

# Stepping Stones (Grange) Ltd

Normacot Grange Road, Meir, STOKE-ON-TRENT, Staffordshire, ST3 7AW

<b>Inspection date</b>	05/12/2013
Previous inspection date	03/12/2009

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	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 are happy and relaxed within this warm and welcoming nursery. They form strong attachments with staff, which helps them to settle quickly and enjoy their learning.
- Teaching is good because staff fully understand how to promote children's learning. Throughout the nursery, staff have high expectations for children and support them well. As a result, children make rapid progress.
- Safety is highly prioritised. Children are well protected through thorough risk assessments and as a result of the high levels of supervision provided by staff.
- The nursery is focussed on meeting the individual needs of children and staff work effectively with parents and professionals to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, children make rapid progress and quickly catch up with their peers.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to improve the deployment of staff when the pre-school numbers are low so that these children continue to benefit from the good teaching skills of staff and learning is maximised during free play.
- There is room to enhance the level of information given to parents about their children's next steps in development so that they can further extend and consolidate their child's learning at home.

## 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 activities in the open-plan playrooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and the area manager for the provision.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from information included in the nursery's own parent survey.

## Inspector

Jennie Lenton

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones (Grange) Limited opened in 2009 and is one of three settings privately owned by Stepping Stones Limited. It operates from a single-storey building in Meir, Stoke-on-Trent. The nursery serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. The nursery opens five days a week from 7.30am until 6pm all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 75 children on roll, 55 of whom are in the early years age range. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are currently 10 staff working directly with the children. Nine hold early years qualifications at level 3 and above, while the other member of staff holds a qualification at level 2. The nursery receives support from the local authority and is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- revise the deployment of staff when there are low numbers of children in the pre-school room so that learning continues to be maximised during free play
- enhance the level of information provided to parents, so that they are given regular ideas about how to consolidate and extend their child's learning at home, for example, through the provision of specific activities linked to their child's next steps in development.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are enthusiastic and excited in this friendly and welcoming nursery. They are keen to take part in activities, showing high levels of concentration and engagement as they search for treasure in the sand or play imaginatively in the play kitchen. Older children show they are confident as they chat away to their friends and take part in group activities, such as circle time. Babies and toddlers show strong attachments as they snuggle up to staff while listening to stories or just to have a cuddle. All children enjoy a wide range of activities that stimulate and engage them. Babies explore their senses as

they investigate treasure baskets and look at their reflections in the low-level mirrors. They have great fun playing with the soft blocks, crawling over and under them and bouncing on the cubes with staff support. Toddlers enjoy the challenge of matching colours as they build towers and place them on the corresponding mats. They show increasing skill as they push shapes into shape sorters, make marks with chalks and take part in junk-modelling activities, such as making an igloo out of empty milk bottles. Older children in the Butterfly Room display impressive skills with the keyboard and mouse as they use the child-friendly laptops, taking turns and sharing these popular items maturely. They enjoy the freedom of the large 'C' shaped room, with designated areas for sand and water play, table top activities and a fabulous role-play area, complete with a stage. However, the layout of the room means that at least two members of staff are constantly required in this room if children are able to move freely between activities and still benefit from the positive input provided by staff. Very occasionally, only one staff member is in place and while children remain safe and well supervised, they do not have the same level of teaching input. There is scope, therefore, to improve the way staff are deployed to maximise every learning opportunity.

Staff are skilled and effective teachers. They help children to learn new skills and deliver a range of planned and spontaneous activities with enthusiasm that captures children's imagination and encourages them to be willing learners. Story books are read with emphasis, with characters coming to life as staff use different voices, holding children's attention and making the stories fun and interactive. Staff are flexible as they change their plans to respond to children's interests and unplanned events. As the wind blows strongly during an outside play session, staff respond to children's excitement as they see the canopy above them shake and lift in the wind. They encourage them to notice how it goes quiet as the wind stills and spark their imagination as they ask how it would feel if the wind could lift them up. Children twirl and swirl about as they pretend to be leaves. They learn new vocabulary as staff introduce new words, such as 'sway' and 'breeze'. Similarly, routine activities are also extremely engaging. Children are fascinated as they see the whole fruits they will have at snack time, being cut up in front of them. They discuss the number, colour and shapes of the fruit, count the slices they can get from an apple and discuss how the pips make trees, but taste 'yucky'. Children develop key skills for future learning, such as concentration and being part of a group. They take it in turns to identify the animals on flashcards, waiting patiently as their friends have a go and then all joining in to make the animal noises. Children have a positive attitude to learning as activities are fun. They laugh and giggle as staff encourage them to move their arms about, pretending to have trunks like an elephant.

All children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. This also helps to prepare them well for their future learning and the move onto school. Children's achievements are recorded and the key person for each child regularly monitors their development to ensure that they are continually making good progress. Staff successfully identify ways to help children move forward and use this to inform the planning of future activities. Planned events are shared with parents and staff consult with parents at the start of a placement to determine children's starting points. They ensure that parents are kept informed as to their child's progress through regular reviews and parents' evenings. Parents also have the opportunity to contribute to staffs' understanding of their child's achievements, through the completion of 'wow' moments. Staff provide them with cards to

record special moments or milestones and these are then fed into their child's learning record. With children who have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities, staff are particularly good at sharing individual goals and discussing activities that parents can carry out at home to further support their child's development. This enables parents to consolidate and extend their child's learning and promotes even swifter progress. However, this is not extended to all children. Consequently, there is scope to improve the already good communication with parents so that all children benefit from this approach.

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

Children display positive relationships with the staff and each other. They are helped to settle in as the nursery offers settling-in sessions where parents slowly build up the time they leave their children. Staff use these sessions to find out about each child's personality, likes and dislikes. They provide favourite activities to help children settle to play and consequently, by the time parents are ready to leave their children, they are usually fully engaged and happy to be left. Indeed parents comment that their children 'settle amazingly well'. Information is also collated on registration forms to ensure that staff are aware of any special requirements. Dietary or medical needs are fully discussed. A 'red plate' system is used to make sure that children only receive food that is suitable for them. Where other special requirements are identified staff work in partnership with other professionals and parents to ensure that a consistent approach is taken. For instance, where speech and language delay is identified, staff follow the techniques suggested by therapists. For example, they make sure they repeat back words and encourage children to build up from one and two word answers to complete sentences. This helps all children to make the best possible progress.

Children are kept safe. All exterior doors are kept secure and a fingerprint system is in place to ensure that only authorised individuals access the nursery rooms. Effective risk assessments ensure that all areas and equipment are fit for use. Children also learn how to keep themselves safe. They know how to respond swiftly during a fire drill as these are regularly practised and discussed. Children behave well. They know the rules of the nursery and understand that these are in place for their own well-being. For example, they know to sit properly on their chairs at meal times and not to leave the table while they are still eating or they might choke. Children play together harmoniously and display good behaviour. They take part in 'tidy up time', putting away toys with little prompting. Children receive encouragement and praise from staff throughout the day which effectively builds self-esteem and promotes emotional security. Any unwanted actions are dealt with calmly.

Children's good health is well promoted through sensible routines and a commitment to a healthy lifestyle. Active play is effectively encouraged both indoors and out, as children dance to music indoors and enjoy a range of songs with actions. They have great fun pretending to be hopping rabbits and roaring lions, jumping about energetically. They have daily access to the outside areas, where they enjoy the challenge of the climbing equipment as well as taking part in a range of group games. An annual sports day is also enjoyed on the adjacent school fields. The majority of children go on to attend this school and therefore, they are familiar with the school prior to attending, which helps to ensure a

smooth transition when the time comes. Children are provided with a range of nutritious meals, which are all prepared on the premises. They tuck in enthusiastically to slices of beef with carrots, peas and potatoes and enjoy snacks of fresh fruit, such as oranges, apples and pears. Drinks of milk or water are offered throughout the day.

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

Staff are all checked to ensure they are suitable to work with children. They all hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service check and regularly sign to say that there have been no changes to their circumstances which affect their ability to work with children. Staff are also well qualified. They attend regular training and are all required to complete key courses, such as first aid and safeguarding at level 1. Consequently, safeguarding procedures are fully understood by all staff. Staff recognise the signs and symptoms that may indicate abuse and are clear about how to follow any concerns up promptly. Their practice is underpinned by a full written policy, which also covers the use of mobile phones in the nursery. Staff know to keep their phones in the office and spot checks are undertaken to ensure that this policy is adhered to. This protects children effectively. New staff benefit from a full induction, which ensures they are quickly aware of the routines, policies and procedures that apply to the nursery. Consequently, even students are fully conversant with key issues, such as how to deal with safeguarding concerns. Annual appraisals and regular supervision sessions are also in place to ensure the ongoing suitability of staff. The manager ensures that any under-performance is effectively tackled and staff are also encouraged through positive feedback, such as 'Stepping Stones star of the month'.

The manager is extremely committed to her role and is keen to continually improve the nursery for the benefit of children. She is an effective leader, with an infectious enthusiasm which permeates staff and children alike. Consequently, there is an extremely positive atmosphere at the nursery and all staff, from the most junior to the most senior, are open to new ideas and keen to develop their own practice. Team building projects, such as designing different outdoor areas, ensure that all staff feel valued and are able to contribute their skills for the benefit of the nursery. Children enjoy some lovely outside experiences as a result of the creativity and dedication put in by staff to provide exciting play opportunities, which include wigwams and a planting area. The manager also encourages a reflective approach and all staff contribute to the nursery's self-evaluation process and resulting action plans. This helps to ensure that the nursery is continually developing better ways of working. For instance, staff have highlighted the need to revise the 'all about me' booklet so that it is more user friendly for parents and provides more detail on what children are able to do. The progress of all children is effectively monitored to ensure that staff are accurately assessing each child and providing appropriate activities to help them make the best possible progress. Room observations and peer observations are also regularly undertaken to help all staff improve on their practice.

Staff build positive relationships with parents and chat to them on a daily basis about their child's achievements and well-being. They get to know parents well and seek to support them. For instance, they help them to fill in forms accurately so that they are able to

access funded places. This approach enables staff to support families and children more effectively as they take account of issues that may impact on daily life. Notice boards around the nursery provide parents with additional information about childcare issues and about the Early Years Foundation Stage in particular. This helps parents to support and develop their children's learning at home. Key policies and procedures are shared with parents, ensuring that they are aware of the standards to which the setting operates and providing details of how to make a complaint if they need to. Parent comments show that they are very happy with the care provided. They rate the nursery as '10 out of 10' and comment that it is 'absolutely brilliant'. The nursery also builds good links with other providers. Teachers at the local schools visit the children who will attend their provision and get to see them in the nursery. This enables them to see children in an environment that is familiar and comfortable to them and ensures that children know their new teacher prior to moving to school.

### **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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY396390
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke on Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	874037
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	54
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	75
<b>Name of provider</b>	Stepping Stones (Grange) Limited
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	03/12/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 501666

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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.

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.

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