

# Stepping Stones II

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY402962  
**Inspection date** 25/06/2010  
**Inspector** Judith Rayner

**Setting address** Stepping Stones Day Nursery, 42-44 Attenborough Lane,  
Beeston, NOTTINGHAM, NG9 5JW  
**Telephone number** 01159678785  
**Email** info@steppingstones-2.co.uk  
**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## Description of the setting

Stepping Stones II Day Nursery was registered in 2006 and re-registered with the same ownership as Newjay Limited in 2009. It is a privately owned day nursery, situated on the outskirts of Beeston and close to direct routes to Nottingham and Derby. Children are accommodated, according to their age and stage, in three rooms on the ground floor of the building. They have access to a secure outdoor play area. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 55 children at any one time.

The nursery is open, Monday to Friday all year round with the exception of the week between Christmas and New Year. Sessions are from 07:30am until 18:00pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are 12 members of staff working with the children. Half of the staff are appropriately qualified, with a high percentage being qualified to level three. There is one member of staff working towards the Early Years Professional Status. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children within the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy their time at the nursery. They are settled, happy and make good progress in their learning and development. Their welfare is also well promoted. Staff have good relationships with children and understand the positive ways of meeting their overall needs whilst promoting inclusion. Links with parents are good and the liaison with other providers is very proactive which helps to ensure consistency in care and education. The new management have good vision for developing the quality of the nursery to drive and maintain continuous improvement.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review the recording systems for identifying children's next steps for learning so that they are consistent, effectively inform planning and always support children's progress towards the early learning goals
- review the practice used for displaying children's own creative art work that will encourage their free self-expression
- monitor the use of resources and activities to ensure they provide challenge and stimulation for all children
- review the system used to undertake risk assessments for outings.

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

Children are protected because staff are aware of the possible signs of abuse and know what to do if they have concerns about a child. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and know when to take action to safeguard children in their care. Detailed risk assessments are carried out to provide a safe environment for the nursery both inside and in the outdoor area. However, the system used for risk assessments for any outings undertaken is not as robust and does not clearly highlight potential hazards. Children are protected because the staff team keep the premises secure and supervise the children at all times. Procedures for arrival and departure ensure children are handed over safely to a known adult. The new manager has completed updating the written policies and procedures which highlight to staff, parents and carers how the nursery is run, what staff roles are and how children are cared for. Records are carefully maintained.

There are effective systems in place to cover staff absences and emergencies. All required checks are completed on staff, alongside staff appraisals. This ensures that the management are clear about the ongoing suitability of staff. Staff organise the rooms well. Children access a good range of toys and activities which are presented attractively both inside the nursery and in the outdoor area. However, not all resources are used effectively to challenge, stimulate and build on all children's interests. The environment is clean and well presented. Children's welfare is supported well. Staff complete and appropriately involve the children in established consistent hygiene and safety procedures such as hand washing and emergency fire evacuation drills.

Staff are knowledgeable about the learning and development elements and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are making good progress. Staff know their children well. Most staff are involved in planning, and key persons assess the children towards the early learning goals. The staff are currently in the very early stages of developing a new observation and assessment system. However, the recording systems for some observations are less effective in identifying children's next steps for learning. At times the system is not consistent enough to always inform planning and support children's progress towards the early learning goals. They are currently working proactively with the local authority support worker.

The nursery places value in ensuring that parents develop a sense of belonging to the setting and have a say in the care and well-being of their children. They contribute through parent questionnaires, parents evenings and daily discussions. Parents speak very positively about the nursery and the key is to an open house policy. From the onset parents share information about their child enabling staff to support their child's learning and individual needs and routines. Through activities and resources children's awareness to others similarities and differences are promoted well. They are learning the diversity of society in which they live.

There is a strong commitment and drive to improve the provision and the

outcomes for children since the new manager has been appointed. Positive links are in place with the local authority worker to improve the system used for monitoring and tracking children's learning and development. Also plans are already in place to improve the outdoor area providing children with more learning opportunities such as a raised garden bed. Changes to the surface from concrete to astro safety surface will improve safety for children. The new manager values the practice of self- evaluation and uses this to inform improvements for better outcomes for children. The setting demonstrates a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children are enthusiastic, happy and settled at the nursery. They enjoy their time accessing the toys and activities both inside and outside. Children concentrate very well and confidently enjoy activities alone, in small groups or with an adult. Children benefit from the positive and warm interaction from all whom work at the nursery. Staff know the children well and meet their individual needs quickly, by for example, through recognising when they are tired or need support during an activity. Staff are proactive in the planning of play and also build upon most children's interests. Children have good opportunities to enhance their all round development. They are supported well by staff through good communication and physical help. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play.

All children behave very well as staff use appropriate strategies to encourage children's good behaviour thus, no unwanted behaviour. Children from a young age play harmoniously together. Babies are happy spending their time watching their peers with occasional interaction. All children feel safe to explore their surroundings. Babies crawl and toddle around the room accessing toys of their choice such as the train track, musical ball and ball tent. Young children explore their room engaging in activities such as role play. They move the push chairs confidently around the room without bumping into their peers or objects. Older children in the early years, build with construction inside and with larger construction outside. They confidently climb apparatus and run around outside playing games and accessing toys. Children's self-esteem is good. A good range of resources are easily at hand to support children in their communication and literacy skills. Staff support this further through thought provoking questions, listening and speaking clearly to all children. There is a good range of books which are presented easily accessible for all children These range from hard back textured ones for babies through to paper books for older children. This encourages children to look at books and recognise that print has meaning.

Children use numbers every day. They count, add and subtract numbers spontaneously within the routine of the day as well as alongside focussed activities. Children enjoy problem solving. They engage with a construction activity working out how to make a cube and once made what objects are small enough to place inside the cube. Great concentration and perseverance is maintained. Children explore differing textures and art and craft materials such as dough, paint, glue, sand and water. Although children access a good range of creative

materials there are less opportunities for them to freely express themselves in creative art work and have their finished piece of work displayed. They play very imaginatively in small groups pretending to be dinosaurs chasing one another with safe places to hide around the outdoor area. Children scream with excitement as they take it in turns to be the dinosaur. Children access a range of resources to help them positively explore and value differences and similarities in the wider world. They visit the local nursing home to sing songs at Harvest festival. Staff invite the local fire fighters and dentist to the nursery to talk to the children about their roles and how they help people to keep safe and be healthy.

Staff promote children's welfare well. They follow clear health and safety procedures and involve children in understanding dangers and what is healthy practice. Children know to wash their hands to stop the spread of germs after they have used the toilet and before eating. Children take part in fire evacuation drills and staff talk to them about stranger danger. Meals are cooked from fresh ingredients and children learn good table manners as they sit together for meals in small social groups. Children learn to respect their surroundings by helping tidy away their toys before going outside. They access programmable toys from a young age such as investigative toys with buttons through to cameras, shopping tills and computers. All in all, children are developing the skills they will need for future learning.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met