

Stepping Stones Nursery

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

Inspection date

15/08/2014

Previous inspection date

27/11/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

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. Staff are knowledgeable about how children learn and as a result, children gain the skills needed to support their future learning.
- Children are settled and secure because they have formed close bonds with their key person, who knows them well. Consequently, child's needs are well met.
- Practitioners work well in partnership with parents and involve parents in their children's learning. Parents feel their children's learning and development is well supported and they are kept well-informed about their child's progress.
- All staff have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children and have good knowledge of child protection procedures. They ensure a safe environment for children by implementing daily checks to minimise hazards.
- The managers continually strive for improvements. They have good understanding of their roles, how to improve practice and monitor the effectiveness of teaching, which contributes to the ongoing development of the nursery.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children's independence and self-care skills are not promoted to the maximum potential during lunchtime.

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 had a tour of the premises.
- The inspector observed children's play and staff interactions both indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation of a teaching activity with the deputy manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment of records, planning documentation, evidence of the qualifications and suitability of practitioners working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents and children spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Lynn Byrne

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery was registered in 2003 on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a single storey building in the centre of Uppermill, Oldham. The nursery is privately owned. It serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level three and the owner at level four. 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 33 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 further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance children's independence and self-care skills during lunchtime, for example, by supporting children to set the tables and self-serve their lunch and drinks.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They provide an interesting and motivating range of activities and resources, which support children to develop and progress across the seven areas of learning. Staff complete individual journals for each child, which show detailed observations and accurate assessments. This information is skilfully used by staff to identify the next steps for children and to create experiences to enrich their learning. Successful planning includes opportunities for child-initiated activities, which are enhanced by focused and adult-led activities. This means children are engaged in experiences, which have depth and breadth across all areas of learning. All children are generally working comfortably within the typical range of development expected for their age. This results in children having the skills needed for the next steps in their learning, including school.

The quality of teaching is good and all staff have high expectations of children. Staff support children in their learning by encouraging them to initiate their chosen activities by exploring and playing independently. Staff skilfully question children to extend their critical thinking and to challenge their learning. Children display the characteristics of effective learning, for example, while mixing paints outside, where young children enjoy getting messy and examine the texture of the paint as they squeeze it through their fingers. Older children are engaged as they explore and have their own ideas of how to make different colours as they mix the paints together. Staff support children's good communication and language skills and help them to build their vocabulary by talking to them and introducing

new words during daily activities. For example, staff encourage babies to repeat words while they play in the water and older children join in with repeated phrases in rhymes and stories.

Parents are fully involved in their children's learning through sharing information on their progress and achievements. They have daily talks with their child's key person and they are invited to attend parents' evenings each term. As a result, staff know children very well and talk to them about their home life, which helps them to feel valued. Starting points for children's development are established using information from parents during settling-in sessions. This information helps children's key persons to get to know them quickly, supporting a smooth start to nursery.

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

Children's emotional well-being is effectively promoted throughout the nursery. A well-established key-person system ensures all children benefit from secure attachments. The caring and supportive environment helps children to feel safe and secure, which provides a strong foundation for their well-being and independence. Children's care routines are adhered to and a clear exchange of regular information between parents and staff ensures children's changing needs are consistently met. Consequently, staff know individual children well and they benefit from consistent care. Staff prepare children to ensure they are emotionally ready for changes and movements through the nursery by providing short visits until they feel secure to move. Teachers from relevant settings are invited into the nursery. This enables children to meet them and form new attachments in a safe and familiar environment.

Children are generally developing good independent self-care skills. Some use the toilet and wash their hands with confidence and others confidently ask for help if needed. Children in nappies have their care needs met effectively through consistent routines throughout the day. Fresh drinking water is readily available to children to access all day, which they are encouraged to do as they learn to recognise and manage their own need for a drink. However, at lunchtime some opportunities to promote self-help skills and independence are missed, because children are not encouraged or supported with learning how to help with setting the table or with serving drinks and their lunch. However, staff use lunchtime positively to help children understand about nutrition and how to make healthy choices by encouraging the children to try a variety of foods.

Staff provide stimulating, well-resourced indoor and outdoor environments, which support children's all-round development and emotional well-being. Outdoors, children have a wide-range of opportunities to challenge them in all areas of learning. For example, children enjoy developing physical skills as they climb, throw beanbags into hoops and kick footballs. Children are showing good awareness of their own and others safety and learn how to assess and manage risks independently. They are encouraged to tidy up when they have finished with resources to keep the environment safe and minimise hazards. This helps children develop a sense of growing responsibility, which helps them with their future learning. Staff are good role models and use age and stage appropriate

explanations to provide children with a clear knowledge of acceptable behaviour. Staff use simple reinforcement and distraction with children, which supports the consistent and calm approach by staff.

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

All staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities regarding the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are aware of the indicators that would alert them to a child at risk. They have a strong knowledge of child protection and the procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child, or the conduct of a member of staff or any of the managers. Several staff have first-aid certificates and appropriate accident and medicine records are in place. Safety is promoted through robust arrangements for assessing any risks to children. Checks are carried out on a daily basis to identify any new risks and to ensure that the safety measures that are in place remain safe. Effective procedures are implemented whenever new staff, volunteers or trainees are recruited. This includes thorough background and vetting checks and clear induction procedures. This ensures children are cared for by suitable and knowledgeable staff.

The manager's drive for improvement is demonstrated by a clear improvement plan. Since the last inspection the manager has successfully met the actions that were raised, which has improved the outcomes for children. She has achieved this by implementing robust systems for tracking and monitoring individual children's progress. Every term, she monitors the progress children make in all areas of learning and analyses the data to identify areas of learning where children are not reaching their expected level. This clearly shows any gaps in learning and enables staff to take appropriate steps to provide all children with the opportunity to reach their full potential. Assessment records are now effective and clearly show children's good progress through the planning of purposeful next steps in learning. Consequently, the educational programme has been improved to provide challenging activities that meet the individual needs of all children. Furthermore, the manager gives good support to all staff to ensure teaching supports all children appropriately. She has carried out in-house training to strengthen staffs' practice with using consistent questioning techniques. This promotes children's language and critical thinking and effectively supports their characteristics of learning. An established system of annual appraisals and more regular supervision meetings, ensure staff are valued and supported. Continual professional development opportunities are decided on effectively by providing training that meets the needs of individual staff and by providing group training to the whole staff team when necessary. This ensures that each member of staff has their needs met and that there is a shared knowledge, understanding and consistency within the nursery.

Partnerships between staff and parents are very positive. Parents spoken to comment on the friendliness of staff and how they are kept informed of their children's development through daily discussions and regular parents' evenings. Staff encourage parents to express their opinions of the nursery, in order to ensure their views contribute to the

nursery's overall self-evaluation and ongoing developments. Staff understand the importance of sharing information with relevant professionals, and teachers from schools in the area are invited to meet children prior to starting reception class. As a result, children's move to school is as smooth as possible. Staff have systems in place to work closely in partnership with specialised professionals to support children with special educational needs when required.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY263166
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	962756
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	33
Name of provider	Helen Williams
Date of previous inspection	27/11/2013
Telephone number	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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