

Stepping Stones Academy Childcare Ltd.

344 Long Lane, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB10 9PN

Inspection date	05/06/2014
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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 have strong, warm relationships with staff, which helps them to feel secure and promotes their emotional well-being.
- Staff assess children's progress well. They use this information to inform planning effectively. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
- Staff manage children's behaviour well using praise to motivate children to behave in positive ways.
- Management have a vigilant approach to children's welfare and safety. As a result, children are kept safe and secure.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not provide wide learning experiences to enable children to learn about and use technology.
- Staff do not make full use of all opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills.

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 invited the manager to carry out a joint observation of an adult-led activity.
- The inspector observed the interaction between staff and children in the indoor and outdoor environments.
- The inspector tracked the progress of children.
- The inspector held a discussion with management and sampled a range of documentation.
- The inspector spoke to parents, staff and children and took their views into consideration.

Inspector

Jennifer Beckles

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Academy Childcare Ltd registered in 2013 and is operated by a private company called Stepping Stones Academy Childcare Ltd. The nursery is situated in Uxbridge, within the London Borough of Hillingdon. It operates from a converted house. The children have access to an enclosed garden. The nursery is situated close to transport links, schools and shops. It provides both full and part-time sessions, Monday to Friday, from 7am to 6pm. The nursery operates throughout the year, for 51 weeks and is closed for public bank holidays. It is registered on the Early Years Register. The nursery employs ten members of staff, including the manager. Of these, eight staff members hold recognised early years qualifications. The manager holds qualified early years teacher status; four staff members hold qualifications at level 3; three staff members hold qualifications at level 2; and two staff members are unqualified and working towards early years qualifications. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early years education for children aged two and three years. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. There are 52 children in the early years range on roll.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the range of resources, activities and experiences to promote children's technological development

- maximise opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills in play situations.

Inspection judgements

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

Children engage well in a range of stimulating activities. Overall staff meet the needs of children well because they base planning on areas of learning and link this effectively to children's interests. Staff provide children with a balance of learning opportunities. This involves children creating their own play through independent choice of accessible resources. Staff offer coordinated learning opportunities through adult-led activities. Children move freely between indoor and outdoor environments, which cater for the different ways that children learn.

Overall staff support children's early literacy skills well. Children have good letter sound knowledge because staff teach children letter sounds. For example, while they use sponge

letters in printing. Staff ask children to find the initial letter in their names and children happily find the letters to make colourful prints. When children arrive at the nursery, they find their names on cards and this helps to support their early reading skills. Although the writing area has a good range of writing tools and materials, children do not use this very often throughout the day. Children use the role play area well but staff do not always make writing materials easily accessible to further promote children's literacy skills. Staff bring real life objects into the home corner to stimulate children's language development. For instance, they introduce a real coconut and encourage children to shake it and listen to the sound it makes. Staff teach children new words to describe the sounds they hear, such as 'swirling'. Staff talk to the children about the coconut shell and milk inside the shell, which supports their understanding of the world. Although there is a computer in the group room, this is not always in operation and there are few opportunities for children to learn about and use technology. Children practise their counting skills as they park push bicycles in numbered bays in the outdoor area. Staff encourage children to recognise and order numbers while they play with numbered cupcakes in role play. Children develop an understanding of where food comes from because they plant tomatoes in the outdoor area and learn how things grow. Generally, these experiences provide children with valuable skills for later use in school.

Babies enjoy exploring different natural textures in treasure baskets. Staff talk to babies about how the materials feel and babies learn new words, such as 'smooth' and 'rough'. Babies learn to use hand eye coordination skills as they place pretend toast in toy toasters. Babies listen attentively to stories read by staff in lively tones. They learn about story structure as they point to pictures and vocalise spontaneously. Babies adore being in the outdoor area where they move freely in a range of ways, such as crawling through tunnels and climbing up frames.

The outdoor area is spacious and well-designed with good physical challenges for children. Children climb up ladders and crawl through tunnels. They move skilfully in a range of ways, such as running and jumping into hoops. Children use push bicycles competently. Staff teach children how to throw and catch using bean bags, which supports their physical coordination skills. Staff provide a wide range of outdoor learning opportunities for children. For example, children practise their drawing and early writing skills using chalks. They develop small muscle control while they blow bubbles from soapy solutions and watch in amazement as these float through the air.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because staff work closely with community health professionals involved in children's care and learning. Staff take their advice to form individual education plans and closely monitor children's progress. Children who learn English as an additional language receive good support because staff find out key words in children's home languages. This helps children to feel secure and understood. Staff use gestures and visual resources to aid children's communication skills. Staff keep good records of children's progress. This encompasses photographic evidence of skills, samples of children's artwork and summaries of their development. Staff carry out regular observations of children and evaluate all of these forms of evidence. They use assessment information in planning to meet children's individual needs effectively.

Staff work effectively with parents. They provide good opportunities for parents to contribute to children's learning. For instance, staff invite parents into the nursery to take part in children's activities. Staff encourage parents to complete 'wow' notes to share their observations of their children. They keep parents well-informed of their children's progress through daily diaries and also have regular formal reviews with parents. Staff complete the required progress check for two-year-old children and provide written summaries to parents. This helps to keep parents further informed of their children's development.

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

Children settle readily in this nurturing nursery. Staff display pictures of babies and their families, which helps babies to feel valued. Staff happily incorporate babies' home routines so that they are undisturbed by changes. Staff gather information from parents about children's likes and dislikes and use this information to provide activities that children enjoy. Staff build strong relationships with children, which supports children's feelings of security.

The nursery is beautifully arranged with high quality resources which generally cover areas of learning well. Children's artwork is attractively displayed and the nursery is bright and colourful. This supports children's strong sense of well-being. Children behave in safe ways as they travel around the nursery. They hold onto low hand rails and walk one behind the other as they negotiate stairs carefully. Children learn to take care of their environment and resources because they tidy up keenly. Staff teach children how to handle books to avoid damage. Staff encourage children to be independent. They put their outer clothing and shoes on by themselves; staff support younger children appropriately. Children help themselves to food at mealtimes from communal food bowls and competently pour their own drinks. Children have good self-care skills as they wash their hands independently at appropriate times. Staff change nappies in private, bright clean areas which supports children's comfort.

Staff promote children's awareness of a healthy lifestyle.. They provide nutritious snacks and meals, consisting of a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Staff prepare all meals and snacks with full awareness of special dietary needs. This helps to ensure that children eat suitable foods. Children practise a wide range of physical skills in the well-resourced outdoor area. They gain daily fresh air and this supports children's physical health.

Children behave well. Staff use gentle reminders to encourage children to share resources. Staff have regular group time discussions with children and this helps children to learn to take turns in speaking and listening. Staff praise children for specific behaviour and this encourages children to behave in positive ways. Children learn to accept individual differences because staff celebrate and talk about special cultural and religious events, such as Chinese New Year. Staff are beginning to develop links with local schools to support children who move to school in future. They help children to settle into new group rooms at the nursery by spending time in the room with the children. This helps children to get familiar with new routines and new environments and effectively supports their

emotional well-being.

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

Management has a good working knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and its responsibilities to meet these requirements. Staff prioritise children's safety. They have a secure entry system which involves use of an electronic intercom and visitor book to help prevent intruder access. Management carry out rigorous checks on staff to help assess suitability for their roles. Staff carry out regular risk assessments covering all areas of the nursery, which supports children's safety. Staff have good knowledge of the child protection procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child. This helps to protect children's welfare.

Staff performance is closely reviewed. They receive regular supervision where any issues of underperformance are discussed. Management offers training and mentoring to staff to support them in their role. An appraisal system is in place which helps to identify staff training needs. Management promote professional development through a range of courses to enhance staff skills. Management monitors the nursery well. The manager works in one of the group rooms so directly observes staff practice. Any issues are raised and addressed to improve staff performance. The deputy manager observes staff practice in other group rooms. Staff observe each other and provide feedback, which enables them to learn from each other's practice. Staff use a tracking system to monitor children's progress in their learning and development. This enables staff to identify children who need additional support so that they can plan activities and experiences to close gaps in learning.

Staff have a good range of effective links with others involved in children's lives. Staff work closely with parents by keeping them informed of children's progress. They provide good opportunities for parents to contribute to children's learning. Staff work in partnership with the area special educational needs coordinator to provide support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are effective links with the local authority early years department who offer information and advice on early years matters.

Management evaluates all aspects of the nursery in order to develop good awareness of the nursery's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, management has identified clear areas for improvement. For example, it plans to create an indoor soft play room to enhance children's physical skills. The nursery operates well and management has good capacity to maintain this.

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

Unique reference number	EY468793
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	939199
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	52
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Academy Childcare Ltd.
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01895257853

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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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