

# Stepping Stones Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY405710  
**Inspection date** 09/07/2010  
**Inspector** Kashma Patel

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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 Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Smarteenies Birmingham Ltd which opened in 2010. The nursery operates from a converted house in Birmingham which offers full and part-time care facilities to the local community and surrounding areas. The setting is easily accessible via one step and there is also disabled access to the side of the premises. Children are cared for in four main large playrooms. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register for a maximum of 64 children at any one time. There are currently 81 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting is in receipt of funding for nursery education for two, three and four-year-olds. The setting is open each weekday from 7.30am until 6.00pm for 51 weeks of the year. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

There are 20 members of staff, of whom most staff hold relevant early years qualifications or are working towards them. Some staff are currently working towards a foundation degree and the Early Years Professional Status. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting is very well organised and managed which supports children's care, learning and development. The nursery works extremely well with parents and other settings to create an inclusive environment for children and their families. Policies, procedures and documentation are well implemented which contributes to the welfare and safety of children. The management and staff team have a clear idea of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement and effective plans are in place to ensure continuous improvements.

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

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

- develop further staff's knowledge of how to support and challenge individual or groups of children during activities to enable them to reach to their full potential
- develop further opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning in order to value linguistic diversity
- update consent for emergency medical treatment to include advise.

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

Children's safety is well promoted as all staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and are clear of their responsibilities to protect children. A safeguarding policy is comprehensive and in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines. In addition to this, there are clear and robust recruitment procedures that include Criminal Record Bureau checks which ensure all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. A password system is in place for the collection of children. Staff also ensure the identity of all visitors is checked on their arrival and their departure is recorded, this further protects children from persons not vetted.

The nursery is very well managed. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team receiving a high level of support from management. The professional development of staff is valued, consequently staff are keen to attend training and improve their knowledge and understanding of childcare issues. Systems for self-evaluation are in place which enables the management to identify areas of improvement, some of which have already been addressed and new targets set. For example, a parent's association has been set up and more information is given on children's activities during the day. Regular staff meetings and appraisals ensure that staff are kept well informed and are able to contribute their ideas to make improvements. Documentation, policies and procedures are in place to promote most aspects of children's welfare, however, consent for emergency medical treatment needs to be updated to include advice.

The environment both indoors and outdoors is welcoming and exciting. A good range of toys, resources and equipment help children to develop new skills which promotes their development. For example, in the baby room the extra small furniture enables all children to participate in group activities, such as, snack time. Children learn about the diverse community through a range of resources which promote equality of opportunity. Some systems are in place to support children who speak English as an additional language. However, this needs further developed to ensure every child's home language is promoted in the setting. Staff are well deployed throughout the nursery and the key worker system ensures children are safe and receive high levels of support.

Highly positive relationships are in place between the nursery and parents which ensures each child's individual needs are well met. Parents receive comprehensive information on all aspects of the nursery through daily discussions, emails and newsletters. The nursery helps parents to support their children's learning at home. For example, all children take books home to read and carry out activities with parents to extend their learning. In addition to this, staff support children to make a smooth transition into school through activities and discussions about starting school. Comments from parents highlighted that they are very happy with the nursery and found staff friendly and approachable. They also felt they were ready to discuss any issues or concerns with staff and management.

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

Children are well cared for in an environment which is accessible, inclusive and welcoming. Activities are clearly rooted around children's individual interests and learning styles which enables them to enjoy their time in the setting and make good progress in their learning and development. Systems for observation and assessments are in place which clearly identify what children need to do next. This information is then used for planning to ensure children continue to make good progress in the six areas of learning. Although, staff plan an interesting range of activities for children, they are not always confident in supporting and challenging children to ensure they reach their full potential. As a result, there are missed opportunities in some aspects of children learning.

Daily opportunities are in place for children to make marks using pencils and crayons. Their learning is continued outdoors as children pretend to take the register and make shopping lists. The daily signing in and out system ensures children have opportunities to recognise letters of the alphabet. Older children are also able to write many recognisable symbols from their names and their work is displayed at their level to promote their self-esteem. Children have a variety of opportunities to develop their independence. For example, at snack time they help themselves to food and pour their own drinks. They take pride in being the helper for the day as they help staff set up for lunch. Skills for the future develop as children independently access the light table. Older children look at x-rays and talk about the skeleton whilst younger children examine the holes left by insects on leaves. Their learning is continued outside as children go for bug hunts and take part in growing activities where they care for plants by watering them. Children access electronic toys, such as, toy computers, the listening centre and the tape recorder which they operate independently.

Children have time to be physically active and also times to rest and relax. Excellent use is made of the garden on a daily basis to enable children to get lots of fresh air and exercise. Children access a wide range of equipment, such as, wheeled toys, bikes and tyres to improve their balance and coordination. Babies enjoy the fresh air as they access the small slide which promotes their physical skills. Children enjoy freshly prepared meals and snacks which meets their individual dietary requirements. Menu's are displayed to ensure parents are kept informed of children's food intake. Meals for babies are also prepared according to their stage of development. Mealtimes are social occasions which are used well to promote children's independence and self-help skills.

Children learn about being safe through regular activities. For example, the road safety person talks to children about safe places to cross the road and involves them in demonstrations. Babies feel secure in an enclosed garden area where they can safely play and explore. The low fence ensures babies are able to interact with the other children in the main play area. Children learn about acceptable behaviour as they access the rules book which contain photographs of children sitting and listening well. They also receive a certificate for being the helper of the session.

## 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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### 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