

# Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY321200

**Inspection date**

09/12/2009

**Inspector**

Mary Kilroy

**Setting address**

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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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery opened in 1992 and was re registered under the current owner in 2006. It operates from three rooms in a house in Urmston, Manchester. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 33 children at any one time on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. They are also registered on the Voluntary part of the Child care register to enable them to care for older children. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Access to the premises is suitable for people with disabilities.

There are currently 21 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery engages well with parents and working in partnership with them is a sound area of the provision. Management identify clear goals, which are understood by staff and demonstrate a strong commitment towards achieving continual improvement. Children are making good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage from their starting points and observation and assessment systems are developing well. Children's physical development is good and they are provided with a variety of ways to enjoy exercise and a healthy lifestyle. However, forming links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework are at an early stage and developing and providing good opportunities for children to learn that everyday print has meaning is an area for development.

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

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

- provide opportunities for children to learn that everyday print has meaning and to mark make, in all areas of continuous provision
- ensure the record of written complaints is presented to parents who may request to see it, in a format that maintains confidentiality
- continue to build and develop links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

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

The nursery provides a stimulating and well organised environment, giving children choices and good opportunities to become independent. They are making good progress in all areas of learning and development. The daily routine promotes children's welfare and meets their individual needs very effectively. All documentation is in place and there are written policies and procedures that positively promote children's health, safety, achievement, enjoyment and ability to make a positive contribution. Staff have good understanding of the Safeguarding Children procedures and children are learning good strategies to remain safe, such as regularly practising the emergency evacuation plan, so that they are familiar with the procedure and are starting to take responsibility for own safety. Visitors are made aware of the fire drill and exits, on arrival. On walks around the local area, children have opportunities to use the crossing, learn about safe places to cross and identify hazards in the environment.

The manager and staff are committed and enthusiastic and strive to improve the service they provide. They ensure children enjoy an inclusive environment that makes everyone feel welcome. Parent's views are acted upon, such as recently they were asked to comment on plans for a summer holiday closure of the nursery and earlier morning opening times. A suggestion box is soon to be in place. This helps staff to successfully monitor the service they provide. Records for the safe and efficient management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are maintained well and children's individual needs are fully met. Staff contribute to the self-evaluation process and it is used as a tool for future improvement. All recommendations from the previous inspection have been met, to promote good hygiene practices and ensure children's privacy when using the toilet, to ensure parents can access their children's assessment files freely and contribute towards their learning and so that the learning objectives of focused activities are clearly identified. There are no hazards in the outside area and children benefit from a wide range of natural play equipment both inside and out, to enhance their tactile experiences and ensure older children are sufficiently challenged. All children are making good progress from their starting points.

The nursery has developed good written policies and procedures, which are discussed with parents. This helps to develop good working relationships and a shared understanding from an early stage. Parents are provided with a range of information about their children's care, learning and development and are consulted about children's interests and asked what they are doing at home. They are able to contribute to planning and assessment in a variety of ways. The setting works well in partnership with parents and links are being formed with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. There are presently few links with local schools as there are no school children on roll. Links with other professionals involved in children's care are good, with documented evidence of how children, for example, who have Down's Syndrome have their needs fully met.

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

The acting manager and staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the underlying principles of effective early years practice. Effective assessment procedures are clearly established and monitored to record children's progress and individual learning. Children's starting points are discussed on admission to the nursery. Regular observations and photographs are used to inform planning sheets and focussed activities are evaluated and enhanced to continually improve practice.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging within the nursery and access toys and join in conversation confidently. A balanced range of resources are available for children across the age ranges and are organised to promote children's active, independent learning, such as treasure baskets and containers of bark, cones, cross cuts of tree trunks, nailbrushes and tactile pictures and fabrics, a ball pool and soft blocks. Children enjoy a huge bubble tube and a sensory tent with a treasure basket inside, which enhance tactile experiences for babies and toddlers. There are sensory and shiny pads on the wall and furniture in the home corner has been changed to wooden. Plastic containers were exchanged for baskets made from natural materials and they are labelled in small case letters.

Early mark making opportunities are generally good, however, there are limited opportunities for children to see examples of everyday print and mark make, in areas, such as the home corner. They enjoy daily outdoor play and the provision of all in one weatherproof suits and Wellington boots ensure they are able to take advantage of naturally occurring events, such as snow and rain. They use the available space well. Photographs, creative activities and books are used to enhance and re visit these experiences. Signs around the water play area encourage children to think, is the bucket full or empty, is the water hot, or cold? The washing machine in the home corner contains different sized children's clothes for them to compare and there is a washing line and pegs, to count the number needed for each garment. They have access to a computer, cassette recorder and programmable toys.

Planning now shows the next steps in learning, to challenge children and move their learning forward. An investigation area has been installed, with an ant farm, books and activities for observing mini beasts, with magnifying glasses, shells, activities to compare animal sizes, a book about why snow sometimes falls in summer, a hedgehog bean bag and huge rubber spider. Children have regular opportunities to visit the nearby aquarium shop. New equipment in the outdoor area challenges older children and meets their physical needs and photographic evidence shows children playing creatively and problem solving outside, using bread trays and crates as stepping stones, using pipes and building dens creatively and imaginatively. They create obstacle courses, planning and working co operatively together. Photographic evidence shows play sessions in a local park and babies in nappies painting and creating with shaving foam.

Children were observed sleeping to their own patterns, on beanbags with clean

bedding, in cots, rings, cradle chairs and waking up when they are ready. In the morning a child was sleeping in it's own room, on a beanbag with a clean sheet and covered by a blanket. All children have individual blankets and sheets are all washed daily. Improvements to the menu have been implemented, with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, salad served at teatime, if appropriate, more fish and lamb and less processed foods offered. Lunch was cheese pie and spaghetti, with vegetables concealed in the pie and children enjoyed it. Milk and water only are offered to drink and fresh drinking water is made available for children to self select. Staff discuss making healthy choices with children, they draw plates with selections of their favourite foods on, these are discussed with the children. The manager is aware of current information on healthy eating, about the eat well plate and providing a balanced diet with pulses, carbohydrates and full fat products, for very young children.

Weekly and monthly play plans incorporate each child's individual plan for the next steps in learning. Improved planning shows the planned next steps in learning and observations, such as 'Used previous knowledge to shake the glitter off' show that staff are moving forward with their understanding of planning for individual progress.

Children share warm, happy relationships with staff, with babies and toddlers getting hugs and cuddles from their carers. Parents who expressed an opinion were satisfied with the service provided, they knew how to make a complaint and felt that they were kept well informed about everything, including children's progress. They said that the things they liked most was that staff are welcoming, 'My child likes all the key workers and talks about them all the time at home,' and had no suggestions for improvement. Children are achieving well in the Every Child Matters outcomes.

## 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	3
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