

Stepping Stones Footsteps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY368378
Inspection date	02/06/2009
Inspector	Ann Coggin
Setting address	Stepping Stones, Ochil Terrace, Billingham, Cleveland, TS23 2QL
Telephone number	01642 556 378
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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

Stepping Stones Footprints Nursery opened in 2004 and was operated by Sure Start. The Pre-School Learning Alliance took over the registration in July 2008. The nursery operates from four activity rooms within Ochill Children's Centre in the town centre area of Billingham. All children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas. It is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round, except for bank holidays.

The Nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 50 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 86 children aged from 6 months to under five years. The nursery provides a wraparound service for children attending Pentland Nursery School. There are systems in place to support children with disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 16 members of staff, of whom 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2. Four staff members are working towards a level 2 qualification and the manager is completing an early years foundation degree. The nursery receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children enjoy attending this welcoming and friendly setting where staff offer good support and encouragement for each child's learning and development. Staff have a good awareness of children's needs and work in close liaison with parents and other agencies to ensure that they can fully meet the unique requirements of each child. They take positive steps to ensure that all children can play a full role in activities and help them to reach their full potential. Effective self-evaluation and monitoring by the management and staff team ensure continuous improvement throughout all areas of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the use of the outdoor area and provide equipment and resources to ensure they are challenging and interesting to all children
- continue to develop resources to promote diversity and develop knowledge about other cultural groups to ensure children are provided with a wider range of opportunities to foster a positive image of others
- develop the information given to parents regarding the nursery.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted well by the maintenance of all necessary records and the effective implementation of policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed. Whilst the manager and some staff are new to the setting they all work well together as a team to ensure children reach their full potential. There are robust procedures in place to ensure staff suitability, which include thorough recruitment and vetting procedures and induction. There are effective written risk assessment which are reviewed regularly and written daily safety checks are carried out by staff. Children benefit from the commitment staff have to further their professional development through training and attending courses. This includes the Early Years Foundation Stage training, first aid, food hygiene and safeguarding children. As a result, staff members secure understanding of child protection policies and procedures supports children's well-being.

Children benefit from having experienced and qualified staff who work well as a team and are effectively deployed. The majority of staff have relevant childcare qualifications. All staff are involved in monitoring and making ongoing evaluations of the provision and demonstrate a commitment to the improvement of children's care and learning. Parents and carers are also invited to give feedback about the setting through the use of questionnaires. Parents state they are very happy with the service provided. Staff effectively promote inclusion which ensures that all children feel valued and welcome.

Effective partnership between staff and parents ensures that children's needs are fully met. Information is shared through discussion and daily diaries. Parents have regular opportunities to see their children's records of progress and contribute to their learning. They receive relevant information through regular newsletters and via the notice boards in all areas of the nursery. Parents receive general information about the nursery chain and what the nursery has to offer, however information about the individual nursery is not in place. The nursery has effective systems in place to ensure that relevant information about children is shared with other professionals to ensure that children's needs are fully met.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are making good progress as a result of the support and encouragement offered by staff. Staff help children to develop their independence and start to think for themselves. Babies are encouraged to feed themselves while other children have self serve during meal times and are encouraged to do this and try a bit of everything. Children are well behaved and are good at learning to share with such things as the computer and outdoor resources. Staff are good role models and carefully show children the effect their behaviour has on others through gentle handling. Children are encouraged to respect each other's values and feelings they learn about taking turns and how to share and respect each other. However, they do not have many experiences which promote an understanding of the wider world or other cultures. Staff are kind and patient, they are energetic in their work with the children, which assists in giving them a sense of security during their time at

nursery. Through a positive attitude by staff, children are learning a mixture of life skills, including being polite, taking turns and being independent. Effective systems for making relevant observations of children's progress are used to identify the next steps for each child. This information is used in conjunction with their knowledge of children's interests to inform the weekly planning.

All children are happy, confident and self-assured as they move freely from the inside to out-of-doors throughout the day. They are confident communicators who interact well with other children and adults, and they are encouraged to become good listeners. They have daily opportunities to play with different medias, such as sand, water, paints and play dough. They thoroughly enjoy physical exercise as they ride bikes, climb, play bat and ball with the babies having opportunities to crawl, pull themselves up and use sit and ride toys. However, equipment and resources are not challenging and interesting to all children. Children's imagination is well promoted as they climb the caterpillar train and ride to the seaside, build a den using the wooden bridge and various materials and build a ramp using large bread baskets and have races using their bikes. Staff sit alongside children helping them to explore their thinking and maximise learning. For example, they count the days of the week, talk about shape and colour when playing with the bean bags and beam with pride as they succeed.

Children are learning about how to stay safe. Staff ask what needs to be done before they go into the garden and the children say that they must wear their hats and have sun cream put on. They remind each other when hats fall off outside and practise emergency evacuation from the building. They are learning highly effectively about health and hygiene. They know why they need to flush the toilet and wash their hands and staff give a simple explanation of why it is very important to use tissues to catch germs. Children enjoy nutritious home-cooked meals, such as pasta bake, garlic bread and salad and have snacks such as fruit and crackers.

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