

Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Yvonne Campbell

Setting address 155 Whitefield Road, BRISTOL, BS5 7UB

Telephone number 01179 658241
Email littleacornsthornbury@yahoo.co.uk
Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery opened in 2009 and is one of five nurseries privately run by a small group of individuals. It operates from two adjoining converted houses in the Speedwell area of Bristol, on a direct route to and from the city centre. The premises are accessible at ground level and babies are cared for on the first floor. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

The nursery opens each weekday from 8am to 6pm, all year round except for bank holidays. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 38 children aged from three months to under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 66 children on roll. The nursery provides care for three and four-year-old children who receive funding for nursery education.

Eleven members of staff work with the children. Of these, the manager holds a Level 4 qualification in Children's Care, Learning and Development. Other staff have suitable Level 2 qualifications and are all working towards Level 3 qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

A comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework ensures that staff are effective in creating a well resourced environment that successfully promotes children's learning and development. Children are kept safe through thorough safeguarding and risk assessment procedures and they are able to safely explore, and have new learning experiences in the nursery and also by regular involvement with facilities available in the local community. Partnerships with parents are established so the needs of children are met well and there is continuity of care for children between home and nursery. Ongoing self-evaluation by the management team is a key strength of the setting and necessary changes are made promptly in order to consistently maintain the high standard of care available to children and secure the confidence of parents.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve systems for assessments and ensure all evidence obtained from observations of children's individual learning is organised, analysed and provides up to date information on progress
- reappraise the environment and ensure older children feel safe and have privacy when using the toilet facilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's well-being is safeguarded and promoted by thorough practices and procedures which are well established and known to all staff. The management team have systems in place for carrying out Criminal Records Bureau checks on all adults who have regular contact with the children. Information about checks is accessible for reference and is periodically renewed so all information held is up to date and relevant to the individuals concerned. Staff are clear about the action to take if they have concerns that child abuse may have taken place. Senior staff have completed training and the information is cascaded down to others. Additional procedures to protect children include strict procedures to remove the need for any use of mobile phones, also all photographs taken for observation of children's learning is first vetted by the nursery manager before approval for use.

Self-evaluation of the provision is honest, ongoing and reflects a strong desire amongst the management team that both the learning environment and staff should excel in meeting the needs of children and the expectations of parents. Continuous improvement is maintained by purchasing interesting and stimulating resources and new information technology equipment has been purchased to further develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and help them learn skills for the future. Improvement of the outdoor area has also been prioritised by obtaining a grant to purchase a water feature. Staff continue their professional development by attending relevant courses and also through accessing internal training which meets their individual needs from the area manager.

The setting is inclusive and children feel welcomed regardless of their ethnicity and backgrounds. Staff ensure that specific dietary needs are met and senior staff check to make sure that children have meals which reflect the wishes and instructions given by parents. The use of children's first language is facilitated during play and staff work with parents to ensure they know some key words which children may use. The manager is aware that some children have special educational needs. She is currently working with parents and staff to ensure all children have sufficient challenge in keeping with their individual stage of development. The setting is working well to establish links with the local schools, having organised visits from the reception teacher.

Most children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff make and record regular observation of play. Individual activity plans are developed for observation of children's interests. Some observations in the baby room are very well set out in their learning records and are clear and easy for parents to understand. Along with information from parents about children's starting points and the nursery's own settling in records, this provides clear information and analysis of younger children's progress. However, some written and photograph evidence collected from observations of older children's learning has not been analysed and set out in their learning records. This means that though key staff have a clear understanding of each child's learning needs, this is not reflected in the learning records and parents cannot access the information independently.

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

Older children are happy and enjoy their play. They speak confidently to their peers and to adults and share their experiences using good vocabulary. Staff talk with children about what they are doing and they respond with genuine enthusiasm to children's interests in order to further develop conversation. Children who have English as an additional language join in story and song activities. Staff use effective resources such as well illustrated books and record music from DVDs. Children listen to the musical and verbal prompts and repeat familiar words and sounds.

A range of interesting books are accessible at child height and children are developing the interest in different elements of books and they know what terms, such as illustrator and author, mean. Children have the opportunity to practise mark making and emerging writing skills in a number of situations. For example, different size crayons and writing equipment is available for children to self-select during free play. Children also practise making shapes and letters when exploring foam and some children can link letter sounds to their name. The use of Makaton signing by staff ensure that children, including babies, who have developed clearly spoken words are able to communicate their basic needs, such as sleep and drink, to adults.

Children have regular opportunities for walks during which they exercise and explore and learn about the local community. They have trips to local shops and the nearby playing fields where they observe aspects of nature and changes in the environment. Staff ensure children benefit from spontaneous learning opportunities brought about by natural changes, such as the weather. For example, a large amount of snow is collected for children to explore the texture and how they can mould the material into balls. Children also express curiosity about why the material turns into water enabling staff to introduce the ideas about solid and liquid. Children are developing confidence in using information and technology equipment. They capture the learning environment using a digital camera and are learning how to reproduce their work by using a photocopier.

Children are learning how to stay safe when hazards are present. They are familiar with the procedure for wearing a high visibility vest when they go out and staff ensure they holds hands and look right and left before they are taken across the road. Children are familiar with the procedure for leaving the building in an emergency as staff ensure fire drills are practised regularly and evaluated for effectiveness. Each member of staff has a specific role in ensuring children evacuate quickly if necessary. Risk assessments are given high priority and staff assess the indoor and outdoor environment and control measures are in place. However, children do not have sufficient privacy when using the toilet facilities and this may impact on their sense of feeling safe and the right to privacy during hygiene procedures.

A varied range of activities and resources ensure children feel good about

themselves and are developing a positive attitude to the differences they observe in others. A range of activities and resources are provided and on occasion the view and input of parents is sought to enhance the provisions made by staff.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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