able to concentrate well in a group

situation.

Children's physical development is well promoted and they enjoy their outdoor play as they learn to jump, run and shoot the ball in the basket ball net. They are learning to move with co-ordination and to control their bodies as they follow the instructions during the music and movement sessions. Babies enjoy walks in the local environment as they are taken out in the buggies to the sea or the shops. Children behave extremely well and respond to the praise and encouragement they are given by members of staff. They learn to respect others and take part in a wide range of activities within the local community which the setting is regularly involved in. Children share and take turns and older children enjoy the interaction with their friends.

All staff complete observations and assessments and have a reasonably good knowledge of what each child knows and can do. Staff deploy themselves well and complete assessment records for each individual child. They plan activities which cover all areas of learning and include some next steps for children. However, some staff are less confident about making these assessments and using them to inform the planning to ensure that each individual child is making the best possible progress. Children take part in activities which help them to learn about different festivals and foods although they have few positive images and resources available to help them embrace differences or learn about valuing others.

Children's and babies safety is given high priority and they are extremely well protected. Older children learn to keep themselves safe as they take care on the stairs, wear tabards when on outings and talk about road safety. Babies have the necessary equipment in place such as buggies, high chairs and potties and their individual routines are met very well. Main meals are provided in accordance with the wishes of the parents, some children having a hot meal provided by the nursery and others bringing packed lunches. Children talk about healthy eating and know that vegetables are good for them. Even the very young children are competent to feed themselves. Children know and follow good hygiene routines, washing their hands before eating and putting their hands over their mouths if they cough.

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	1

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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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