

Stepping Stones Nursery

155 Whitefield Road, BRISTOL, BS5 7UB

Inspection date	09/12/2013
Previous inspection date	22/05/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Well-established key person arrangements ensure children are happy and secure in the nursery and are confident to seek support when needed.
- Children make good progress in relation to their capabilities and starting points at entry as staff provide motivating experiences based on their needs and interests.
- Consistent assessment and planning for children's individual progress means that children do well in the environment which includes stimulating resources and activities.
- Strong relationships and links with parents enable staff to share information about the children and their learning at home and in the nursery.
- The teamwork and hands-on support by management supports the team of staff to be motivated and enthusiastic about their work and to evaluate the provision well so that children continue to receive a good standard of learning and care.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Older children learning English as an additional language tend to look at books in whole group situations. This means that staff do not always encourage children's concentration and participation fully during these times to extend their early literacy skills.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the three play rooms and the outside learning environments.
- The inspector had discussions with members of the management, staff, children and parents.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the leader in the pre-school room.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation including self-evaluation documents, children's records, planning, safeguarding procedures and policies.

Inspector

Angela Cole

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery registered 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 toddler and pre-school units are on the ground floor with a shared conservatory and babies aged three to 24 months are cared for on the first floor. Children play in an enclosed outdoor area at the rear of the premises. The nursery opens each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm all year round, except for bank holidays. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and there are currently 85 children in the early years age range on roll. It currently supports a number of children learning English as an additional language. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

There are 13 members of staff working with the children, including the manager. Of these, 12 staff hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications. There is one staff member working towards a qualification and two staff are gaining further qualifications, including a degree in early childhood studies.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- support children with developing understanding of the English language to fully enjoy and learn from looking at books.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff know babies and children well and their knowledge of how to promote children's learning and development is secure. They establish children's starting points by gathering information from new parents and through systematic, early observations. Key persons in each room prepare clear plans to support what each child needs to learn next. Overall, planning is consistent throughout the nursery as staff base this securely on every child's individual needs and interests.

Babies and children are keen to choose activities and have fun at the nursery where they make good progress in their learning and development. Staff skilfully analyse their observations to note children's achievements and their need for further support. Staff offer a good range of activities and support children to choose for themselves, which helps to build their skills for independent learning. The adults demonstrate a good understanding of when and when not to get involved. As a result, children develop their own learning

through play and increasingly make their own decisions about their activities. For example, older children become engrossed in preparations for Christmas and staff enhance this attitude by making available a wide range of appropriate materials. Children create tree decorations out of construction materials, fashioning symmetrical shapes, such as stars. This approach helps children to recreate real experiences through their play. Younger children benefit from learning through their senses and enjoy many 'messy' activities, such as playing with flour and then adding water. This type of play enables young children to learn to explore and experiment with different materials.

Staff effectively foster children's communication and language skills. During free play times, they attend closely to individual and small groups of children, giving them time to talk and respond to questions. This approach encourages children to think and develop their own ideas, for example as older ones master skills to use the computer. Staff caring for babies recognise the ways in which individual children communicate and respond warmly to them. Children have ample opportunities to learn about the living world as they grow fruit and vegetables, and care for the nursery's snails and visiting animals, including a rabbit. Staff encourage children's interest in stories through sharing special books and enthusiastically led story times. However, the groups are sometimes too large to enable each child to concentrate and participate fully, particularly for some children learning English as an additional language. Children learn about letters and sounds in many routine and play activities, including the naming of their artwork. Staff display words and signs in the children's home languages and use sign language so children recognise what they are saying.

Staff provide robust support to help children prepare for their moves between the nursery rooms. Staff encourage babies and children strongly to gain independence and develop good learning and social skills, such as decision making and consideration for each other. As a result, staff support children from a young age so that they are well prepared when they eventually move on to full-time education.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children make smooth moves from home and between rooms in the small, homely nursery. These are the result of a well-planned, effective settling-in process and the close relationships key persons and their buddies have with families. New parents have ample time to share about their children and to raise questions. They settle their children and complete initial paperwork, including about their achievements and routines. Babies and children build strong relationships as staff provide genuine warmth and affection. The adults show a strong interest in children, listening attentively to them and swiftly meeting their personal needs. This enables younger and newer children to feel safe and secure. It helps to give them the confidence to develop their independence and explore the spacious rooms and outdoor environments. Children effectively learn how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, very young children spontaneously tidy toys away into soft, cloth boxes to keep the floor clear. Toddlers and older children negotiate the outdoor decking and steps safely several times each day. They benefit from discussions around road safety before going on outings.

Children of all ages show a strong sense of belonging in the nursery. They demonstrate that they are used to the routines and gain a good understanding of what staff expect of them. Older babies willingly share the space on the blackboard to make marks and all children receive warm praise, including for using 'kinds hands' and 'walking feet'. Babies and children develop well as they explore their surroundings. They confidently move around the play space, choosing good-quality resources from clearly labelled, low-level storage to have control of their learning and build their confidence. Children of different ages meet as they move in and out of doors and as groups combine to make best use of staff. This means children develop positive self-esteem to be spontaneously caring towards others, for example offering a toy to a child who needs comforting.

From a young age, children develop a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Babies and children benefit from playing in the fresh air for lengthy periods. Children are encouraged to be physical and to recognise the effect that this can have, such as needing a drink from their named bottles. Staff follow parents' wishes effectively so that they meet children's dietary needs. Babies negotiate a slide and enjoy ball play. Older ones energetically scale a climbing frame and net and know that an adult is always close for their safety. Children increasingly take responsibility for their personal hygiene and learn to wash always after toileting and before eating. Staff strongly encourage children to have a healthy and positive approach towards food. Children choose from a variety of healthy foods, including different fruits at snack times and nutritious, balanced meals. Older children confidently organise their own crockery and serve themselves. Their discussion about the foods they eat contributes to their growing understanding about the importance of a healthy diet.

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

The provider demonstrates a good understanding of their responsibility to meet all requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The management ensures that staff are not left in sole charge of children before suitability checks are completed. Staff benefit from a strong employment programme of supervision, appraisal and professional development which helps to check that they are suitable to work with children. As a result, staff are deployed well to care for babies and children.

The manager and staff have a secure awareness of safeguarding children procedures and work to appropriately detailed policies, including behaviour management and complaints. Through regular, in-house training, staff become familiar with child protection issues and with procedures to follow if they have concerns. The premises are secure and staff supervise children closely at all times to reduce the risk of accident and injury. Risk assessments, including for outdoor spaces and outings, are effective. As a result, staff check the areas thoroughly that children use to keep them safe at all times.

The provider understands the learning and development requirements comprehensively. The manager and key persons monitor children's progress at regular intervals. They use

this information effectively to improve the provision for children's learning, for example by focusing on a particular area of learning. Staff understand well the legal requirement to assess children's progress at the age of two years. Key persons complete detailed checks for two-year-olds, including parents' comments and planning what children need to learn next to help prevent gaps in their learning. Staff work effectively in partnership with other providers and agencies. Having obtained parents' permission, key persons liaise with shared settings by providing summary sheets. In this way, they communicate children's stages of learning and development so that children benefit from consistent practice and the sharing of any concern.

Staff discuss children's progress, activities and achievements with parents/carers on a daily basis and also more formally in a system of regular meetings. They frequently ask for parents' comments on children's learning and development. Staff use such information effectively to extend children's conversations and their activities at the nursery. The two-way flow of information between families and staff has a positive impact on children's learning. Parents say that staff are friendly, approachable and 'very down to earth' as they fully interact with themselves and their children.

The committed management and dedicated staff evaluate their practice well. They encourage parents to feedback their views about the nursery and hold termly meetings to discuss how to extend children's learning further. Staff are proactive in taking account of children's interests when planning activities so that children enjoy what they do. The management values the support and suggestions of the local authority advisor, for example concerning recommendations from the previous inspection. Staff have developed partnership working and they now give children time to think and respond to a question, before posing another. The provider and staff constantly review what is working well and identify areas for additional improvements under a quality assurance award scheme. They are working towards consolidating parental contributions to children's learning diaries. Actions plans also include developing forest school activities and implementing activities under the Every child a talker initiative to support children's communication and language. This planning demonstrates the provider's commitment to making ongoing improvements.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY392108
Local authority	Bristol City
Inspection number	943469
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	85
Name of provider	Little Acorns (South West) Limited
Date of previous inspection	22/05/2013
Telephone number	01179 658241

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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