

Stepping Stones Nursery

55 Glanville Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX4 2DD

Inspection date

10/06/2013

Previous inspection date

27/05/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 3

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 3

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Children are content and settled at the nursery because they form secure relationships with staff and other children.
- Children enjoy a variety of play resources and staff provide a suitable range of activities. Staff plan appropriately for children's learning and development, which helps children make sound progress.
- The staff and manager form positive relationships with parents and exchange suitable information with them on a day-to-day basis. As a result, staff are up to date with parents' wishes and this enables them to meet children's needs.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not monitor children's progress and identify their next steps in learning in all areas of the nursery.
- Staff do not consistently implement the nursery's policy to supervise agency staff and students on placements with the children. This does not ensure children are consistently cared for by familiar staff who know them well.
- Staff do not always ensure children follow good hygiene practices or explain the importance of good hygiene to children, which affects children's awareness of healthy practices.
- Some staff do not value children's creativity and their individual efforts to create unique artwork.

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 voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the play environments, the children at play and the staff's interaction with them.
- The inspector discussed practice with the manager and staff.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector sampled records and documentation, including children's progress records.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents to gain their feedback about the nursery.

Inspector

Tracy Bartholomew

Full Report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery was registered by the current owner in 2003 and is privately owned. It operates over two floors from premises situated in East Oxford. There are three base rooms and a separate eating area for babies and toddlers. All children have access to an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The nursery opens from 8am to 6pm each weekday for 51 weeks of the year. After-school care is provided from 3.30pm until 6pm in term time and a holiday club operates during school holidays. The nursery serves the local community. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery cares for a maximum of 25 children up to eight years of age. There are currently 36 children on roll in the early years age group. The nursery receives free early years education funding for children from the age of two and three.

There are nine members of staff employed including the manager. Of these, six staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. Three staff are currently working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that staffing arrangements ensure children receive consistent care at all times, with particular regard to the supervision of new, temporary and less-experienced staff
- improve the consistency of staff observations of children's learning and assessment of children's progress across the seven areas of learning in relation to their age and stage of development, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable learning experiences for each child
- develop the educational programme for physical development to improve children's awareness of hygienic practices at meal times, by explaining the importance of washing their hands and table prior to eating and ensuring all children do so consistently.

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

- develop staff's awareness of the importance of valuing and celebrating children's own efforts in creativity to promote children's self-expression
- develop the use of self-evaluation to consider all aspects of the provision and to highlight priorities for improvement.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are happy and content at nursery. They enjoy a variety of toys and resources, which are used well to aid children's overall development. Most staff have a suitable understanding of the learning and development requirements, and plan activities which meet the interests of the children. For example, babies enjoy exploring the treasure baskets and toddlers enjoy investigating the musical instruments.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from suitable support. The special needs co-ordinator has an appropriate understanding of her role. She seeks support for the children to encourage their progress and meet their individual needs. The nursery has a key person system in place and this enables the children to feel secure. However, not all key persons have an in-depth understanding of children's ongoing progress to securely identify their next steps in learning. Inconsistencies in the way

observations are recorded means that some staff are unable to effectively plan for children's progress. As some staff lack understanding of how children are developing, they do not take all opportunities to extend their learning. This means that, while children broadly develop within expected ranges, not all children reach their full potential. The staff have an understanding of their role to undertake assessments, including the progress check for two-year-olds. These are shared with parents, who are encouraged to contribute their comments. This promotes suitable partnerships between the staff and parents, which in turn supports the children's individual needs and learning.

Children benefit from plenty of child-initiated activities, which capture their interest well. Children show a strong interest in their environment, such as exploring the climbing equipment outside and building obstacle courses out of the wooden boxes and planks. Staff support children's learning soundly overall and praise them for their achievements, which helps to promote their self-esteem. Babies benefit from gentle interaction from staff. For example, staff look at simple picture books with the babies to promote their communication and language skills. Toddler and pre-school children benefit from exploring different sensory materials, such as sand, water and straw. Some staff are skilled at extending children's creativity as they allow them to investigate freely with water and paint with pasta and lentils. This supports children's imagination and encourages them to explore and experiment. However, some craft activities are very adult led and directed, which results in children's art work not being their own. This means that children do not always know that staff value their creativity.

Children sing number rhymes and play with construction to support their mathematical development. Children of all ages independently use programmable toys. Older children have access to computers and babies enjoy exploring interactive toys, which develops their understanding of the world. Older children are encouraged to write their names on their artwork and to sound out letters from flash cards. This supports their literacy skills well and prepares them well for school.

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

The nursery offers a friendly environment, with photographs of children's play and creative artwork on display. Children of all ages have independent access to a suitable range of resources inside and out, which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development. All children enjoy the outside area, which allows them to benefit from fresh air while being physically active outdoors. Children at the nursery are content and settled. This is due to the sound implementation of the key person approach. Children have secure attachments with staff and happily go to familiar staff to play, ask questions and for a cuddle or reassurance when a visitor enters the room. Children develop friendships with each other and play cooperatively together. For example, in the pre-school room children dress up and play imaginatively together as they dance to the music like ballet dancers. Overall, the nursery is welcoming and provides areas for the children to relax and play imaginatively.

Children bring their own packed lunches from home and the nursery provides healthy snacks and teas. This includes a healthy selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. All children receive regular drinks of water or milk throughout the day, which promotes healthy choices. Most hygiene practices are implemented consistently, such as nappy-changing, and staff ensure children have clean bedding for sleep times. However, not all staff promote consistently good hygiene practice. For example, staff do not ensure children who arrive later in the day and need to eat their lunch wash their hands or ensure the table has been cleaned. This poses a risk of infection to the children and affects their understanding of self-care routines.

Children behave well throughout the nursery. Any disputes between children are generally because of their ages and developmental stages. The staff manage these incidents well, helping children develop their understanding of the rules and boundaries in place. Children benefit from the warm praise and encouragement they receive from staff. This enhances the children's self-esteem and emotional development well. Children are beginning to learn about their own safety as they practise the evacuation procedure and learn to use the climbing equipment in the garden safely.

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

The inspection was brought forward due to concerns raised about children's learning records and comments within these observations and assessments. The concerns also related to the partnerships with parents. The provider keeps records on how children are progressing, however these differ in quality depending on which room the children are in. Some staff lack a secure understanding of observing and assessing children's progress. This means that they are unable to securely identify the next steps in children's progress to ensure children reach their full potential. However, overall, staff promote children's learning and development soundly through their interactions and the activities on offer. As a result, children make adequate progress. Sound relationships are in place with parents, and staff keep parents professionally informed about their child's progress and care.

The nursery has had a new manager appointed since the last inspection. This has resulted in some staff changes and reorganisation of staffing teams for some rooms. The nursery uses agency staff to maintain a suitable level of qualified staff while they appoint new staff. On the whole, all staff work well together; however, they do not always follow the nursery policy to ensure agency staff are supervised by permanent staff. This means that familiar staff, who know children well, are not always available to ensure the children's receive consistent care.

All staff demonstrate a suitable understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff carry out suitable safety checks each day to promote children's safety at the setting. The staff demonstrate a strong understanding of how to safeguard children. They have a secure understanding of their

responsibilities to protect children and understand the procedures to take should they have a concern about a child or another member of staff's practice. Risk assessments help to ensure staff identify and manage potential risks to keep children safe.

The manager spends time in the rooms with the children and staff. This allows her to monitor staff practice and ensure play activities are suitable for the children. In addition, the manager undertakes regular one-to-one meetings with staff and has appropriate appraisal systems in place. The manager supports her staff well and assists them in further training. However, she has not ensured all staff understand and maintain purposeful learning records. All required policies and procedures and additional policies to promote acceptable practice are in place. These include safeguarding and complaints procedures. The provider continues to steadily develop an appropriate approach to self-evaluation and takes some suitable steps to evaluate the service and provision. This shows that the nursery is working to enhance priorities for improvement.

Parents and carers speak positively about the nursery. For example, they state that the staff and manager are 'lovely and very good with the children', other parents commented that their child is 'always happy and engaged and keen to attend'. Communication between staff and parents is friendly and welcoming. Staff give a positive account of the child's day and progress through appropriate verbal and written feedback. The nursery staff work well with other professionals involved in children's care. This support enables the staff to meet the children's individual needs and, overall, promotes individual children's steady progress.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

The requirements for the voluntary 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	EY276264
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	919853
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	25
Number of children on roll	36
Name of provider	Natalie Alexandra Greatbatch
Date of previous inspection	27/05/2010
Telephone number	01865 717139

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

