

Stepping Stones Private Day Nursery

60 Blakehall, SKELMERSDALE, Lancashire, WN8 9AZ

Inspection date	22/04/2013
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	2	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	Not Applicable	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children are confident and active. They enjoy their time in nursery as staff are interested in them and encourage them to make choices in their play. Children are motivated and play and learn with enthusiasm.
- A well-established key person system means staff get to know children well. Children form secure emotional attachments and display a strong sense of belonging in the nursery.
- Managers and staff value working in partnership with parents and local services so that staff and children are fully supported to reach their full potential.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Ways to monitor the progress of different groups of children have not yet been introduced in order to be able to track any group falling behind their peers or below their expected development levels.
- Ways to further develop children's listening skills, such as reminding them how to be good listeners or by using pictures to remind children how to listen, are not fully explored.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the two main nursery areas and the outdoor areas.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and provider and had discussions with staff.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children and the provider's self-evaluation documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and children talked to on the day and in written feedback.

Inspector
Mary Wignall

Full Report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Private Day Nursery registered in 2012. It operates from a single storey converted building in the Digmoor area of Skelmersdale. Access to the building from the road is via a slope and there are two steps at the front entrance. Children are based in two rooms, depending on age, and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is open Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 6pm, for 51 weeks a year. Children are able to attend full time or for a variety of sessions. There are currently 22 children attending who are all in the early years age group. The nursery employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5, three at level 3 and one at level 2. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance the development of children's early listening skills further, for example, by using pictures or symbols to remind children how to be good listeners
- introduce systems for monitoring progress in relation to different groups of children in order to be able to track any group falling behind their peers or below their expected development bands.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are lively and active in this nursery. They display high levels of self-esteem and independence as they play and talk with staff and each other. The staff's understanding and emphasis on play and learning is evident in the thoughtful organisation of the playrooms and careful planning of activities. Very clear labelling, good quality resources and an inviting layout entices children to play. Consequently, children fully explore the wide selection of toys and activities covering all areas of learning and make good progress in their learning.

Practitioners have high and realistic expectations of children. They make suggestions to children in their play to help extend and reinforce their learning. They introduce meaningful opportunities for children to practise their developing writing skills. As children play in the role play area preparing and serving food, staff suggest they may want to take the customer's order. Children confidently get the clipboard and pen to write down the

order, demonstrating their early writing skills. They play creatively as they spend time putting the toy bread in the toaster, adjusting dials and spreading the imaginary butter before serving it on a plate. They show good level of concentration as they play.

Children's learning is well-supported as staff have a good knowledge of the children based on regular, accurate assessments of their learning. Staff use their knowledge of children to help consolidate their learning and ensure they are well-prepared for the next stage in their learning. For instance, as children make cakes with dough, they sensitively join-in and an impromptu birthday party ensues. Staff skilfully extend children's understanding of mathematics. For example, they ask younger children to count with them and older children to calculate how many they need. They use good teaching techniques as they model holding their fingers up, count both up and down and use clear number labels to help children match the correct numeral. Staff use children's names to help encourage children to listen. Children are eager to sit and listen to stories as staff read with animated voices to capture children's interest. There is scope to further strengthen children's listening skills, such as, by using picture or symbol prompts to remind them how to be good listeners.

Staff develop positive links with parents to fully support children's learning and development. They gather information to help assess children's starting points and regularly update information from parents to inform their planning. For instance, when staff find out about a child's interests in birds, they purchase a bird table for the outdoor area. This stimulates conversations about feeding birds and all children delight in checking to see if the birds have eaten their seeds. Parents and children take home the nursery's Bertie Bear and share what they have done together at home. This helps involve parents in their child's learning and builds strong relationships with parents. Staff equally seek to capture the children's views in the nursery. They display children's suggestions and take photographs of the subsequent activities. This helps children remember and reflect on their learning and fun. Staff and children engage in two-way conversations about how to plan the activity. Children demonstrate their increasing language and problem solving skills as they plan how they will make muddy puddles. They speak with confidence as they describe how they will pour and mix water together with soil. Consequently, children feel valued and highly motivated to talk to staff and share ideas with staff.

Staff skilfully observe as children play cooperatively in the outdoor area building an obstacle course. They demonstrate rich mathematical language as they talk to the children about how the planks are 'long' or 'short' or how they climb 'in' and 'out' of the tyres. This extends children's vocabulary in practical learning situations and helps them remember their learning in ways which are meaningful to them.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Comprehensive induction and key person arrangements mean children form secure emotional attachments in the nursery. Children routinely go to staff for cuddles and consistently see staff as a source of support, help and comfort. This creates a strong base for babies and young children to develop confidence as they explore and try out new skills, such as walking or picking things up to examine. The key person system is

monitored to ensure each key person has a buddy to provide consistency for children at all times. Staff and children call each other by name, creating a warm and homely environment in which children display they feel safe and secure. Each child's key person effectively plans for children's transitions, both in the nursery and as they move to school, in full partnership with parents.

Careful planning of resources actively contributes to children's independence and enjoyment. For instance, children are encouraged to help themselves to the cereals stored at low level for breakfast. The style and size of the storage units are suitable for children to reach and open for themselves. Children, including young children, are sensitively supported to use the scoops as they choose the cereal they want to eat. Older children display good levels of dexterity as they carefully pour milk out. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy eating as staff talk about the benefits of the vegetables in the freshly prepared meal they enjoy. Staff gently encourage children to try new foods, such as, beetroot. They make connections to current activities in the nursery as they explain the carrot they eat is the root of the plant and full of natural goodness.

Children show a good attitude and understanding of their personal needs as they independently access the bathroom. Flexible nursery routines help all children develop good hygiene habits. Posters remind children to wash their hands as they take turns to use the bathroom before eating. They call out to friends that the bathroom is free and others come quickly, eager to wash their hands before their meal. Afterwards, children naturally go to wipe their hands and faces and dispose of the wipes immediately, deftly using the foot pedal to open the bin.

Staff routinely talk to young children about the need to share and play together. They play cooperative games with children at an early age. For instance, staff sit and roll a ball with a young child. Later they move away as two children sit together to continue the game themselves. Consequently, children behave and play well together. Children show a good attitude to fresh air and exercise as they relish playing on the hard and grassed surfaces. They look for insects in their bug house and talk about where they do their planting demonstrating a good sense of belonging. Younger children roll and throw balls with staff showing increasing control and coordination. Children show good consideration of others in play. For example, when a ball goes into the grassed area, they stop their game to get the ball and throw it back calling to friends as they do. Staff regularly talk to children about safety and sensitively encourage children to take safe risks. Staff explain how to stay safe as they carry large objects, such as tyres or boxes. They sensitively offer help or stay nearby as children test their increasing balancing skills as they climb on an obstacle course they have made themselves.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider has set high aspirations for quality and demonstrates a clear understanding and commitment to meet all requirements. Reflection and evaluation is an integral part of the nursery's routines and fully involve parents, staff and children. This enables the nursery to see what is working and what could be improved. For instance, children's

involvement in the planning of activities has been reviewed to offer a wide range of ways to encourage different children to join-in. New and novel ways to encourage parent's participation are similarly explored. This actively encourages as many parents as possible to be involved with the nursery. Daily diaries, displays of parents' suggestions and a parents' committee are some of the ways that the nursery effectively encourages parents' participation.

Safeguarding procedures are secure. Policies are shared with parents in initial meetings and in discussions with staff. Effective induction procedures mean staff know and implement the nursery's full range of safeguarding policies and risk assessment procedures. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure staff suitability. The provider has established a close team of experienced and well-qualified staff who have a good knowledge of the children, each other and the nursery. Consequently, they share the provider's vision for quality and work effectively together to keep children safe and help them learn.

Children's progress and the quality of teaching are monitored closely by the manager who works alongside staff. A range of monitoring tools are used to monitor staff performance, including regular appraisals and meetings with staff. The quality of staff observations of children's learning and progress is monitored to ensure they are accurate and used effectively. However, systems to monitor different groups of children are not fully in place in order to identify any groups achieving below typical expectations so that any achievement gaps can be addressed.

The provider has established relationships with the local authority to help evaluate and support staff's professional development. They are currently completing their local quality award 'Step into Quality' and make regular use of training and professional support services to help drive further improvements. The provider's commitment to work in partnership is extended to local schools, other providers and professionals, such as health visitors, to help ensure all children are fully supported in reaching their full potential.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY454406
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	889099
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	22
Name of provider	Cheryl Toni Boylan
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01695726007

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

