

Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	07/03/2011
Inspector	ISP Inspection Diane Hancock
Setting address	Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, Worcs, WR10 1PT
Telephone number	01386 565404
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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 day nursery opened in 1992. It operates from three rooms in Wychavon District Council Civic Centre, in Pershore, Worcestershire. The nursery is open each week day from 8am until 6pm for 51 weeks a year. All children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 24 children in the early years age range. There are currently 37 children under five years on roll. The setting is also registered on the Childcare register to care for children under eight years of age. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. Special terms are available to parents employed by Wychavon District Council. Children attend for a variety of sessions and full day care. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and Children with English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff, one of whom has a Qualified Teacher Status and one of whom has an Early Years Foundation Degree. Six staff members are qualified to NVQ Level 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children have a wonderful time in this small, friendly nursery where they are well cared for by qualified, consistent and enthusiastic staff. Children make good progress because staff plan a range of exciting learning opportunities for children of all ages. Their individual care needs are well met because staff meet welfare requirements and work closely with parents and where appropriate, with outside agencies. The owner is fully involved in the day-to-day life of the nursery and works very closely with her team of staff. They are totally committed to reviewing the practice throughout the nursery and make ongoing changes as they seek to improve all aspects of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the organisation of space to improve the balance of activities available at any one time.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are protected effectively as staff have undertaken recent safeguarding training. Staff have a secure knowledge of the possible signs of child abuse and

they are fully aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. Appropriate employment procedures including, criminal record bureau checks, signing a yearly record regarding any convictions and regular appraisals are in place to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. Children enjoy a safe and secure environment with comprehensive risk assessments and regular safety checks to ensure that all hazards are removed or minimised. Policies and procedures are updated to ensure a smoothly run setting. Children are well supervised with adult to child ratios being met and on occasions exceeded when support is sought for children with additional needs. Children are cared for in a clean environment with good hygiene procedures including individual flannels and paper towels to prevent cross-contamination and appropriate nappy changing procedures. Effective documentation and procedures are carried out regarding accidents, medication and health care needs.

Children enjoy the care received from a very well-qualified team, who have clear roles and responsibilities. Staff know the children well through spending time carrying out observations, assessments and planning appropriate activities, covering all areas of learning. Improvements have been made to make resources more accessible, however, the current layout of the room limits access to all areas of learning at any one time for all children. Children benefit from playing with good quality resources, both indoors and outside, which are continually improved upon.

Staff reflect on their practice and regularly update a detailed self-evaluation. They have a clear vision to continue to improve and have identified areas for future development, for example, changing the layout of rooms to ensure easier access to outside, increasing the amount of scientific activities and improving their liaison with schools. Managers regularly seek and act upon advice from early years practitioners. All recommendations from the last inspection have been met, these include purchasing additional resources to increase role play and improve mark making and mathematical opportunities, planning and daily routines are more flexible, children have greater access to resources independently and policies and documentation are reviewed and updated. Many other improvements have been made, including to the outside area with an all weather shelter and providing activities for children's understanding of letters and sounds.

Children thrive because of the excellent partnership between their key person and their parents. Staff follow young babies routines to help them settle well and parents receive a written diary regarding the care and activities their baby has enjoyed each day. Parents are well informed through policies, newsletters, displays and feedback at the end of the day on the service and care their children receive. They are very well informed and involved in promoting their child's developmental progress and next steps in their learning through regular reports and 'learning journey' books with many photographs detailing their progress and achievements. Parents views are actively sought through questionnaires and acted upon. Parents comment very positively on the care their children receive and on how well the staff know and support the children.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive because the nursery staff work closely with outside agencies to provide the best possible support for such children. The nursery communicates well with other Early Years

Foundation Stage providers to ensure consistency for children and ensure their needs are well-met to help them reach their full potential.

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

Children have good opportunities to enjoy creative play such as painting and exploring different textures such as jelly and spaghetti. Babies thoroughly enjoy a wide range sensory experiences, for example, as they sit and feel the changing textures of gloop, staff eagerly join in with the activity. Craft activities are often planned around a theme or book. Staff have a good knowledge of children's interests and plan activities and buy resources to meet these interests, such as games and topics involving dinosaurs. Children help choose resources including the new pink play house, where they play well together in their imaginary play, posting letters to each other and making ice-creams.

Children are sociable, friendly and form good relationships with staff and each other. Babies are readily given affection and staff have good interaction with them as they sit and look at books, play musical instruments, sing popular rhymes and build towers with bricks. Babies are content as they explore different shining materials and textures in the treasure baskets and they interact with adults playing peek-a-boo. Children have confidence and develop self-esteem as they perform a nativity and sing songs in front of parents and at a care home for elderly people. Children develop a very good sense of belonging and involvement in the local community as they access the library, local parks, shops and feed the ducks. They hold charity and fundraising events and regularly visit a care home, encouraging children to think about the needs of other people. All children gain an awareness of other cultures as they take part in activities to celebrate different festivals, such as, Chinese New Year. Children thoroughly enjoy getting out in the fresh air and exploring nature, climbing trees as they go to a forest and grow plants in the garden. They take an interest in insects and worms and look at them under the microscope.

Children get excited and enthusiastically act out familiar stories about a bear hunt and use props to help tell stories about a 'gruffalo'. Children eagerly act out songs, such as five current buns where staff reinforce their mathematical learning. Older children develop excellent technology skills on the laptop as they play mathematical and literacy games and develop their keyboard skills. These activities help children develop good skills for the future.

Children develop an awareness of healthy lifestyles and learn about the benefits of exercise as they love singing, dancing and doing actions to music. They spend time outside in the fresh air and develop physical skills by balancing on tyres and playing with balls whilst running in the park. Babies are praised and encouraged to crawl and walking aids are easily accessible. Children develop excellent swimming skills and confidence in the water as they attend weekly swimming lessons. Children learn about safety, for example, when out crossing roads and during regular, well planned fire drills. Staff have good relationships with the children and

they feel safe and secure with staff.

Children behave very well as they become engrossed in their play and learning. They learn about the 'golden rules' and receive praise and encouragement from the reward sticker systems in place. Children make good progress in their behaviour with individual support strategies from staff. Children have opportunities to take responsibility, such as laying the tables for lunch and pouring their own drinks. Self-care skills are encouraged, such as putting on their own coat. Children demonstrate good personal hygiene and independence. Children and babies individual health, care and sleep routines are well respected. They have a good appetite and learn about healthy eating as they enjoy freshly cooked nutritious meals and snacks provided by the nursery.

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	1
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	1
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	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

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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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