

Stepping Stones Nursery and Afterschool and Holiday Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127641
Inspection date	26/05/2011
Inspector	Julie Sackett
Setting address	Lansdowne CP School, Gladstone Drive, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3BH
Telephone number	01795 410499
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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, After School and Holiday Club was established in 1995. The holiday club is active but the after school club is not currently operational. The nursery, after school club and holiday club are managed by a committee and operate from a mobile classroom in the grounds of Lansdowne Primary School in Sittingbourne, Kent. Children come from the local area. A maximum of 40 children may attend the group at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday, term time only, from 8.45am to 3.15pm and the holiday club opens during the school holidays from 8am to 6pm. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. In addition the nursery has access to parts of the school including the library, school hall and outdoor areas. There are currently 34 children aged from two to under eight years on roll for the morning session and 27 for the afternoon session, including children who receive funding for early education. The setting has experience of supporting children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs 11 members of staff. Three members of staff, including the manager and deputy manager, hold NVQ Level 4 and eight hold NVQ Level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority. It is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The overall quality of the provision is good. The setting successfully provides a happy, inclusive and caring environment so that children feel exceptionally safe and secure. Adults are well qualified and guide children appropriately although sometimes they miss opportunities to extend children's thinking. Good partnerships with parents and carers and other professionals are maintained so that the learning needs of individual children are supported very well. The setting demonstrates good capacity to make further improvements with accurate self evaluation procedures in place to support future developments.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that adults' questions are sufficiently open ended to stimulate and extend children's thinking and accelerate their progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting places a strong emphasis on safeguarding so that procedures for ensuring children's safety and well-being are rigorous and thorough. Systematic safeguarding checks mean that all risks have been assessed and staff vetting and suitability checks are in place. For example, outdoor areas are always checked for potential risks and hazards prior to use by the children. All adults receive safeguarding training, including those new to the setting. As a result, adults have a very robust awareness of safeguarding and child protection procedures. Clear policies and systems are in place and used very effectively to ensure that the premises are extremely secure and to promote children's welfare.

Self evaluation procedures are good. The setting has an accurate picture of its strengths and development needs and the staff are ambitious for improvement. Key issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed in full and have had a positive impact on children's learning and development. For example, key workers now make regular observations of the children's learning which contribute to comprehensive 'Learning Journals'. Observations are detailed and focused well on children's achievements as well as the next steps in learning to support their consistently good progress.

The setting is strongly inclusive so that all children are treated equally, regardless of their ability or background. Warm, positive relationships enable all children to participate fully in activities. The setting works very effectively in partnership with a range of agencies and good links with the local primary school have been established. The quality of these links is exemplified by the setting's recent review of the way in which children are taught to form letters in their writing. Such initiatives ensure that support for children is consistent so that they settle quickly and make good progress. Parents and carers express confidence in the members of staff and are happy to leave their children in their care. They have regular opportunities to contribute to their child's 'Learning Journal' and questionnaires are used to gather their views so that they make a valuable contribution to improvements in the provision. Good quality resources are organized and managed very effectively to promote children's learning and development.

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

Adults very successfully create a warm, welcoming and secure environment so that children are happy and develop a sense of belonging. Adults are attentive and actively listen to the children so that they get to know their key people, as well as other adults, very well. This means that the children feel exceptionally safe and valued and their personal, emotional and welfare needs are fully met. For example, many children happily enjoy telling adults their news and listening to a story at the start of the day.

Adults show a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements and the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. Most adults make good use of questioning to explore and extend children's understanding. However,

occasionally adults' questions are not sufficiently open ended to stimulate and extend children's thinking so that opportunities to maximize learning and accelerate children's progress are sometimes missed. Regular assessments of the children's understanding are completed and used to plan activities which interest the children and meet their learning and development needs so that they make consistently good progress, including those children whose circumstances make them vulnerable and children who have special educational and/or disabilities. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed listening to an adult giving a series of verbal clues and then used these to work out which object was in the tin. This supported good progress in the development of children's language skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

The setting is well-resourced, including a good range of books, posters and signs in several languages which help children to begin to appreciate a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. Strong relationships and clear expectations mean that children's behaviour is excellent so that children make an excellent contribution to the setting. Children make good progress in the development of independence and confidence because they have regular opportunities to make choices about their activities, in addition to adult-led activities. They play an active part in their learning and make choices responsibly and sensibly. For example, one child chose to use the 'paint dabbers' to complete a 'Fireman Sam' picture whilst another requested the dinosaurs and play mats as one of the activities available. As a result, children are successfully helped to develop the necessary personal and social skills to support the next stage in their education.

Adults regularly remind children of the importance of good hygiene habits, such as washing their hands before eating their snack and, as a result, children show a good awareness of safety issues. Children access the secure and well-organised outdoor area enthusiastically and thoroughly enjoy the range of physical activities available, including ride-on toys and use of the school's spacious and very well-equipped trim trail. They help prepare healthy snacks and drinks and show an excellent understanding of why it is important to lead healthy lifestyles.

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	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	2

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	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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