

Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Stepping Stones Nursery is a privately owned and managed nursery. It was registered in 2004 and operates from the ground floor of a two storey industrial unit in the Denton Holme area of Carlisle. Children have access to a baby room and sleep room, toddler room and pre-school room. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 28 children aged under eight years may attend the nursery at any one time, of these 28 children may be in the early years age group. There are currently 30 early years children on the roll. The nursery provides early years entitlement for three- and four-year-old children. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm, and is open all year round, apart from bank holidays and the Christmas and New Year break. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of child care staff who hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager holds a level 6 qualification in Early Childhood Studies, a Certificate in Education and has gained Early Years Professional Status. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and is supported by the local early years team.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Stepping Stones Day Nursery provides a warm and welcoming, safe and secure environment for children and their families. Staff effectively implement the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) to ensure that all aspects of children's care, learning and welfare needs are effectively met. Children access a wide range of activities and resources that meet their interests, overall, and the effectiveness of the support they receive helps them make good progress in their learning and development. All the required documentation is maintained with clear and effective recording methods. The setting has outstanding partnerships with parents, and multi-agency working and supportive transition arrangements with the local school ensure children's are effectively supported and their needs met. The collective self-evaluation document truly reflects the setting's practice and clearly identifies their strengths and areas for development for continued improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enhance the environment with visual displays of positive images to help

develop children's understanding of difference and diversity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are effectively safeguarded. The staff competently promote children's safety and welfare in all aspects of this nursery provision. The manager and staff implement robust safeguarding policies and procedures and have a good understanding of their role and responsibility should a child protection concern arise. Children are kept safe and secure on and off the premises through detailed risk assessment and safety checks completed daily. They begin to learn how to keep themselves safe by taking part in regular fire evacuation practises and learning safe practises as they play. The manager maintains in depth recruitment and suitability procedures to ensure that children are cared for by suitable persons. A strict monitoring of visitors is in place. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and made available to parents. These are effectively implemented by staff to ensure the smooth running of the setting.

The manager and staff are experienced practitioners, who work well as a team. They have worked hard to make vast improvements to their practice and the nursery overall. The manager is inspirational in her enthusiasm for learning which inspires the staff, whose training needs are continually addressed. The staff are confident about the strengths of the setting and acknowledge any areas for development. Effective systems are in place to ensure parents, carers, children and staff are fully involved in the self-evaluation process. Staff meet regularly with development workers to review their everyday working practices to improve the outcomes for children. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been implemented and have improved outcomes and safety for children.

The interesting and stimulating nursery rooms are effectively organised to enable children to make choices and decisions in their play. The space and continuous provision set up provide a wide variety of resources and range of activities which cover all areas of learning. Staff deploy themselves well to ensure children are challenged and supported as they play. The nursery is warm and welcoming. Staff provide an inclusive environment for all the parents, carers, and children attending. A wealth of information is available in different media. A number of creative displays decorate the walls of the rooms, however, these are limited in the way of positive images and reference to the difference and diversity of the world.

Children benefit from the exceptional positive engagement with parents. Parents play a key role in the nursery and their children's progress and achievement. They are provided with numerous ideas of how to help their children learn at home and they are involved with new appointments of staff. The daily contact with the staff and the role of the key person all contribute greatly to the effective sharing of information and continuity of care for children. Regular newsletters and parent comment sheets keep them informed and enable them to offer their observations on the setting. Parents express a high regard for the care and service the staff provide. They find the staff very friendly and approachable and their children are progressing well. The setting fully embraces local community involvement. The

established links with the local schools and nurseries ensures a smooth transition for children into nursery or reception class.

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

Children are happy and contented. They settle easily on arrival, warmly greeting the staff and key person. Children are well supported by skilled early years practitioners, who have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The key person system effectively supports children to achieve good outcomes. Therefore, they make steady progress towards the early learning goals. The staff know the children well, therefore, they can explain what stage of development they have reached and what they are helping children to achieve next. Staff collect vital initial information from parents and observe children's starting points. They observe, assess and evaluate children's learning using developmental charts, as a result the staff have a clear and accurate picture of the progress each child is making towards the early learning goals. Effective systems are in place to ensure that planning covers all areas of learning and incorporates the next steps in children's development.

Children enjoy themselves and have fun. Their behaviour is managed effectively through the support of well deployed staff. Children establish good relationships with the staff and work well both independently and in groups. They make choices and decisions about what they do and their independence and self-help skills are encouraged. Children help themselves to resources and cooperate with each other while playing, for example, when building a train track. They develop hand eye coordination in craft activities and enjoy sensory activities with sand and water. Children listen to favourite stories and competently engage in letter and sound activities. They enjoy mark-making activities, for example, by using white chalk directly on a black table top. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are fully supported. They talk to staff about forthcoming events in their lives and recall things they have taken part in. For example, the mini Olympics with other local nurseries. Children feel valued and respected, as the staff constantly praise them during activities. They learn about weight, shape and measure during their baking activity and thoroughly enjoy eating the end product.

Children's healthy living and lifestyle are promoted. Staff support children during toileting and hand washing routines and nappy changing is done in an unhurried manner. Children are provided with healthy nutritious fresh fruit snacks and benefit from the social occasion created at snack time. Children access fresh air and exercise daily. They play in the outdoor play area in all weathers using a range of equipment. Children are provided with opportunities to investigate and explore the natural environment when they grow plants and dig in containers. The nursery has developed a 'Circle of Friends' within the local community and visit numerous places of interest with the children.

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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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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