

# Stepping Stones, Lewes Community Nursery Ltd

Southcourt House, Morris Road, LEWES, East Sussex, BN7 2AT

<b>Inspection date</b>	15/07/2014
Previous inspection date	14/08/2013

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>3</b>
	Previous inspection:	4
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

### **This provision requires improvement**

- Staff work cooperatively with parents and ensure that information regarding their child's development is shared effectively.
- Children are happy within their environment and confidently choose from the resources on offer.
- Due to the thorough observation and assessment system in place, it can be seen that all children are making progress.
- Children go on trips daily for physical exercise and to develop an awareness of their local community.

### **It is not yet good because**

- Staff do not consistently provide activities that motivate and challenge young children's current level of development.
- Staff do not have a thorough knowledge of all safeguarding procedures.
- Staff do not use all opportunities to develop children's communication and language skills. In addition, there are few resources that reflect children's home languages to help children build their vocabulary and their language skills
- At times, the environment is not organised effectively to ensure the individual needs of

all children are catered for during sleep times.

### **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 viewed the policies and procedures of the nursery.
- The inspector discussed safeguarding procedures with staff.
- The inspector spoke to parents to gain their feedback about the nursery.
- The inspector viewed the online system for assessing children's development in all areas of learning.

### **Inspector**

Hannah Barter

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Lewes Community Nursery registered in 2013 and is privately owned. It operates from a purpose built building with stairs to the first floor in Lewes, East Sussex. The nursery does not have access to their own outdoor area, however, they regularly take part in outings within the local area. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 8am until 6pm, all round year. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are eight members of staff, seven of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification level 3. All staff have valid paediatric first-aid training. The nursery also employ regular bank staff when needed.

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

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

- provide a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities to ensure that younger children are provided with a good level of challenge as they learn to play, explore and solve problems
- ensure staff understand the safeguarding policy and procedures regarding the action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against them
- improve the programme for communication and language so that staff use open-ended questions to develop children's language and critical thinking skills, staff help children extend their vocabulary about colour and shape, and so that children engage in conversations during routines, such as snack time.

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

- develop resources for children who speak English as an additional language to further enhance their language development
- develop the organisation of the environment to ensure that children can relax and sleep when needed.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff allow children to choose their own activities from a range of resources set out for them. Children move freely around the room and can independently select resources from low-level shelving, and boxes. Staff carry out regular observations on the children, which with the assistance of an observation and assessment system, helps them to identify children's next steps in learning. Staff take into account children's interests and their next steps in learning to inform their planning. However, not all activities are appropriate to meet the needs of all children. Some activities lack challenge, especially for younger children and they are not fully engaging with the resources that are on offer. Staff do not consistently use open-ended questions to develop children's language and critical thinking skills. For instance, whilst playing with the train track, staff ask children, 'Do we need a straight bit or a curved bit?' 'Is the train going over or under the bridge?' Although this develops children's knowledge of positional language, the use of closed questioning does not encourage children to explore their ideas independently. Consequently, the quality of teaching differs between staff and requires improvement. Therefore, good quality learning experiences are not consistently provided for all children.

Staff do not always deliver the right balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities, especially for the younger children. This means that not all children are making as much progress in their learning and development as they possibly could. For example, younger children are encouraged to free play within their environment. Children play with a puzzle which consists of three different coloured circles. Staff do not discuss the shape or colour of the puzzle pieces and, therefore, opportunities are missed to develop children's communication and language development, and understanding of colour and shape. This also means that children sometimes become disengaged quickly due to the lack of motivation from some staff. Staff provide play dough for young children to independently access. They make marks in the dough with cars and cutters. This promotes children's fine muscle skills. Overall, children enjoy the freedom of play and all children show that they are making satisfactory progress.

Children are happy and show excitement when coming into the nursery. Children seek out their friends and play well together. While playing in the water tray, children talk about sea creatures and show each other what animals they have. Staff encourage children's mathematical skills, for example, 'You have a shark and so has your friend so how many sharks do you have altogether?' 'one add one equals two sharks'. Staff praise the children's knowledge which enhances children's self-esteem and develops children's knowledge of numbers. The staff support the children to explore their senses as they investigate the marks they can make with paint. Children use different textured balls and staff ask the children what it feels like. This encourages children to actively explore the resources and discuss their thoughts. The staff encourage children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Every Friday children are provided with a 'meal from around the world', such as, black bean stew from Brazil. Staff extend children's knowledge of the country by offering discussion about the recent World Cup and the colours of the country's flag. This develops older children's understanding of the world they live in. Staff welcome

children who speak English as an additional language and have discussions with parents about children's developing speech in their home language. However, there are no resources or displays to further support or develop their communication and language skills to encourage them to use their home language in the nursery.

Staff have developed positive relationships with parents and use their knowledge to help settle their key children. Staff complete learning journeys about the children, which they regularly share with parents. Parents are aware of the activities offered to their children and appreciate the information they receive about their child's progress.

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

Children have sound relationships with the staff and settle well into the nursery. There is a key-person system implemented which is satisfactory. However, due to staff recently being moved around the nursery, some staff have considerably more key children than others. Children benefit from unlimited settling-in sessions before they start at the nursery. This ensures that children are confident in the environment before being left for longer periods and that they are given the time to form an attachment with their key person. This promotes children's well-being and personal, social and emotional development. Children confidently seek out staff for cuddles when needed, and parents comment on how happy their children are, and that they sometimes struggle to get them to leave. Younger children enjoy sitting with staff and listening to stories. They are encouraged to feel the different textures in the book and staff praise children, which develops their self-esteem. Staff occasionally need to offer gentle reminders to children to encourage positive behaviour, but overall children demonstrate acceptable behaviour and respond well to staff. This shows their sense of belonging and their understanding of following routines. Children throughout the nursery display their growing independence as they move freely between different areas of the room for most of the day and develop their social and physical skills.

Staff support children's knowledge of the importance of keeping a healthy life style. Younger children are individually taken to wash their hands before mealtimes and older children show confidence in doing this independently. Children are offered a selection of fruit as a healthy snack however, staff do not use these times to discuss the importance of healthy eating. This also reduces opportunities for children to develop their communication and language further through conversations and discussions. Younger children's routines are attempted to be met effectively and staff have an adequate knowledge of their individual needs. However, staff do not always arrange the environment appropriately to ensure children's sleep routines can be followed due to the surrounding noise from other children.

Although the nursery does not have access to their own dedicated outdoor area, they make effective use of their local environment. The nursery is centrally based in a small town which has nearby play parks, a river and playing fields, which staff take children to on a daily basis. This develops children's knowledge and understanding of the importance of physical exercise, and also allows them to access their local area. Staff help to prepare

parents and children for their next stage in learning by having effective systems in place to communicate with additional early years settings, and schools. Visits are organised for teachers to meet the children at the nursery and information sheets are completed by the children's key person, which they pass on to school when necessary.

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

Overall, the provider and managers have a suitable understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The managers implement robust recruitment procedures, which include the full vetting and induction of every staff member. They have systems implemented to monitor staff practice and carry out formal staff supervision sessions every six months as part of their professional development. Although staff have a sound knowledge of the areas of learning, the quality of teaching is variable, particularly in promoting children's communication and language development. The activities offered to children are not always focused to sustain good or better learning outcomes for all children. For example, younger children are not encouraged to become involved in group activities or given the opportunity to benefit from adult-led activities. Therefore, not all children are sufficiently challenged or motivated to learn. The managers have monitoring systems in place to ensure that observations and assessments of children's learning are consistently carried out. The setting use an online assessment system, which effectively tracks children's development and highlights areas for development. Partnership with parents is good. Parents can access this system at their leisure and comment that they are more than pleased with the amount of information they receive about their children's time at the nursery and the progress they are making. Parents also have the opportunity to comment on the nursery and make suggestions for improvement by completing questionnaires.

Staff complete the progress check for two-year-old children well, and share it online with parents so they are aware of how their children are developing. For parents that do not have access to the internet, staff provide paper copies for parents. This ensures that all parents are fully included in their children's learning.

Staff have an acceptable knowledge of safeguarding practices and can detail how they ensure children are kept safe. However, some staff lack knowledge and understanding of what would happen if they had an allegation made against themselves. All staff have completed safeguarding and paediatric first-aid training and understand their role in keeping children safe at all times. Risk assessments are implemented and updated annually and staff carry out daily visual checks to identify any hazards, and minimise possible risks to children. All required documentation is appropriately completed and available for inspection.

The provider and management team strive to improve the nursery. They have devised an in-depth self-evaluation form which highlights their strengths and weaknesses. However, their written documentation does not support the practice observed from all staff. This means that not all weaknesses have been identified effectively, therefore, children's

learning can be hindered. Partnerships with external agencies are sound which ensures that children who need further support receive it.

## 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>	EY459301
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	963542
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	38
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	35
<b>Name of provider</b>	Stepping Stones, Lewes Community Nursery Ltd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14/08/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273479699

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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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