

# Stepping Stones Nursery

The Park, Off High Street, Uppermill, OLDHAM, Lancashire, OL3 6AP

## Inspection date

27/11/2013

Previous inspection date

04/08/2009

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

3

Previous inspection:

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How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
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## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision requires improvement

- Staff undertake observations of children as they play. Planned activities generally support children's learning and development. As a result, children make satisfactory progress.
- The management team have been proactive in addressing previous concerns and evaluating their practice. This shows some commitment to continued improvement.
- Staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding and the importance of risk assessment. As a result, risks to children are identified and minimised.
- Staff understand the importance of parent partnerships. Children are settled and secure attachments with staff are evident.

### It is not yet good because

- Assessment and tracking of children's progress is not yet consistently embedded in practice. This means that planned activities do not always offer appropriate challenge.
- The educational programme requires further development, in order to offer consistent challenge throughout all areas of learning.
- Opportunities to provide challenge and support children's all-round development in the outdoor area are less well established.
- Some staff do not exploit opportunities to skilfully challenge and question children to improve their learning and prepare them for school.

## 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.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities and children at play throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with children, parents, staff and the management team throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at documentation to ascertain children's progress towards the early learning goals.
- The inspector looked at the nursery's self-evaluation processes, ensured appropriate suitability checks were in place for all staff and undertook a joint observation with the manager.

## Inspector

Elisia Lee

## **Full report**

### **Information about the setting**

Stepping Stones Nursery was registered in 2003 and is on the Early Years Register. It operates from three rooms in a single storey building in the centre of Uppermill, Oldham. It is registered to a private individual. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from the ground floor and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 4, and five hold early years qualifications at level 3.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.45am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 24 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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

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

- ensure that assessment and tracking are consistently used to identify the next steps in children's learning and to understand children's level of achievement, interests and learning styles, to ensure that learning experiences meet their individual needs and offer challenging learning opportunities so they make good progress
- improve the educational programme by providing challenging experiences for each area of learning and development to ensure children make good progress in all areas.

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

- consider developing resources in the outside area to allow consistent learning and challenge across all areas of development
- strengthen staff's practice to enable them to skilfully question children with consistency, to further promote their critical thinking and to challenge their learning.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan activities which generally support children in their learning and development and readiness for school. Educational programmes cover the seven areas of learning and staff plan activities based on children's interests. This means that children are appropriately engaged in learning. However, activities can lack consistent challenge for all children. For example, children are given the opportunity to explore flour and glitter in the sand tray but resources to accompany this activity lack imagination and do not support children's enhanced learning. Staff observe children as they play which allows staff to be aware of children's likes and dislikes. However, assessment and tracking of children's progress does not consistently identify targeted next steps for children. Therefore, planned activities do not always reflect or shape challenging learning experiences for children. This results in learning experiences not being fully in place to precisely match individual learning needs or to always provide developmentally appropriate activities. As a result, children make satisfactory, rather than good progress.

Learning and teaching is satisfactory. Children access resources independently and initiate their own play. For example, babies explore a range of cause and effect resources, toddlers experiment with different roles as they play with an assortment of hats and pre-school children choose books that they would like to read. Staff support children through role modelling resources, playing with children and supporting early language skills. For example, children observe staff using a telephone and role modelling how to say 'hello'. Staff provide a running commentary for younger children which supports children in their understanding. However, staff do not always skilfully question children as they play, which means that opportunities to extend children's learning are missed. As a result, the impact of teaching on children's progress is satisfactory rather than good.

Staff have satisfactory partnerships with parents and are working to develop further links. For example, the nursery has recently held an information evening for parents on language and literacy. This gave the opportunity for staff to discuss ways that parents can support children's learning in the home. Staff are aware of the importance of building secure parent partnerships in order to support children's needs and offer a consistent approach. For example, staff liaise with parents when supporting children with self-care skills when using the bathroom. Effective communication methods are in place, such as, home link books, newsletters and daily verbal feedback. Parents are invited to be part of the assessment process. For example, by discussing skills that children are exhibiting at home and contributing to the 'progress check at age two'. Children are supported at times of transition. The nursery holds meetings with parents prior to children starting school to discuss any concerns and school teachers are invited to nursery to observe children at play. Staff share information with school which ensures that all carers are aware of children's developmental needs. Partnerships are effective. For example, nursery children are invited to watch the Christmas concert at the local primary school which helps prepare children for change and readiness for school.

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

A generally good key person system is in place. The nursery is small in size and this is one of its strengths as children build secure attachments with staff. Children start at the nursery on 'staggered starts' which allows children and parents to build relationships with key persons and discuss children's needs. For example, children's care needs, such as nappy changing and sleeping are individualised to suit children's individual needs. Staff are generally positive role models and interact with children at their level. Children's emotional well-being is supported. For example, staff play with children as they play with dolls and put the 'babies to bed', this develops into a discussion about new babies. Behaviour is broadly good and children are aware of routines which support positive behaviour. For example, children listen to staff as they sound out the letter of their name to line up, staff praise the children and children are given a sticker as a reward. Staff praise children when they have undertaken certain skills for the first time. For example, using the toilet for the first time.

Staff show an appropriate understanding of risk management. Daily safety sweeps are undertaken to minimise risks to children. For example, staff check the gate is locked in the outdoor area before children access the outdoors. Staff consider the risks in all aspects of the provision. For example, staff always open the door to all visitors, ensure that visitors use a signing in book and assess the environment to ensure that hazards are minimised. Children are building a knowledge of risk through the opportunity to take part in regular emergency evacuations of the building. Children's independence is supported. For example, children self-serve themselves with cereal at breakfast time. Resources are age appropriate and are stored effectively so that children can choose their own resources as they initiate play.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles through daily access to the outdoor area and local walks in the environment, such as the park and library. There is a designated cook in place who prepares fresh meals on the premises on a daily basis. Menus are developed with children's dietary needs in mind and all diets are catered for. Menus are varied and include fresh fruit and vegetables. Children access the outdoor area every day. However, a broad range of resources to support children's all-round development in the outdoors are less well established. For example, during the inspection children could access a variety of ride-on toys and scooters. However, as there were not enough for each child and there were no other resources accessible to children this offered very little challenge and learning opportunity for all children.

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

Staff have a secure knowledge of safeguarding procedures. They attend safeguarding training and are aware of the procedures to follow should they have a safeguarding concern or be concerned about a child's welfare. This inspection took place following notification of an incident, where a child was able to injure themselves with a display at

the nursery. The inspection found that the staff were fully aware of their responsibilities and took all the necessary steps for appropriate treatment. Following the incident the manager took immediate action to removing the hazard that caused the injury. In addition, the manager has reviewed the risk assessment procedures to make sure further risks are minimised or eliminated. Children are protected in the nursery as staff supervise children appropriately. Safeguarding practices are in use. For example, staff use a keypad entry code to gain access to the nursery, always ensure that mobile phone are locked away and inform colleagues if parents have informed staff that a different adult will be collecting children. In addition, the nursery keeps thorough records of accidents, medication and attendance, which helps staff to further protect children and promote their welfare. There are effective processes for selection and safe recruitment of new staff. The nursery has a very low staff turnover which helps children to build secure attachments. The manager always ensures that appropriate suitability checks have been undertaken before new staff or students start work in the setting.

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge of how to support children in their learning and development. For example, younger children initiate their own play and much of their activities are child led. While older children build their skills further through adult-led activities. There is a new manager in place, who is the owner of the nursery, who shows a commitment to further monitoring staff effectively to develop practice. For example, staff have recently started undertaking peer observations to share ideas and good practice. The manager currently monitors children's progress through assessing and monitoring the data gained through tracking children. This means that any gaps in children's learning are identified so that effective support can be put into place. Staff training needs are discussed at appraisals and regular staff meetings. Teaching practice is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and development, as next steps are not always identified to maximise learning.

There is a new manager and deputy manager in place who have been proactive in addressing recommendations from the previous inspection. For example, the nursery is incorporating the views of parents in their self-evaluative practice, further resources have been purchased which allow children to learn about different cultures and observation procedures are monitored by managers. The staff have identified areas of strength and weakness and are receptive to ideas given by parents. For example, menus have been developed through suggestions from parents. Overall, this shows that the management team are committed to improving practice. Partnership working is in place and the nursery works well with other professionals. For example, staff meet with teachers from local schools, attend network meetings to meet other providers and attend meetings at the children's centre. These partnerships work well and help to identify and support children's needs further. Parents are complimentary about the nursery. For example, they comment 'my child has settled in fantastically, staff are friendly and there is a nice atmosphere'.

## 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>	EY263166
<b>Local authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	940905
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	30
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	24
<b>Name of provider</b>	Helen Williams
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	04/08/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01457 872830

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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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