

Derwent Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sheena Gibson

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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.

Description of the setting

Derwent Stepping Stones registered in 2006. It operates from modern purpose-built premises on the edge of Derby city centre. The setting provides care for families in and around the local community. It is registered to provide care for 128 children under eight years at any one time. Currently there are 198 children on roll who attend for various sessions. There are five playrooms for children aged under five years and one room for children aged over five years, as an out of school service is also provided. The setting also cares for children over eight years. There is a fully enclosed patio, decked and grassed area available for outdoor play.

The setting is accessible to all. The entrance has automatic double doors and doors into rooms are a suitable width for wheelchair users. The nurseries main play rooms are based at ground floor level and there is a lift for access to the first floor. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childcare service operates as part of a community and training centre serving the local neighbourhood. It offers funded nursery education and makes provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language. Childcare provision is offered from Monday to Friday all year round between the hours of 08:00 to 21:00. Currently 91% of the childcare staff hold recognised early years qualifications at Level two or three. The nursery also employs a suitably qualified manager, early years professional and various support staff. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The nursery has systems in place to ensure that it is inclusive for all and these mostly work very well. Therefore, children's welfare is appropriately supported and they progress well. Partnership with parents/carers and other people involved in children's welfare and learning is a main focus for the setting and so benefits children. The setting takes steps to evaluate the provision and make plans for future improvement, which effectively supports the outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop planning to ensure that children's next steps are effectively planned for and activities are sufficiently extended in order to provide appropriate challenge for children
- develop further systems to ensure that information required to fully meet children's needs is shared effectively with staff
- review the implementation of the key worker system to ensure that children's needs are consistently met.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The management team at the setting are focussed on ensuring that the outcomes for children are strong. They strive for improvement and to provide a service to children and families that is relevant to their needs. They work well to effectively support staff practice through putting into place a structure of skilled professionals and ensuring that staff continue to improve their skills and knowledge through training and information sharing. The provision maintains a comprehensive range of policies and procedures, which are periodically reviewed and updated as appropriate. These are shared with staff and parents so that all are aware of their responsibilities to support children. The setting has put into place a system for self-evaluation that includes the views of parents and staff. Steps are taken to identify and address any areas for improvement to benefit the outcomes for children. For example, recommendations from the last inspection and actions given in relation to a concern raised have been appropriately dealt with.

The setting has developed systems to ensure that children's needs are met well. For example, detailed information is obtained from parents. However, the key worker system is not always effectively implemented and sometimes systems break down, resulting in information not being successfully shared with staff, potentially impacting on children's well-being. The setting has robust systems in place for the recruitment of staff, which effectively contributes to children's safety. Detailed risk assessments, including daily checks, mean that hazards to children's safety are minimised. Equipment and resources are checked and cleaned regularly in order to ensure that they remain suitable for children.

Safeguarding is a priority of the setting and staff are knowledgeable about their role in safeguarding children from potential child abuse. Parents are provided with a broad range of information in a variety of formats so that they are notified of, for example, the setting's policies and menus. They receive newsletters periodically and a parent's forum has been developed so that parents are able to share their views. The setting works collaboratively with external agencies who are also involved in supporting children's welfare, providing a consistent, multi-way flow of communication to effectively benefit children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The nursery environment effectively supports children's learning and welfare. Rooms have been designed and equipped to be appropriate for each age group of children, ensuring that there are facilities for them to play, eat and rest. Immediate access to a well-resourced outdoor area for each age group extends their play. Children's craft pictures and photographs are displayed around the rooms; various pieces are hung from the ceilings to give an alternative interest for the less mobile children. The majority of staff have a sound understanding of how to effectively support children's learning and therefore children progress well. The observations that staff carry out are used to gauge children's capabilities. Activities are planned for children that consider their interests and support their progress. However,

children's next steps for learning are not always reflected in the planning, which also does not consider how an activity can be extended for more able children, potentially resulting in children not always being sufficiently challenged.

Children have a wide range of opportunities that encourage the development of their skills across the different areas of learning. Independent learning is a strong area within the setting. Even the youngest children are making decisions about their play and using their time constructively to gain further skills. For example, a group of children initiate their own activity. They sit together in the book corner and one child 'reads' a story whilst the others become involved in the story with hand puppets. Another child sits with a rhyme book and competently counts down as she sings merrily and turns the pages of the book. Children enjoy time at the computer and some capably use the keyboard and mouse to animate the icons. Their imagination and creativity skills are fostered well. They enjoy a variety of craft activities and have free access to materials that they can assemble and build with.

Children are beginning to learn about how to keep themselves safe through activities and also through meeting with visitors to the setting such as a road safety officer. Staff encourage children to assess their own capabilities, for example, when using the large slide. Menus contain a well-balanced combination of food that children require to stay healthy and all children are encouraged to try a variety of healthy options. Children have daily opportunities to be active, both indoors and outdoors, developing a range of physical skills.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	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