

Stepping Stones Private Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	311272
Inspection date	09/06/2011
Inspector	Hilary McKenning
Setting address	16 Waingate, Linthwaite, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD7 5NR
Telephone number	01484 843035
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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 is a private day nursery. The nursery is situated in the village of Linthwaite near Huddersfield. It comprises of a baby room, toddler room, creative room and quiet room. Two units on the first floor are dedicated early years units. There are toilet, kitchen, staff and office facilities onsite. At the rear and side of the building there are enclosed play areas which are divided to accommodate the varied ages of children attending. The nursery serves the local community and outlying villages.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are 65 children on roll. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language. There are 13 members of staff who work directly with the children and the majority hold a relevant early years childcare qualification, one member of staff has an Early Years Foundation Degree. The nursery receives support from the Early Years Childcare Development Partnership.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children needs are exceptionally well met through the effective partnership between staff, parents and their children to successfully promote inclusive practice, encouraging children to enjoy experiencing the world around them. Children are excited by and eagerly explore the extensive range of interesting activities that are specifically planned to ensure each child is a competent learner who is confident, feels included, safe and valued. The provider effectively engages staff and parents in the self-evaluation process to monitor the service, identifying areas for development to ensure better outcomes for children.

The extensive range of learning opportunities helps children make very rapid progress and their individual needs are met extremely well through personalised planning and rigorous assessments. Children's sense of belonging is expertly fostered within an appealing environment where children independently choose resources and access all areas as robust risk assessments ensure their safety is maintained.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing ways to engage and involve all parents in their children's learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are extremely well protected due to the highly effective safeguarding systems that are in place. Staff have an accurate knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues and are clear about the steps to be taken should there be any concerns regarding children's welfare. Robust processes ensure that all adults working with children are suitable do so. Comprehensive risk assessments are regularly completed and measures are immediately taken to rectify any hazards identified to ensure children's safety. Children are actively introduced to safety and how to keep themselves safe through daily activities and a variety of topics. Staff plan activities around road safety and invite the local police to visit the nursery. Children are also involved in regular fire drills and there are detailed records to support this.

The management team are successful in inspiring the staff and they share high expectations across all areas of their practice which drives ongoing development and continued improvement. There is a well established system to monitor and evaluate the service offered which actively involves both staff and parents, promoting better outcomes for children. There are very positive partnerships with parents and they are involved in many aspects of the nursery, such as sports days, shows and various celebrations throughout the year. Parents share information with staff at the start of their placement which ensures children's individual needs are effectively met. They maintain regular communication through the use of a daily diary. Parents are invited to parents evening twice a year to discuss their child's achievements. The nursery holds a variety of events, such as colour of the month and pet of the month. Most parents are successfully engaged and they are encouraged to play a part in their child's learning, bringing a selection from home to contribute to these areas. There is a wealth of information displayed for parents throughout the nursery and regular newsletters ensure they are kept informed about events and topics within the nursery.

The nursery is highly committed to working in partnership with others to support and extend the welfare and learning of children in their care. There are effective systems in place to share information with providers, in particular, visits are arranged when children are moving into full-time education to promote a smooth and positive transition into school life.

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

Staff have an exceptional understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They recognise the different ways individual children learn and skilfully present resources to support children's preferred ways of learning. For example, when some children display an interest in wheels and things that turn, staff ensure there is a wide range of cogs and wheeled objects available. Staff use high quality observations to confidently assess children and use this information effectively to plan for individual children's learning. As a result, children are progressing at a

rapid rate.

Children are excited, eager and fully participate in the wealth of well planned activities. Their behaviour is very good and they have an impressive understanding of boundaries, limits and strategies to help resolve conflicts. Staff have recently completed 'Butterfly' training and they use this effectively to help calm children by using massage techniques. First class daily opportunities are provided for babies and young children to access a rich, vibrant and innovative range of activities, which promote their all round development. Babies are positively encouraged to explore their immediate environment and they receive beneficial support from the staff. Very young children are extremely confident as they explore their environment. Babies respond to music played in the background swaying their bodies to and fro. Gross motor skills are expertly encouraged as babies have a superb range of toys to pull, suck and squeeze. To encourage mark making skills, the staff innovatively uses a range of activities, such as water, sand and play dough to make marks and to manipulate an inspiring variety of media. They also access a wide range of natural resources. They seek out staff for comfort and reassurance as staff sensitively introduces new people into the group. Children feel valued and receive lots of praise and encouragement. They smile and giggle with pleasure as the staff praises them. For example, children excitedly play together harmoniously, as they take turns playing a game of hide and seek in the garden. Children are extremely confident in their play and have developed a very strong relationship with the staff.

Children are encouraged to be active and clearly understand the benefits of physical activity as they eagerly make their way to join the exercise session and carefully concentrate as they follow staff in completing the different movements with the ribbons. They confidently access the outdoor play areas freely moving between areas. Children quietly and carefully search for the butterflies they recently released into the garden and delight when they find the baby spiders in the web. Children successfully negotiate the various toys and equipment around the play area. Children's future economic well-being is fostered through a positive relationship with staff. Children use programmable toys with ease as they select music to sing along to and are competent when playing electronic musical instruments and a variety of computer games.

Children make a positive contribution by becoming involved in all aspects of play. They learn about the wider world and its diversity through good examples and photographs show children as they celebrate the different festivals. Throughout the nursery, a wide variety of children's work and photographs are attractively displayed in prominent positions, such as, in the entrance, hallways and play areas.

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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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