

Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Market Lane, Swalwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE16 3ED

Inspection date

31/10/2014

Previous inspection date

07/05/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

1

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 are making good progress in their learning and development. This is because staff know children well and plan activities that interest and motivate them to learn.
- Staff use a wide range of activities to teach children about healthy eating and exercise.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well. Staff work with a range of professionals and implement care plans. As a result, children make good progress.
- Staff give high priority to safeguarding children. They attend regular training courses and know what to do if they are concerned about a child's well-being. As a result, children are protected from harm.
- Parents feel very included in their child's learning because staff ensure regular reports, daily discussions and formal meetings are held to share children's progress.
- The management team work well together and have clear development plans in place. As a result, the capacity for continuous improvement is good.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always best support younger children to develop high levels of independence when carrying out simple tasks, such as hanging up their coats
- Staff do not always maximise opportunities to share best practice so that children's learning is enhanced even further.

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 all areas of the premises and equipment and observed activities in the playroom and the outside play areas.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of staff working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation form and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector held meetings with the management team, completed a joint observation with the manager and spoke with staff and children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Eileen Grimes

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery was registered in 1997 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in Swalwell in Gateshead. The group serves the local community. It operates from four rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The group employs 15 members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The group opens Monday to Friday, for 52 weeks of the year, and is open from 7.30am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 104 children attending who are in the early years age group. The group provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- support children's growing independence when carrying out simple tasks, for example, by adding pictures to the name labels so that younger children can identify their own pegs and drawers
- extend opportunities to share best practice with all staff in order to further enhance children's learning, for example, through the use of peer observations.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff plan a good range of activities and learning opportunities for children. They ensure that all children are engaged and motivated to learn. This is done by allowing children freedom to explore resources and activities, while ensuring they are close by to extend their play. For instance, children talk about, and look for, pretend spiders in the jelly. Staff use this opportunity to consolidate children's counting skills and also introduce new language about textures by discussing how this feels. Younger children explore with sounds, as they beat a large drum. Staff encourage them to feel the drum skin and explore with a range of resources to make the sounds. This holds their concentration for long periods of time and staff support them to make further sounds.

Children are well prepared for school. They take responsibility for tidying up and respect resources in the setting. Children listen to instructions, given by staff, and behave maturely. All children sit for small-group time before lunch and sing their favourite songs. Children demonstrate high levels of confidence as they stand at the front of the group and perform their chosen song. Older children are starting to recognise letters and make links to their names. They repeat familiar sounds and some children recognise the first letter of

a few words. Staff pose questions about the weather and the day of the week during circle times. This encourages them to think and answer questions that relate to real-life experiences. Children also have opportunities to think as they play board games with staff. Opportunities for children to use their imaginations and think critically when they are outdoors are maximised because there are a range of open-ended resources for children to use and create their own games. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well. Staff are sensitive to their individual needs and plan a range of activities, pertinent to them in line with their care plans. Therefore, children make good progress.

Staff plan for each child's interests and stage of development. Activities are stimulating and keep children engaged. Staff clearly know what children's next steps in learning are and share these with parents. This means both staff and parents work harmoniously to support children to make good progress from their starting points. Regular assessments are completed and this means staff are aware of any emerging gaps in children's learning. These are then focussed upon and promptly narrowed. Parents are encouraged to share children's learning at home. This is then recorded in children's development files. In addition, when children are moving to the next room or school, staff write transition reports. These detail children's stage of development and are shared with the next key person and the school, to ensure children's good level of development are further supported.

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

Staff have created very strong relationships with children and parents. Children freely explore their environment but often return to their key person for reassurance, support or a cuddle. Staff understand the importance of creating strong bonds with children and their families. They gather detailed information during the initial settling-in period and liaise with parents, regarding children's individual routines. Staff talk to parents and learn about children's home lives and backgrounds. This means that during times of change, such as siblings being born, staff understand children's feelings and can sensitively support them. Staff also support children well when moving rooms in the setting. Key persons communicate and ensure all information regarding children's well-being is shared to ensure the move is easy for children.

Children thoroughly enjoy playing outside. They eagerly put on their coats and happily play in the sun and the rain. However, opportunities to further enhance the youngest children's independence are not best used. For example, staff label pegs and drawers with names only, which some children do not recognise and therefore, are unable to find their peg by themselves. Staff understand the importance of all children accessing the fresh air daily and ensure all children access the play area and exercise. Staff support children to understand risks in the outdoor environment. Children understand how to move and negotiate activities outside with regard to safety. They begin to identify risks in their environment. Staff discuss with children how to stay safe. Children regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures and staff attend training, such as paediatric first-aid training, to promote children's welfare. All staff are trained in paediatric first-aid and

deployed to deal with any accidents and emergencies immediately.

Children behave very well. They have made firm friendships and talk about their best friends and how important it is to have friends to play with. Staff allow children space to resolve minor disagreements and solve their own problems. They remind children of rules and boundaries and, as a result, children know the behaviour expected of them. Children take on small responsibilities. They tidy away resources and prepare for mealtimes. Children have a good understanding of hygiene issues. Older children are able to access the toilet areas with low levels of supervision appropriate to their age, while younger children are supervised. Staff ensure that nappy changing and toilet training sessions are undertaken according to children's individual needs, with all hygiene issues addressed to a high standard. Meals are healthy and nutritious and the cook follows a three week menu. All meals are freshly prepared on the premises and are thoroughly enjoyed by children. Staff discuss where food comes from and this enables children to learn about the living world. Children wash their hands before meals and sit with their friends. Older children serve their food independently, which develops some aspects of their independence.

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

Staff know their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. They know the signs and symptoms of abuse and who to contact with any concerns. All staff receive safeguarding training during their induction and external courses are attended by the management team. The setting has a detailed safeguarding policy and information on safeguarding and professionals, who can advise and support staff, is displayed in the staff room. There are robust policies and procedures in place for the use of mobile phones and social networking sites. These are regularly monitored by the management team. A detailed register of attendance is kept for both staff and children, which ensures that ratios are adhered to at all times. All staff are subject to a rigorous recruitment procedure. They attend interviews and work directly with children, so that staff can assess how they interact with children. All staff have an in-depth induction and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. All visitors to the group who are not checked are supervised at all times. Detailed risk assessments are in place for all areas of the nursery, including the outdoor areas and toilets. This ensures they are safe and secure for children to access. As a result, all children are safeguarded very well.

The management team work very closely with all staff. They monitor the planning and observe staff practice throughout the day. Both the manager and deputy work within the children's rooms and, therefore, implement the planning system. This means they role model and support staff to deliver high quality teaching. The deputy manager uses her knowledge to reflect on practice and improve provision. The management team track children's progress and ensure any emerging gaps in children's learning and development are promptly closed. All staff are encouraged to develop professionally. The management team sources training for staff and information received is cascaded at staff meetings. This means all staff and children benefit from a wide range of training opportunities. However, there is scope to highlight and extend the methods used to cascade the very best practice

to other staff, for example, through the use of peer observations.

Staff have created very good partnerships with other professionals. They work closely with local authority advisers to evaluate their practice and listen to suggestions and advice. Clear development plans are in place and the management team have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas of the setting they are working to develop further. Parents' views are sought through daily conversations and regular parent questionnaires. Parents are very happy with the service and comment that 'they are confident in the care and education their children receive from a highly committed staff team'.

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	311839
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	847638
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	72
Number of children on roll	104
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Day Nursery Partnership
Date of previous inspection	07/05/2009
Telephone number	0191 488 9000

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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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