

# Stepping Stones Day Nursery

38 Crib Street, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 9EZ

## Inspection date

02/01/2014

Previous inspection date

09/01/2009

## 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

- Teaching is good because staff fully understand how to promote children's learning and they have high expectations for their achievement. As a result, children are making good progress.
- Children settle quickly into the nursery because the key person system is well established. As a result, children are forming secure attachments because staff provide them with good levels of emotional support.
- Children's safety and overall well-being is promoted because the manager uses effective recruitment, induction and performance management systems to support staff in improving their knowledge, qualifications and practice. This ensures that the safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- Children demonstrate a good understanding of how to manage risks themselves because staff teach them how to use and handle tools, such as knives and scissors safely.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- There is room to improve the opportunities for children to access further learning experiences in the outdoor area.

## 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 staff and children in the downstairs playroom, the dining room and in the outside areas.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager, talked to staff and discussed children's progress with key persons.
- The inspector and manager carried out a joint observation of staff and children in the main play area.
- The inspector looked at various documents, including policies and procedures, children's records, evidence of the suitability of staff and safeguarding procedures.

## Inspector

Susan Parker

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery was registered in 1992 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from a listed building in the centre of Ware, Hertfordshire. The premises comprises of three main play areas. Younger children under the age of two years are cared for on the ground floor. Older children are cared for on the first floor. There are sufficient toileting facilities on both floors and a dedicated room for children to have undisturbed sleep. The nursery has two secure outside play areas.

There are currently 24 children in the early years age range on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is open all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm, with options of a morning session from 8.15am until 1.15pm and an afternoon session of 1pm until 6pm. The nursery also offers 'Tots Time' at an hourly rate of care. The nursery employs five full-time staff and four part-time staff, of whom six are qualified to level 3 and above. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for three-year-old children.

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

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

- increase the opportunities for children to experience all areas of learning in the outdoor environment as well as they do indoors.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff display a good understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and they have attended further training to support their knowledge. Observations are regularly completed for every child and are effectively used to measure children's progress through assessment. Staff interact well with children and they use effective teaching opportunities to extend children's thinking whenever possible. For example, as children are engaged in an activity where they are making a 'forest' with model trees, staff skilfully ask them 'what else shall we put in the forest?' and 'how many do you have there?' As a result, children's learning and development is encouraged. Staff intervention is well timed to encourage children's independence skills. An example of this is when children are dressing themselves in readiness for their outdoor play session. Staff encourage all children with the 'yes you can' song, which results in children achieving their goals. Staff provide children with a wide range of opportunities to explore and expand their skills across the prime and specific areas of learning. They learn about the outdoor environment while developing their physical skills and their communication and language

skills, as they talk about where they are going to put the spade full of stones and how they are going to carry the soil to the pot. This effectively supports children's preparation for school.

Staff effectively use observations to identify children's individual next steps in their learning and development. This information is incorporated into the planning of future activities, which also includes children's interests. Adult-led activities are planned around themes and topics, such as 'people who help us', which is the current theme. Children are engaged in creative activities, such as writing a letter to Nanny about Christmas and creating their own buildings and farms from a range of resources. Staff encourage children's physical development well by providing and encouraging them to explore and use equipment and their bodies with soft play shapes, dance and action rhymes. Additionally, outside the children use a range of slides and climbing frames, balls, spades and natural materials. However, there is scope to improve the range of learning opportunities for children outside. Currently, the weather has affected the use of some of the equipment, therefore, learning opportunities and choice of resources are limited.

Partnerships with parents are well promoted because staff encourage them to be a part of their child's learning. Staff obtain a range of information from parents, which enables children to settle quickly. Children's ongoing progress is effectively shared with parents who speak with staff on a daily basis. Parents are encouraged to share progress that they have seen at home and talk about their children's achievements. Parents' comments compliment the nursery on their children's good progress in their learning and development. As a result of good partnerships, children's learning and development is effectively promoted.

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

Children display a very good understanding of their personal safety and how to manage risks for themselves. For example, children butter and cut their own toast with knives competently. They know how to handle scissors safely and understand the points can be sharp. Children's behaviour is very good because of the consistent management methods understood and practised by staff. This means that children receive clear and consistent messages about behaving safely and responsibly while enjoying their time and having fun. A wide range of good resources and equipment indoors enable children to explore and learn. Children display a good understanding of the importance of effective hygiene procedures. They talk about how and why they wash their hands to prevent the spread of germs after play and before eating. Children's individual dietary needs and preferences are well known by all staff. Safe procedures are in place to ensure that children are provided with snacks and meals, which meet their individual requirements. Children are developing a good understanding about the need for a healthy lifestyle, including food, fresh air and the effects of exercise on their bodies. For example, children listen to their heart beating faster after physical activities. They regularly enjoy outdoor activities, using climbing and balancing equipment to master their physical skills. Additionally good use of gardening activities and a vegetable patch, promotes hands on experiences and children's understanding of where healthy food comes from.

Children are forming very close bonds and attachments with staff and other children. Each key person has a detailed understanding of the individual needs of each of the children in their care. Staff display a nurturing and reassuring approach, which results in children settling in quickly and showing enthusiasm in exploring the resources and investigating the environment. In addition, children show they are happy and content as they freely give affection to staff and children go to them for comfort when the smoke alarm beeps noisily. Staff respond warmly, which supports children's safe emotional attachments. They are skilled in implementing successful plans, which ensure that children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Positive relationships are built during initial visits to the nursery. Parents and carers share detailed information on the children, which enables key persons to gain an accurate knowledge of the individual characteristics and abilities of each of the children. Parents' comments and 'thank you' cards say that they feel their children are very happy and making good progress. Babies and toddlers progress and move on to more challenging rooms when they are ready and not related to their age. They are very well supported, parents and the key person decide together when the children are ready and short visits to their new room are built up gradually until children are comfortable and secure. These visits are specifically tailored to meet children's individual developmental needs.

Children's personal, social and emotional skills are very well supported. Their independence is growing as, for example, capable children help younger and less able children to put on their own wellington boots and find their own coats. Children visit the toilet independently and routinely wash their own hands with staff close by to assist them, if needed. Children are supported by good professional partnerships between key persons, parents and other professionals in the children's lives. For example, most members of staff have training in using an epipen as well as first aid training. This ensures that children are well looked after. Staff successfully support children's well-being and this means that children are confident and capable. This results in children welcoming new challenges as they continue to make very good progress and continue to gain confidence.

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

Staff at the nursery effectively meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements and demonstrate a good understanding of how to protect the children in their care. Daily risk assessments are completed within the nursery and outdoors, to ensure that children can play safely. Additional assessments are completed for all outings. All staff have completed basic safeguarding training and they are aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of a child protection concern being raised. In addition, the nursery manager ensures that suitable checks are carried out on all staff to ensure that they are safe and suitable to work with children. Robust recruitment and induction procedures ensure that staff are well qualified and experienced. They show a clear understanding of their individual responsibilities. As a result, children are effectively safeguarded.

The manager demonstrates a good understanding of her role in monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning in the nursery. She observes staff practice and carries out regular supervision meetings and appraisals with each member of staff. Additionally, she

monitors and evaluates children's learning journeys to ensure that observations are completed effectively, linked to planning and children continue to make good progress. This results in a good quality learning environment where the activities provided are well matched with children's needs. Since the last inspection, the nursery has improved the risk assessment process to include an assessment of required adult to child ratios, for each type of outing. Staff and the manager have also improved the use of observations and assessment to identify learning priorities and plan challenging and motivating experiences to meet children's next steps. These improvements have had a positive impact on children's progress, providing them with tailored learning opportunities and as a result, children continue to make good progress in their learning and development.

Partnership with parents is good because nursery places high emphasis on working together. Parents are able to access information and discuss their children's progress at anytime. Regular consultations and opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning are provided. The manager has a good understanding of working in partnerships with other settings, delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. Information is shared between all adults, which promotes a consistent approach in children's learning. The nursery is very effective in regularly evaluating their practice through staff discussions each day as well as regular full staff meetings. This enables staff to be involved and have an accurate view of the quality of the provision. In addition, the nursery has focused plans of what improvements they want to make and this demonstrates that they have the capacity to improve.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
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## 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>	127965
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	870975
<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>	28
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	24
<b>Name of provider</b>	Susan McCall
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	09/01/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01920 469 698

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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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