

Stepping Stones Day Nursery Ltd

Arboretum Street, Nottingham, NG1 4JA

Inspection date

04/06/2013

Previous inspection date

24/03/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 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 with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for as practitioners are skilled in providing care that meets each child's specific needs, ensuring every child makes good progress in respect of their individual starting points.
- Children are happy and make good progress, their development is well-monitored and their next steps in learning are accurately identified and well planned for.
- The key person system is effective and enables children to form strong bonds and develop a strong sense of belonging.
- Children have good opportunities to learn through play because the practitioners provide a wide range of toys and activities inside and outdoors which are easily accessible. As a result, children's independence skills are developing well.
- The management team are committed to the continuous development of the provision, using a robust system of self-evaluation to secure improvements in all areas. This creates a dedicated, motivated practitioner team, where everyone works together to ensure children benefit from a continually improving provision.

It is not yet outstanding because

- At times, practitioners do not give enough time for children to respond when asking a question. As a result, opportunities to extend their thoughts and ideas are not fully supported.

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 six indoor main playrooms and four outdoor play areas.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector spoke with the provider, manager, practitioners and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journeys, planning documentation, the nursery's self-evaluation form and a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents via the nursery's recent parent questionnaires.

Inspector

Sue Riley

Full Report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery opened in 2000. It operates from purposely converted single storey buildings situated in the city centre of Nottingham. All children share the use of secure outdoor play areas. The nursery serves the local and wider communities. There is disabled access to the buildings. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

There are currently 158 children aged from seven months to five years on roll. The nursery supports a number of children with English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It receives funding for the provision of free early education to two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery is open each week day from 7.45am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year, closing only for Christmas week and all main bank holidays.

The nursery employs 33 practitioners to work with the children. Of whom, 32 hold appropriate early years qualifications of level 3 or above. The manager has achieved Early Years Professional Status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- give children more time to respond when asking them questions to allow children's thoughts and ideas to develop.

Inspection judgements

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

Practitioners have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements and know that children learn best through play and first-hand experiences. Therefore, they are able to plan stimulating activities that support children's development in all areas of learning. Practitioners are particularly good at observing and recording the children's starting points, this means they are able to plan challenging experiences for them from the onset. They complete regular reviews on all children and share these with parents. They agree next steps in learning together and practitioners offer suggestions for parents to extend their children's learning at home. Children throughout the nursery are making good progress in all areas of learning. All children have a 'learning journey' which contains a variety of observations and photographs to show children's learning over time. Practitioners also share this with parents. Children make

decisions for themselves and are becoming independent because they can self-select from a range of easily accessible toys and resources. This also means that children have time to become deeply involved in activities which encourages them to persist at their learning. However, there are occasions, during children's play, when practitioners do not always allow children to think before they respond to a question. As a result, some children's thoughts and ideas are not heard.

Children develop good communication skills and chat happily both to one another and to adults. Practitioners support children well, by offering praise and encouragement and they demonstrate a good understanding of children's individual learning needs. Babies are actively involved in their play, confidently selecting and exploring resources. They are supported by practitioners and become confident in their daily routines. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and practitioners work well with outside agencies and other professionals to support all children. Also, children with English as an additional language have confidence to learn English as they have their own languages valued in the nursery. Children are learning about diverse cultures because they celebrate a variety of different festivals.

Every room in the nursery is a hive of activity as children enthusiastically make independent choices within their play. Fun and laughter is an integral part of the day and sounds of happy and contented children fill the building. Practitioners in the baby room are always nearby to offer support and they are competent in the way that they extend activities to enhance learning or leave children to develop their play experiences for themselves. The nursery has successfully implemented the progress check for children aged two, and all related documentation is in place. As a result of the effective assessment and recording of children's progress, parents receive a clear picture of where their children are in their learning and are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and development within the nursery. Parents are kept very well informed about the life of the nursery via the notice boards, parent meetings and through daily chats to practitioners.

Older children demonstrate good levels of concentration as they play and gain a strong sense of achievement as they set their own goals. For example, an older child set their goal of climbing safely to reach the top of the metal tubes to roll their ball down to see if the ball will go the furthest. Children are allowed to take supervised safe risks in order to learn for themselves and begin to recognise their own capabilities. A child on a bike demonstrates very good control and skill as they pedal their large dual bike over the bridge, with their friend sitting in the carriage seat behind. The toddler children eagerly join in the singing of songs and rhymes and follow the actions required. They cuddle up to the practitioners as they listen to stories on an individual basis, demonstrating that they feel safe and secure. Children enjoy the sensory activity of playing with cornflour and water and discover how the mixture changes from liquid to solid as they touch it. When playing in the sand, children recognise the patterns that they make with the mark making tools and use words as in 'wiggly' and 'bumpy' as they describe the patterns. Older children are confident with counting as they play. For example, they count the bean bags that they have thrown into the large hoops.

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

The premises are well maintained and very well resourced to provide children with a stimulating environment in which they learn and develop. A well-established and effective key person system operates throughout the nursery. Young children who are a little anxious about separating from their parents are supported well by practitioners, who acknowledge their feelings and reassure them. This means they are soon happy to go off and explore the activities and their learning is uninterrupted. This helps children to form secure emotional attachments and provides parents with a familiar person to share information with regarding their child. Practitioners find out about children's preferences from their parents before they start. This also helps promote children's sense of security as they make the transition between their home and the setting. Every key person knows their children well, and can clearly demonstrate how they are helping them to move forward and make good progress. Practitioners in the baby room provide young babies with physical interaction and cuddles. This helps them to form emotional bonds and attachments. Older children are quick to seek out practitioners for a cuddle as they enter the play room. Children are well-supported in their transitions between rooms and parents are fully involved. They are introduced to their child's new key person and new routines are explained. Practitioners ensure that children are familiar with the room they are moving into by taking them on visits, and they share progress reports and any individual information needed to help children to settle. Parents are also provided with 'welcome information' for the new room, so they are fully aware of the routines of the new room.

Children's behaviour is good, they know how to move safely through the nursery and start to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They play well together and act positively because practitioners have consistent boundaries in place and carefully explain why children need to be kind to each other. For example, practitioners play games with the children so they learn to cooperate and take turns. Children form very positive relationships with both adults and their peers, and work happily alongside each other as they learn to share. They are polite and use their manners as part of the daily routine. Practitioners role model good social behaviour for children and offer them frequent praise. As a result, children gain a sense of self-esteem because they know that they are appreciated.

Children thoroughly enjoy spending time outdoors and the resources and activities provided to enhance their physical development and well-being are very good. Ongoing in-depth risk assessments ensure that any potential hazards are identified and minimised. Children learn about their own safety as practitioners incorporate gentle reminders of how to use resources safely as they play. They know the rules for play, particularly outdoors, and practitioners reinforce these before children use the area. Children's health is well-promoted and there are clear and consistently applied systems in place to protect them from infection. Good systems are in place to inform practitioners of any health or dietary issues the children may have and thorough records are kept of accidents or any medication administered.

Children from an early age understand good hygiene routines and know why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. The children benefit from the

carefully balanced menu offered. Younger children are supported to feed themselves and practitioners sensitively encourage them in this learning experience. Meal times for older children are sociable occasions as they sit together in small social groups. They learn how use utensils correctly and wait until everyone has finished before leaving the table. This helps to prepare them for school and promotes independence. Children are well-prepared for transitions to the local school, because teachers come to visit them in the setting. For children who attend term-time only, the practitioners take photographs and provide home-made books for the parents to use with their child during this holiday break. This helps reassure the children about the next stage in their learning programme.

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

The registered provider is extremely committed and dedicated to maintaining the highest levels of achievement for the children and their families. Very effective management structures are in place and communication with all levels of practitioners is good. Regular and robust reviews of all paperwork and procedures take place to ensure that all requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Children are well-safeguarded in the nursery. All practitioners are very aware of their roles and responsibilities in protecting the children in their care. They fully understand the signs and symptoms to be aware of and know when and from who to seek advice. The nursery is safe and secure due to effective risk assessments in place. Accidents are managed well in the nursery because practitioners have carried out first aid training, they record all accidents and give parents a detailed description of what happened and any treatment administered. All accidents are monitored by the senior management team to ensure there are no trends or areas of concern. Children are well-supervised because the manager carefully plans staffing requirements to ensure the correct ratios are maintained. Sound recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that those working with children are suitable to do so. In addition, new practitioners are given a thorough induction before they begin working with the children.

The manager keeps well-organised records and policies and procedures to support the children's safety and welfare. This means parents are well informed about how the nursery operates and practitioners are supported to implement them consistently. The practitioner team are well qualified and vary in age range to ensure a lovely balance of maturity, which children clearly benefit from. The senior management team works alongside practitioners so they role model good practice and observes staff to identify any areas of their practice which require improvement. There are good processes for supervision as the senior management team have regular appraisals with all practitioners. They agree together what training they would like to access so there is a good culture of continual professional development. This encourages staff to reach their full potential and take on additional responsibilities within the nursery to develop their self-esteem.

In order to identify any gaps in children's learning, the senior management team regularly checks all the children's 'learning journeys'. This means they ensure that all are showing an accurate assessment of children's skills, abilities and progress and can support practitioners to target specific areas of learning, if necessary. Practitioners know what to

do if they think a child requires extra support with their learning. They work closely with other professionals and agencies who come into the nursery to spend time with children needing extra help or support. All children are included and supported well and the nursery promotes equality and diversity highly successfully. Above all, children thoroughly enjoy the time they spend in this nursery and the skills they learn help them to prepare them for school readiness and lay firm foundations for the future.

The manager and practitioners ensure that the effective partnerships with parents and external agencies help to secure well timed interventions to ensure children receive the support they need. There is a secure two-way flow of information to support children's learning. Parents comment that they feel the practitioners tend to their children's needs well and they have confidence in leaving their children. They state that children come on in leaps and bounds and their children are happy and feel safe. Parents also state that the building is safe and secure and the practitioners are very sensitive towards them and the children. Efficient systems are in place for self-evaluation of the nursery to reflect the good practice and prioritise any areas for improvement. Practitioners and parents are involved in the self-evaluation process, and ideas for improvement are carefully considered and given priority. The nursery is very proactive in implementing the changes necessary to sustain improvement and consistently explore new and innovative ideas.

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	254643
Local authority	Nottingham City
Inspection number	916477
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	149
Number of children on roll	158
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Day Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	24/03/2011
Telephone number	0115 9101162

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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.

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