Stepping Stones Children's Centre
Tickhill Road, Maltby, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S66 7NQ

**Inspection date** 28/11/2014
**Previous inspection date** 09/02/2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The quality and standards of the early years provision</th>
<th>This inspection: 3</th>
<th>Previous inspection: 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**This provision requires improvement**

- Children are happy and well settled in their environment. They clearly benefit from the caring and trusting relationships that they have established with staff.
- Staff interact with children as they play. They sit down at children's level which encourages communication and promotes well-being.
- Children's health is well promoted in the setting. They have free access to the garden, where they can engage in physical activities and they enjoy healthy snacks.
- Staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and keep them safe.
- Partnership working with parents is developing well, which contributes to meeting children's needs.

**It is not yet good because**

- Assessments are not fully effective, regular or accurate. As a result, teaching is no more than satisfactory and children are not consistently supported in making swift progress in their learning.
- Staff do not always deploy themselves effectively which impacts on children's behaviour. Consequently, children's behaviour is not consistently managed by all staff.
**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 activities in the indoor and the outside learning environments.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and spoke to several staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.

**Inspector**

Rachael Barrett
Full report

Information about the setting

The Stepping Stones Children's Centre nursery was registered in 2006 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises in Maltby, in the borough of Rotherham. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from two rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, one has a foundation degree, one holds an appropriate early years qualifications at level 4, four hold an early years qualification at level 3 and two hold a level 2 qualification. Two members of staff are working towards a foundation degree. The nursery opens Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 12noon and 12.45pm until 3.45pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 50 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The children's centre receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve the regularity and accuracy of assessments made on children's progress, to make sure that children are challenged appropriately and helped to move on to the next stage in their learning

- ensure staffing arrangements are organised to meet the needs of children, with specific regard to behaviour management.

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

- monitor how all staff manage children's behaviour so that consistently appropriate methods are used to support children's understanding of right and wrong and the expectations of what is acceptable behaviour.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy their time at nursery. Staff take time to gather starting points from home through initial discussions with parents and a ‘settling-in curriculum’. Staff make it a priority to get to know their assigned key children and make observations of what their
children do, like and enjoy. However, some staff do not accurately assess children's progress across the seven areas of learning and assessment is not regular or precise enough. As a result, planning and teaching are not consistently extending children's learning to ensure all children make consistently good progress. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are generally well supported. This is because staff liaise with outside professionals when required to ensure children are fully supported. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported well by staff, as they obtain key words from parents on entry to the nursery and provide a fully inclusive environment. Positive relationships with parents and carers result in a steady two-way flow of information about the children's education, care and welfare.

Recent changes to the organisation of the nursery have resulted in the children from two years to four years being cared for in one room. This room is the pre-school/toddler room and offers children a wide range of resources and activities, which are made freely available to the children. Staff initially focus their teaching strategies on the prime areas of learning, to ensure that children are appropriately prepared for the next stage in their learning. For example, children make suitable progress in their communication and listening skills. This is a result of positive and supportive interactions from staff, who take time to listen to children. Teaching strategies, such as, letters and sounds and the Every Child a Talker programme, are used effectively by some staff to enhance children's learning. For example, staff provide a variety of props to support song time and a group of older children explore letters and sounds using farm animals and a card matching game. Children are encouraged to recognise their own name when they self-register when arriving at nursery. They are encouraged to post their name into the attendance box which supports their personal, social and emotional development. The teaching skills that staff demonstrate ensures that all children make steady progress. Consequently, children develop the basic skills that will support their future move onto school.

Children benefit from plenty of fresh air and exercise each day, and enjoy the sufficient variety of activities. Staff support the children's overall physical development well by ensuring all children make use of the enclosed outdoor area, which is used well for physical play and for them to explore and discover. For example, children dig for worms in the soil and hunt for spiders. Staff support their curiosity further by providing magnifying glasses, plastic pots to study the spiders and photo's/books about worms and mini beasts. Children run, climb and explore and use wooden ramps, crates and ride on toys.

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

Children feel settled and secure because staff provide a warm and welcoming environment. The indoor environment offers a continuous provision of resources to support the seven areas of learning. This helps children to make independent choices in their play. All children are cared for together in one room, with a separate quiet area for exploratory play and space for children to sleep. Children benefit from having direct access to the outdoor play area, which means that they can move freely between indoors or outside. However, staff deployment is not always effective which results in disputes between children and inconsistencies in how behaviour is managed. For example, two staff members are outside with only a few children, leaving a large number of children...
inside with limited staff, some of whom are changing nappies or supporting a group of children with putting on their coats. Consequently, when a dispute occurs between children, staff are not on hand to implement appropriate strategies to support children's understanding of right and wrong and the expectations of what is acceptable behaviour.

Children benefit from the high emphasis the nursery places on building strong relationships with them and their families. Staff are knowledgeable about the importance of children's security and recognise that feelings of well-being are a necessary foundation for their learning and development. Children are happy and settled in the nursery. Each child is assigned a key person, who works with the child and their family to get to know the children's interests and preferences, which helps them to care for the children and meet their needs. Transitions are handled sensitively within the nursery and as children move to school. Staff take time to prepare children through discussions, visits to the school and by the school teachers visiting the nursery. As a result, children are emotionally prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe through consistent explanations. For example, staff remind children not to run inside and not to climb on the furniture. This means children experience a safe environment. A flexible system for snack time enables children to make choices about when they need to eat and rest. They are encouraged to wash their hands thoroughly and to serve themselves a selection of fresh fruit at snack time. Consequently, they develop their understanding of self-care and independence. Children exercise regularly, which contributes to promoting their good health. Parents comment that their children enjoy their time at nursery and note that they receive good feedback about their daily routines.

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

The staff team are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children. They ensure safeguarding training is thorough and up to date. Staff have a good knowledge of child protection and know the procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child in their care. A robust induction programme ensures that all staff, including those who are very new to the nursery, have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures they must follow. Clear recruitment procedures are in place, which includes obtaining Disclosure and Barring Services checks for all staff. The building is safe and entry/exit procedures are good; as a result, children are safeguarded from harm.

The manager has implemented a system for monitoring and evaluating the nursery. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The nursery uses self-evaluation to identify its strengths and to also identify some areas requiring further development. This results in improvements being made in some areas. Arrangements for performance management are in place and include regular supervisions and peer observation to support practice. However, the monitoring of planning and assessments are not yet thorough. This means that staff are not accurately assessing children's development in the seven areas of learning or identifying and planning challenging next steps to support children's good progress. Subsequently, management are not able to consistently identify
gaps in children's progress across different groups.

The staff team work well together and with parents and other agencies to ensure children's care and learning needs are appropriately met, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Links have been developed with the local schools which children move onto. Consequently, children make progress in their learning. The views of staff and parents are fully included in the monitoring and evaluation of the nursery. Parent's state that they are happy with the service provided and appreciate the support staff provide to their children.

**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Judgement</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unique reference number</th>
<th>EY332198</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>Rotherham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspection number</td>
<td>862511</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration category</td>
<td>Childcare - Non-Domestic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range of children</td>
<td>0 - 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of places</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of children on roll</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of provider</td>
<td>Stepping Stones Children's Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of previous inspection</td>
<td>09/02/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone number</td>
<td>01709 816946</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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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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