

Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Stanground)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	256828
Inspection date	17/03/2009
Inspector	Anna Davies
Setting address	School Bungalow, Oakdale Avenue, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 8TD
Telephone number	01733 563 116
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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.

Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery Oakdale is one of two operating in the city of Peterborough. It opened in 1988 and operates from a bungalow in the grounds of Oakdale Primary School, Stanground. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 17.30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Access into and out of the nursery is via a small step to the front door. There are no designated disabled toilet facilities.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 17 children may attend there at any one time. There are currently 20 children aged from three months to the end of the early years age range on roll. The nursery is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register and supports children whom speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs four staff who work directly with the children; three hold appropriate early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 and of these, two are working towards Level 4 qualifications. One member of staff holds a Level 4 qualification. The nursery also employs a kitchen assistant. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Staff across the nursery are developing good skills in observing and assessing children's progress towards the early learning goals and planning for their future learning, but at times, the ineffective deployment of staff is impacting on the quality of some of the activities provided. There are sound working relationships with parents which enables the staff to meet children's individual needs and ensure that they are kept appropriately informed of issues in relation to their child's care and learning. Most policies, procedures and records are used effectively to underpin arrangements to safeguard children's health and welfare. The nursery are developing their self-evaluation systems to ensure that they are able to securely identify strengths and priorities for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the deployment and arrangement of staff to ensure that children's needs are consistently met
- develop systems of self-evaluation, this relates to leading and encouraging a culture of reflective practice to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development
- develop the provision of toys, resources and images that reflect diversity to ensure that children receive consistent messages throughout their play
- ensure staff's awareness of the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality,

this specifically relates to the complaints record

- ensure that children are consistently encouraged to follow good hygiene routines, this relates to washing their hands before eating snack.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- obtain information about who has parental responsibility for each child and who has legal contact with the child (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare).

07/04/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery is developing their self-evaluation systems to ensure that strengths and priorities for improvement are identified and effectively actioned, involving all levels of staff and management. Since the last inspection, the manager has satisfactorily addressed recommendations raised. For example, planning and assessment procedures have been effectively developed to promote individualised learning. Staff have started to identify further areas for improvement. For example, they are looking to increase opportunities for outdoor play for babies and toddlers and are seeking to enhance the information obtained from parents when children first start to assist with assessment arrangements for each child.

Effective recruitment and induction procedures are in place to ensure children are cared for by suitable staff who are appropriately vetted and are suitably qualified for the position that they hold. Children benefit from the small, consistent staff team and the cover arrangements in place when regular staff are absent; relief staff from the other nursery owned by the proprietors provide cover which ensures children are familiar with staff and this promotes consistency of care. The staff's training needs are identified during staff appraisals to ensure they keep their knowledge and understanding up-to-date. Staff have a secure understanding about safeguarding children. For example, clear procedures are in place regarding child protection and staff know what to do if they have concerns about a child in their care. Risk assessments are in place and effective. As a result, children are cared for in a safe, secure environment where potential hazards are identified and risks minimised.

There are sound partnerships with parents to ensure consistency of care and learning. Verbal discussions with parents when they collect their children ensures that they are aware of their children's day. An informative noticeboard in the hallway outlines the Early Years Foundation Stage for parents. Observations are sent home each month for parents to view and make comments upon and their assessment records are sent home each term to encourage parent contributions. This ensures that parents are kept informed of their children's progress and achievements. Staff obtain suitable information from parents when their children begin at nursery, which ensures staff are able to meet their individual needs and routines. However, they do not obtain information about who has parental

responsibility for each child and who has legal contact with the child. Parents are asked about other settings that children may attend and the nursery are developing systems to share information with these settings to promote consistency in the care and education offered. Most policies and procedures are up-to-date and in line with requirements and these are accessible for parents. However, some complaints have not been recorded in a way that maintains confidentiality.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are provided with an appropriate range of activities that cover all areas of learning. Planning takes account of children's interests and next steps of learning so that activities are meaningful for the children and help them to make suitable progress in their learning. Regular observations are undertaken as children play and records of achievement are well established for each child, taking into account parents' comments and contributions. However, staff deployment and arrangements are not always effective at meeting children's needs. For example, staff in the pre-school room frequently have to leave activities they are undertaking with the children, to attend to answering the telephone or door and to prepare snack or make lunch for the children. This means that children's activities and therefore their learning is interrupted and at times this has a negative impact on behaviour. Staff use appropriate strategies to ensure that children who speak English as an additional language are included in the setting. For example, they use words in children's home languages during everyday routines and work alongside parents to meet their needs.

Staff have a sound understanding of how children learn. For example, staff are aware of promoting babies and toddlers sensory development as they enjoy chasing the bubbles when they are blown and role play activities are effectively supported by staff to further develop the children's imaginative ideas. Children have formed warm relationships with staff and settle quickly when they arrive; they are cuddled and reassured throughout the day, for example, as they grow tired or awaken from a sleep. Children are appropriately supported to develop their skills for their future economic well-being. For example, all children are offered suitable mark-making activities and older children are recognising familiar words as they find their name cards to register their arrival. They are encouraged in their communication skills during circle times as they are given time to explain what makes them happy and sad; sign language is introduced during familiar songs to accompany actions. Children enjoy the outdoor environment and generally have regular opportunities to use the garden or enjoy walks in the local community. Older children develop their physical skills on the trim trail, learning to climb a rope ladder to get over the low wall or to balance on the beam. Children learn to appreciate different cultures and traditions through celebrations of multicultural festivals and there is a suitable range of resources that reflect diversity. However, these are not always on display throughout the setting to ensure that children receive consistent messages through their play.

Children's welfare is satisfactorily promoted. Accident and medication records are maintained appropriately and most staff hold valid first aid qualifications to ensure

they are able to deal effectively with minor accidents. The nursery is clean and well-maintained. Snacks of fruit are brought in from home by the children to share with everyone. Nutritious and straight forward meals are cooked by nursery staff and drinks are freely accessible to all children whenever they wish. Children are beginning to learn about good hygiene routines as they wash their hands before lunch and use individual flannels to wipe their faces after they have eaten. However, they do not wash their hands prior to eating snack. Children generally behave well when they are actively engaged in activities and staff praise and thank the children for their help, efforts and contributions. Children learn to stay safe when out on walks as they learn to cross roads safely and are reminded of simple rules in the nursery such as sitting safely and using equipment safely.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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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