

# Stepping Stones

Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, Worcs, WR10 1PT

## Inspection date

12/12/2014

Previous inspection date

07/03/2011

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

2

Previous inspection:

2

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 provide interesting and challenging experiences and teaching is good.
- Children form strong bonds with the key persons and their peers and, as a result, they are happy, settled and well-behaved.
- There is effective partnership working with parents and other professionals, which supports individual children's needs.
- Arrangements for safeguarding children are well established and clear policies and procedures are implemented to ensure children are kept safe at all times.
- Overall, leadership and management is strong and there is clear motivation to develop the nursery, in order to improve children's learning even further.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff have not yet fully explored a wide range of strategies, such as peer observation, in order to build on their already good practice.
- Children are not always able to independently select equipment or resources to support their own initiated play.

## 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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the staff engaging with children in a range of indoor and outdoor learning activities.
- The inspector held discussions with the owner, manager and staff.  
The inspector looked at documentation, including a selection of policies and procedures, evidence of staff suitability and qualifications, and the children's learning records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.

## Inspector

Amanda Tompkin

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery was registered in 1992 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose-built building in Pershore. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. Special terms are available to parents employed by Wychavon District Council. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one staff member who has a level 6 qualification. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year, from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 34 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and 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:

- extend the ways in which peer observations can be used to enable staff to review and reflect on the quality of their own and others' teaching, to enhance and extend the existing good standard of teaching
- enhance the already stimulating environment, for example, by improving children's access to the broad range of equipment and resources, to further promote and challenge their learning during their child-initiated activities.

## Inspection judgements

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

The nursery is welcoming and provides a safe and stimulating environment for the children who attend. Children make good progress from their starting points, as staff are knowledgeable about how children learn and develop. Good quality learning and development information is collected from parents when children first begin attending the nursery. This information is used well to inform staff who provide relevant and individual learning experiences for all children. Staff carry out regular observations of children during their play to assess their skills and identify their current interests. They then use this information to plan a wide range of activities and opportunities, which support the children's identified next steps in learning. There is an extensive range of resources and equipment within the nursery to support children's learning and development. However, the toys and equipment are not always effectively stored, so that children are able to independently access them for themselves to enable them to extend their chosen play

activities.

Children's communication and language development is supported well. Staff engage children in meaningful conversations throughout the day. They listen to children's responses and ask open-ended questions to further their thinking. Children's understanding of language is further supported as they sing along to favourite songs and rhymes. Staff keep children engaged with the activity as they readily join in with the actions and encourage the children to act out the associated actions to the songs. Children's physical development is promoted well because they have daily access to the outdoor environment. Children can pedal bicycles and practice their balancing and climbing skills. They attend local forest areas on a regular basis, which promotes children's understanding of the wider world.

All children benefit from good interactions with staff and babies have lots of one-to-one contact and cuddles. Older children are supported well as staff are always close by to guide and enhance their play and learning. Children's move between nursery and school are well supported. Teachers are invited in to meet children in the nursery and staff share important information with them from children's development and assessment records. This ensures the school are fully informed about the children's next steps and learning priorities are clearly identified. Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents are involved in their children's learning and development. Information displayed in the nursery and daily diaries keeps parents informed of activities and regular newsletters suggest ideas for parents to continue their child's learning at home. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress alongside their peers. As a result, all children are well prepared and gaining the necessary skills to support their eventual move to school.

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

Children enjoy their time spent at nursery as staff are skilled at getting to know children and their families and make learning a fun experience. Children's starting points, interests and achievements are gained from the parents before children begin at nursery. This is supported through the well-established key-person system in place and the flexible settling-in sessions, where parents are encouraged to slowly build up the time the children spend at the nursery. As a result, children settle quickly in the nursery and feel emotionally secure.

Children's health is very well supported within nursery because they are provided with nutritious meals that cater for their individual needs. Children and staff sit together in small groups, enjoying a pleasant social occasion. Older children help to serve their own meal as they chat happily to each other about their day. Children's health is further supported as the staff follow good hygiene practices. Children are reminded to wash their hands before mealtimes and after outdoor play or using the toilet. They are beginning to learn about their own safety because staff talk to them about dangers. For example, they are reminded to sit on furniture correctly and to not run while indoors.

Children's behaviour is managed well by staff. Staff provide clear and consistent

boundaries, which support children to cooperate well with each other and understand what behaviour is acceptable in the nursery. Children are encouraged to share, take turns and listen to each other during group activities. As a result, children learn to become respectful and confident to communicate their ideas with others. These personal skills in managing their emotions and developing positive relationships with their peers support children extremely well towards their next stage of learning, including their eventual move to school.

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

The provider and manager fully understand their responsibilities in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff are aware of the procedure to follow should they have any concerns about a child's welfare. Management effectively carry out effective recruitment and vetting procedures to check staff are suitable to work with children. Staff's ongoing suitability is supported through regular supervision meetings with the manager where staff are provided time to discuss confidential or sensitive issues. Good arrangements are in place regarding the programme for professional development, staff update their training regularly, leading to a knowledgeable staff team. However, staff do not undertake peer observations, where they watch each other teach, as part of their reflective practice. This would ensure that good practice is shared, building on the already good teaching that takes place, so that children can benefit from the best possible learning opportunities.

Effective systems are in place to monitor the educational programme and track children's progress and, where children may need additional support, activities are planned to meet each individual child's need. As a result, any gaps in children's learning are closing. Self-evaluation is strong. The review of the nursery's strengths and areas for development is ongoing and involves contributions from staff, children and parents. Parents are encouraged to share their views through daily discussions, a suggestion box in the reception and through regular questionnaires.

Partnerships with parents are very good. Parents speak positively about their child's time at the nursery. They feel that the staff really get to know their children well and staff have formed good bonds with them. Staff attend regular meetings with other early years providers to share ideas, training and good practice, which helps them maintain the good quality care and learning they provide for all children. Partnerships with external agencies and other professionals are good. The provider and manager work exceptionally well with services in their area and effectively use advice to improve their already good practice to meet the needs of all of the children attending. Links with local schools that children move on to are equally strong. Teachers visit the nursery to spend time with the children prior to them moving to Reception class. Information from children's assessments and observations is shared and gives accurate evidence of where children are in their learning and development and support their smooth move to school.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	205310
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	865327
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	24
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	34
<b>Name of provider</b>	Emma Dixon
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	07/03/2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01386 565404

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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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