

Childcare @ Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY435517
Inspection date	21/02/2012
Inspector	Lynne Talbot
Setting address	9a George Street West, LUTON, LU1 2BW
Telephone number	07530 425 154
Email	karen.godfrey@steppingstonesluton.org.uk
Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Childcare at Stepping Stones registered in 2008 and moved to new premises in 2011. The setting operates from The Stepping Stones organisation building in Luton, Bedfordshire. The building is accessed via two steps and children access the first floor dining room by a staircase. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

The provision is open each weekday all year round with the exception of bank holidays. Sessions are from 9.30am to 12.30pm, and from 1pm to 4pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 19 children may attend the provision at any one time. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare register. Children attend the setting via referral only. There are currently 100 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age range.

The provision is also registered to offer care to children aged over five years. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently no children on roll in this age range. Some children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school or childminders. The provision supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. The provision employs six members of staff, all of whom, including the manager, hold early year's qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage shows a good range and is led by children's interests. This ensures that children receive experiences that foster good progress overall. Staff create a very welcoming environment, using robust safeguarding procedures and clear risk assessments. They have a thorough knowledge of each child's needs to ensure that every child is fully included. Partnerships with parents and other agencies are purposeful and make sure that any additional support needs are met. The leaders and manager communicate drive and ambition to ensure development through reflective practice and this ensures continued good outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that the needs of younger children are met with particular reference to the development of sustained attentive listening, listening with enjoyment and responding to stories, songs and music, rhymes and poems
- develop further the observations and assessments of each child's

achievements, interests and learning styles; ensure that planned learning builds from what children already know or can do, recognise the parental input into the planned learning and use these assessments to identify learning priorities to plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child

- develop further food hygiene matters during induction and on-the-job training for all staff involved in the preparation and handling of food. With particular reference to staff practice when handling food and assisting children with personal hygiene.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Robust safeguarding procedures ensure that children are fully protected. Secure boundaries, robust checking of visitor identity and a coded-fob security at each door ensures children safety. Safeguarding audits are completed. The provider ensures that all persons required undertake the appropriate checks to safeguard children. There is a wide range of relevant policies and procedures which are shared with the parents. They are implemented in practice in order to promote the smooth management of the provision and provide positive outcomes for the children. The provider implements thorough recruitment and induction processes. New staff have an induction and probationary period to promote continued good practice. Risk assessments for the premises and outings are comprehensive; daily checks for all areas of the premises are recorded and checks for outings are thorough.

Partnerships with parents are developed with inductions completed at the pace required by children and parents. Care is particularly flexible to meet the needs of families; there are sessions that are planned to fully include parents and work with them on the individual needs of the children. Staff work closely with other agencies to support children identified with additional needs, including being part of collaborative work and following identified programmes. This ensures that all aspects of care, learning and development are consistent. Staff make the most of diversity to help children understand the society in which they live. The provision has members of staff who speak Urdu, Swahili, Chinese and Mandarin; they reflect the community around them and cultural events and religious festivals where possible are upheld. All children are respected as unique individuals regardless of ethnic heritage, social and economical backgrounds, gender or ability. The provision cares for a small number of children who attend other early years provision. They are aware of the importance of sharing information with other settings when appropriate to support children's continuity of care. Inclusion underpins all aspects of care and learning that take place within this provision. The provider is improving outcomes for children and taking effective steps to close identified achievement gaps.

Staff ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their child's learning and development through discussions and shared information. Achievements are celebrated but those parental contributions are not yet included in the assessments that feed the personalised planned learning. Clear procedures are in place to deal

with undesirable behaviour or harassment of any kind. Resources, furniture and equipment are used well with the manager and staff evaluating and changing the use of the two main play rooms to meet the needs of the children attending. The leaders and the manager are enthusiastic and have clear expectations for progression. There is commitment to ongoing professional development throughout the staff group with staff benefiting from appraisal systems. Recent training has included fire safety training and safeguarding courses. The result is a positive impact on the care and learning provided. Self-evaluation processes are well-chosen and carefully planned, so that impact is evident in the areas in which they are the most positive for the children attending.

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

Children are offered planned activities that help them to make good progress overall in their learning and development. Detailed assessment through observation is in place; next steps are identified. However, observation, assessment and planning do not build from a baseline assessment or include aspects of what children can already do as shared by their parents. This means that potential learning opportunities may fail to be maximised to progress children towards the early learning goals. The staff group evaluate all sessions and ensure that planning is challenging. All children have daily opportunities to become physically active, developing good health. The soft-surface outdoor area is accessed freely and children move with control exploring blocks, sit-and-ride toys, and the play house. Mobiles hung from the trees attract babies' attention whilst low level mirrors and 3-D insects engage their interest. The 'bug hotel' fosters an interest in the natural world. Children have a low-level planting area in which they have planted radishes and later enjoyed them for snack. The provision adheres to the under 5's healthy eating standards and children readily enjoy the snacks and meals provided for them by the cook. They are helped to develop independence when they make choices over toppings for toast and spread these themselves. Children take part in baking bread; they weigh the ingredients and mix them, observing changes. Older children independently meet their own physical needs washing their hands and using soap to remove germs. Younger children and babies have their needs met with help. However, staff do not always show children the importance of washing their hands after using tissues to wipe their noses, particularly when handling food and this impacts on their development of hygiene understanding.

Children readily engage in role play and use figures and vehicles to learn about people in the community, such as the fire service and the police service. Planned activities broaden the development of language. For instance, activities are developed to promote the asking of questions and seeking answers and rhythm and sound patterns using music. All children are creative and enjoy free painting with brushes and their hands, or with toothbrushes and combs exploring texture. Babies and younger children enjoy making sounds with musical instruments; rain makers are shaken and bells rattled as they explore tactile materials. All children have access to some early technology and enjoy role play. They speak through telephones and manipulate mechanical toys. Children explore electronic toys

pressing buttons and watching the effect they make. Puppets and stories are used each day. However, the mixed age group involved in story sessions prohibits the development of sustained attentive listening because books are not always appropriately chosen to attract younger children's attention. Consequently the younger children fail to benefit from such sessions. Children show that they are secure and confident; they make free choices from the attractive and accessible resources. Children are beginning to be sociable and their behaviour is managed suitably. Children are supported to gain the skills and attitudes necessary for future learning and the transition into new settings.

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	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	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