

Stepping Stones RAF Leeming

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Donna Lancaster
Setting address	Royal Air Force, Leeming, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 9NJ
Telephone number	01677 457592
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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 RAF Leeming has been registered since 1987. It moved to new premises in August 2010. The setting is run by a committee with a supervisor employed to manage the childcare. The setting is located in purpose built premises at RAF Leeming, close to shops, the local school and other facilities for families. Children are cared for in age appropriate groups, in seven rooms. Outdoor play is provided in an enclosed area with a grass and safety surface.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 121 children under eight years, of these, no more than 121 may be in the early years age group and no more than 30 may be under two years at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 7.30am until 5.30pm all year round excluding station stand down days which occur twice per year, bank holidays and between Christmas and New Year. The nursery serves children from the local and surrounding communities. There are currently 134 children on roll. Of these, 108 children are in the early years age group. The setting receives nursery education funding for 45 children. The setting have good systems in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the childcare register. There are 18 members of staff working with the children on a regular basis, all of whom hold a relevant childcare qualification. Six members of staff are currently working towards a further qualification. There is also a dedicated administrator and a cook. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and confident as they are treated with genuine respect and care and are fully included in this setting due to good organisation and strong teamwork. The nursery provides an excellent range of effective learning experiences and play opportunities based on children's individual interests. Consequently, children make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. Children benefit immensely through the excellent partnership established with parents and outside agencies that help support children's development and progress. The manager and staff are very committed to evaluating their practice to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas they plan to develop. This maintains continuous improvement, which enhances outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide some provisions for children who wish to relax, play quietly or sleep with appropriate furniture. For example, domestic style furniture
- promote effective continuity and progression by sharing relevant information about children's learning and development with other provisions
- develop further the use of observation and assessment by linking children's next steps clearly to individual planning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

A very good range of well written policies and procedures support all aspects of the nursery and as these are also shared with parents, promote a strong and effective working partnership with them. Children's welfare is further safeguarded as staff have an excellent understanding of the indicators of abuse and know the procedure to follow for reporting concerns. Staffing ratios are exceeded at most times, which means that children receive very good levels of supervision. Vetting procedures for all adults who work with children are robust to ensure they are suitable. In-depth inductions include all required aspects, for example, safeguarding and health and safety. Children are kept safe and secure. Keypads and CCTV on exterior doors ensure children cannot leave the buildings and uninvited persons cannot gain entry. Children access a fully enclosed outdoor play area. A safety surface in this area enables all children to access outdoor play safely, effectively creating an indoor-outdoor classroom feature where the six areas of learning are promoted. There are comprehensive records of risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed. These along with thorough checks from the camps health and safety officer and daily checks which are carried out by staff in all the rooms enables them to fully identify and address potential dangers within the nursery and the outdoor play area quickly. All staff are qualified, knowledgeable and enthusiastic about providing high quality care for children. They regularly attend courses to update and extend their skills and some are working towards further qualifications.

The manager and the staff provide a very caring and professional service. The management team work very well together and have effective organisational skills. They are committed to continually improving the setting. Staff and management evaluate their practice effectively and they actively seek parents' and children's views through questionnaires to identify strengths and weakness of the provision. This also enables parents and children to make suggestions and give ideas to help make further improvements. Children benefit from the staffs strong commitment to training which allows them to continually make improvements to the already high-quality care provided. The recommendations raised at the previous inspection have been fully and positively addressed. For example, all documentation has been reviewed in line with the Early Years Statutory Framework, which improves all outcomes for children. Staff provide an inclusive and welcoming environment by organising the learning environment to ensure activities are accessible to all children and clearly labelled using text or pictures. However, provisions for children who wish to relax, play quietly or sleep on appropriate furniture are limited in

some areas of the nursery.

Managers and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and good systems are in place to identify and support any children with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Staff have attended training and implemented a range of ways to support children's learning effectively.

The extremely effective key worker system enables staff to establish very close working relationship with parents from the onset, in order to secure continuity of children's care. Staff encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning through regular newsletters, help with topics, asking about their child's interests, home diaries for weekend events and adding comments on the daily sheets. Parents welcome the opportunity to meet with staff at parents evening where they look at their child's progress records and have informal chats with staff. Parents and carers are extremely complimentary about the operation of the setting, expressing a high regard for the staff, the welcoming and secure environment and the flexible service provided. Effective systems are fully in place to ensure that children experience a smooth transition from nursery to school, for example, the head teacher and reception class teacher make frequent visits to the setting. Children also have visits to the school when there are special events taking place. The setting have very good links with other professionals such as speech therapists, health visitors, social services and the early years development officer. The systems to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing relevant information regarding children's learning and development are not yet fully in place with other providers of Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

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

Children benefit greatly from spending time in the exciting learning environment provided by the manager and the team of staff. They create a warm, stimulating and welcoming environment in which children can learn, explore and make good progress in their learning. Children are happy and contented and settle easily throughout the nursery in the bright and inviting playrooms. The staff have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and they have the skills to help children progress and achieve to their full potential. Children are provided with an extensive selection of accessible resources stored in low-level storage units within the enhanced free play areas established in all the rooms. The staff regularly observes and record children's development. Information from observation and assessment is very well used, for example, in identifying children's next steps in their learning. However, these steps do not always link clearly to planning for children's individual learning.

Babies and toddlers enjoy numerous sensory experiences, such as playing with treasure baskets, coloured bottles and textured materials. They enjoy craft activities and discover a sense of self as they look at themselves in the large mirrors. They develop walking skills as they pull themselves to standing position and walk around the room holding onto the furniture and the staffs hands.

Children develop their skills in using information technology equipment throughout all areas of the nursery. They have access to a large selection of musical instruments, interactive books and activity centres. There are battery operated and wind up toys and computers in all play rooms appropriate to their age. Children are motivated in their learning and as a result, all children develop the skills needed for their future success. Staff skilfully support young children through their play, introducing appropriate learning opportunities that encourage letter, number, shape and colour recognition in a fun and enjoyable way. For example, as they count the blocks in the tower, they name the colours of the wheels on the tractors and they find and name the wooden shapes. Children have good opportunities to develop their creative skills. For example, they draw, colour, paint and explore different textures, such as gloop, shaving foam, powder paints, pasta and play dough. Staff promote children's communication, language and literacy skills well as they sing an array of songs, rhymes and listen to lots of stories at circle time. Paper, pencils, white boards and chalkboards are easily accessible to help children begin basic mark making. Staff promote number recognition and problem solving through planned activities, such as games and singing counting rhymes, as well as everyday activities, for example, asking children how many plates they need for snacks. Children experience very good opportunities to develop their imagination as they play well together in the role play area as vets, doctors and nurses. The setting has their own cook on site and menus are regularly reviewed to ensure meals and snacks are balanced and nutritious. The cook works very closely with parents to ensure meals meet children's individual requirements ensuring children's health is effectively promoted and safeguarded. Children are learning to behave well, share and care about each other. This is because the staff acknowledges good behaviour and uses frequent praise and encouragement. For example, they praise children when they share the toys and encourage them to show good manners. As a result, children feel good about themselves and are learning right from wrong. Children follow the staff instruction about keeping themselves safe when playing outside and during activities and through the many visits from people in the community, such as fire fighters and police. Children take part in regular fire drills which helps to develop their awareness of safe procedures very well.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
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	1
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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met