

Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery was registered in 2004. It is one of several nurseries run by a limited company and operates from a single storey building located on a business park in Warrington, Cheshire. Children are cared for within four rooms, and have access to a sensory room and secure outdoor play areas. The nursery is open to the general public, but primarily serves children of employees working for United Utilities. It is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm throughout the year, excluding bank holidays.

The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 98 children aged from birth to the early years age range may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 102 children on roll within the early years age range and of these, 25 receive funding for free early education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 26 members of staff including the manager. Of these, one holds Early Years Professional (EYP) Status, 24 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association (NDNA) and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress in their learning and development and overall, they are very settled, secure and show much interest in the stimulating experiences on offer. Staff successfully promote equality and diversity, ensuring children's individual needs are well met. They work exceptionally well with parents and carers, which significantly benefits the children's care, learning and enjoyment. Links with other providers to promote children's care and learning are positive and improving. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement, with robust systems in place to evaluate, monitor and maintain good standards.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the organisation of the baby room, to consistently create an environment that is calm and reassuring for all children
- build on the arrangements for maintaining a regular two-way flow of information with other providers such as childminders and pre-schools.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All staff complete required checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. Induction arrangements for new staff are robust and all staff attend in-house training regarding safeguarding children, so that everyone is fully aware of the possible indicators of abuse and how to respond to a cause for concern. All required documentation to ensure the nursery runs efficiently is very well organised and accurately maintained. An external company is responsible for conducting health and safety audits, and staff carry out thorough risk assessments and daily safety checks to ensure the building is very safe and secure.

Managers and leaders successfully drive improvements to enhance the quality of the provision. Outdoor play spaces have been significantly improved to create exciting areas for children to enjoy and explore. Recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed and all staff contribute to actions plans that identify further improvements to be made. One staff member has recently been awarded 'practitioner of the year' by the NDNA and the nominated EYP is working well with the staff team to lead and develop practice, thus maximising positive learning experiences for all children.

Staff successfully promote equality and diversity and support children in learning to value and respect other cultures. They liaise closely with parents and take positive measures to ensure children with special educational needs are fully supported. Careful consideration has been given to the organisation of indoor and outdoor areas to create a very stimulating and well-equipped learning environment. However, organisation in the large baby room is not always conducive to creating a calm environment and occasionally some babies become a little unsettled.

Engagement with parents and carers is excellent. They receive a wealth of information about the nursery and the educational programme. They have many opportunities to be fully involved in the children's learning, for example, attending stay and play sessions or sharing their cultural knowledge and skills with the children. Parents and carers are highly complimentary about the staff and the range of experiences they provide for the children. Children's transition to school is well supported because of the good links established with local schools. Contact with other providers is less well developed.

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

Children enjoy the wide range of activities on offer and concentrate well on tasks. They show confidence in asking questions and engaging in conversations with staff, which supports their language and communication skills. Well-established routines help children to feel safe and strong relationships with the staff increases their sense of trust. Positive strategies are introduced to help babies feel settled and safe such as creating a settling-in box containing familiar items from home. Staff consistently follow good hygiene practices to minimise risks to children's

health such as wearing aprons, gloves and shoe protectors. Children adopt healthy lifestyles, for example, by eating freshly prepared and nutritious meals, and brushing their teeth after lunch.

Children develop positive skills for the future. For example, they enjoy opportunities to share books, draw and paint, which encourages their reading and writing skills. The sensory room promotes exploration and enables children to use some electronic equipment. Exciting outdoor play areas promote all areas of learning really well. For example, children practise their climbing and balancing skills and enjoy digging in the mud, filling containers with water and growing vegetables. They delight in imaginative play as they search for buried treasure and enjoy using their senses to explore various materials such as paint, custard or toothpaste.

Good behaviour is positively reinforced and staff value children's efforts. As a result, children learn to cooperate and be kind to each other. Children's independent skills are well promoted, particularly at lunchtime where they collect their own cutlery and self-serve. They enjoy using interesting objects in the maths area, such as a spirit level, and have fun building with the bricks, which develops their awareness of shape and space. Children have good opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. Attractive multi-cultural wall displays and a wide range of resources and planned topics, help children to understand and appreciate diversity.

Staff are very caring and supportive towards the children, enabling close relationships to flourish. They demonstrate secure knowledge of how to promote children's learning and implement effective systems to plan, observe and assess their ongoing progress. A wide range of exciting activities are organised to meet children's learning needs, interests and next steps. Comprehensive and well-presented learning journeys clearly show the positive progress children make towards the early learning goals.

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	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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