

# Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 118617  
**Inspection date** 09/03/2011  
**Inspector** Shawleene Campbell

**Setting address** Ardleigh Green Road, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2LL

**Telephone number** 01708 462827

**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*.

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 was registered in 1991. The nursery is managed by Havering College of Further and Higher Education. It operates from a purpose built pre-fabricated unit within the premises of the Ardleigh Green campus of Havering College of Further and Higher Education in the London Borough of Havering. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the compulsory and voluntary Childcare Register. A maximum of 43 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 76 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. Of these, 27 three- and four-year-olds receive funding for early education. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.45am to 6.15pm for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery employs 14 members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The children are making good progress in all areas of their learning and development. Staff know children generally well and ensure their individual needs are met. Practitioners maintain a good two-way flow of communication with parents, although partnerships with others are less established. Overall, documentation is appropriately maintained. The setting demonstrates commitment to continuous improvement and processes are used very well to identify strengths and areas for further improvement.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- develop systems to enable parents to share what they know about their child to contribute to initial assessment records
- develop close working partnerships between other early years settings children attend, to ensure continuity and coherence in their learning and development.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures to effectively promote children's welfare. There are robust policies and procedures to support their safety. Required documentation is in place, well maintained and readily available for inspection. However, procedures have yet to

be fully developed to ensure children's personal information in relation to accidents is kept securely to effectively maintain confidentiality.

The children are cared for by a suitably qualified staff team. There are robust vetting procedures in place to ensure that adults working with children are safe to do so. Practitioners work very well as a team and demonstrate commitment to continued training to enhance their professional development, and outcomes for children. For example outdoor play promotes all areas of learning. Information gained from courses is effectively disseminated to the whole team to ensure all staff are kept up-to-date with current knowledge.

The children are cared for in a safe and secure environment because practitioners undertake regular risk assessments both indoors and outside. Practitioners have developed good partnerships with parents. Information about children's progress is shared both verbally and in writing. Detailed information about the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and current topics is regularly shared with parents through discussion, displays and regular newsletters. An informative parent handbook is provided at point of enrolment allowing them to have a greater insight of the day-to-day management of the setting. Parents are able to contribute to children's ongoing assessments. However, procedures to ensure they contribute to children's initial assessments are not yet fully established.

There are no children attending the setting with special educational needs. However, practitioners and the designated SENCO worker are aware of the importance of working with parents and external agencies to support children's learning and development. This promotes an inclusive environment. Although practitioners complete detailed transition reports to ensure a smooth handover from the setting to school, procedures have yet to be fully developed to ensure effective links are made with other early years provision to effectively promote children's learning and development. Staff are effectively deployed to support children's learning and they have access to a broad range of resources, both inside and out.

Management and practitioners have effectively used Ofsted's self-evaluation form, action plans and support from the local authority to effectively assess the provision. Consequently, improvements have been made for outdoor play and there are now designated champions in place for problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. This contributes to positive outcomes for children. The setting is working towards The Skills Quality Mark.

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

Children are happy in their environment. The babies have formed positive attachments with practitioners. When they are upset they seek comfort from key staff demonstrating secure relationships. Younger children have access to a range of bright and colourful toys that capture their interest. The environment is well planned ensuring that emerging walkers and mobile children have ample of space

to play and explore. Babies benefit from playing alongside and with practitioners, who effectively support their learning and development. Practitioners demonstrate a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and they undertake systematic observations which inform planning. Practitioners plan a wide range of focused activities to effectively support children's individual needs and interest. Assessment and observation records clearly reflect the six areas of learning and identify children's next steps. However, the systems for all children's initial assessments have yet to be fully developed to enable practitioners to effectively build on what children already know.

The children benefit from an interesting range of planned indoor and outdoor purposeful experiences to support their learning. Their imaginative skills are developing very well as they make dens, play with tents and go on imaginary boat rides to Southend. Practitioners participate well in children's play to ensure it is fun as they play in the boat following children's guidance. Children use the hose reel with a nozzle to put petrol in their cars, and then tell their friends they have to pay '.. a million pounds'.

More able children use mathematical language confidently. They talk to adults about what shoe size they take. Children demonstrate a keen interest in numbers and time based upon events that are important to them. Just before lunch, they ask adults the time, and talk about taking forty seconds and one minute to finish their dessert. Children play very well in groups and they negotiate turn taking and sharing well. They spend time playing harmoniously with diggers, tractors and trucks.

The children speak very confidently to peers and adults. Their listening skills are very good and they enjoy story time sessions. Practitioners skillfully read stories capturing children's interest by encouraging participation and changing the tone of their voice. Children display excitement by predicting events. They are developing good early writing skills by mark marking through a wide range of everyday situations, for example when taking part in free hand drawing, painting, using chalks in the garden, using the white-board outside and taking part in role play activities. Older children are able to recognise their name and more able children are able to write their name on their artwork. Children enjoy taking part in cooking activities and they are able to use a variety of equipment to further promote their learning, such as weighing scales. They learn about their own cultures and beliefs, and those of other people through well-planned topics and having access to a wide range of resources and quality displays that reflect positive images of diversity.

The children are very well behaved and practitioners consistently praise children for their achievements, promoting their self-esteem. From an early age children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through effective daily routines, and topics such as healthy eating and the dentist. Children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe as they practise regular evacuation procedures and through planned events as their safety is further reinforced by visits from the police community officers, the local fire brigade and the use of materials from the 'road traffic club'.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	2

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

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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