

Stepping Stones

1 Hawkesbury Road, Bristol, Avon, BS16 2AP

Inspection date	14/01/2015
Previous inspection date	18/08/2009

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		1
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

- Staff take adapt their teaching to meet the needs of children's stages of development, so that they can learn together and make good progress.
- Staff teach children effective social skills which is why they are confident, make good relationships and behaviour is excellent.
- Staff work in partnership with parents to share information about children's ongoing interests, progress and achievements.
- Staff use questioning techniques skilfully to challenge children and encourage them to think more deeply, and to share their personal thoughts and ideas
- Independence is highly promoted through daily routines to develop children's physical and self-care skills helping them prepare for school.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Some staff miss opportunities to extend children's mathematical skills.
- Staff do not always make full use of the daily routines to enhance children's learning and development.

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 all of the playrooms and both outside learning environments.
- The inspector looked at documentation including a sample of children's records, planning and records to check the suitability of staff.
- The inspector took account of the views of some children, staff and parents spoken to on the day of the inspection, and of the provider's self-evaluation.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager, area manager, registered person and owner of the nursery.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the nursery manager.

Inspector

Dominique Bird

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones day nursery is one of a group of seven privately owned nurseries. It opened in 1975 and transferred to its current ownership in 2006, registering with Ofsted in 2001.. It operates from a Victorian house in Fishponds, Bristol. The nursery serves the local area. The building is accessed up some steps; the baby room and pre-school rooms are on the ground floor and the toddler rooms are on the first floor. There are two enclosed areas available for outdoor play. There is a designated sleep room, kitchen and staff office. The group opens Monday to Friday all year round except for a week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 76 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register. The nursery provides funded early education for children aged two, three and four years old. It supports children with learning special educational needs and/or learning difficulties, and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. One member of staff has early years professional status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- maximise opportunities for mathematical learning in daily routines and play activities
- use daily routines, such as when children are waiting to go outside, to enhance their learning and development further.

Inspection judgements

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

Children settle quickly because they are keen to explore the interesting and stimulating play activities. Staff work with the parents when their children start to find out about each child's interests and stages of development. Staff know children well and have a good understanding of how children learn, and of ways to promote their learning and development. Staff carry out on-going observations and use this information to plan activities so that they are of interest and relevant to the children. This approach helps children move on to the next stage in their development. Parents receive regular information about their children's progress and staff encourage them to share their thoughts of their children by writing in the learning diaries for the staff. This aids effective two-way communications, and keeps everyone updated with children's experiences. Staff invite parents to borrow their children's learning diaries to go through at home. They offer

regular meetings so that parents can discuss their children's current interests, needs and achievements. Strong partnerships with parents are well established.

The quality of teaching is good. Children make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. However, although children are making progress with their mathematical development, staff miss some opportunities to promote children's widening knowledge of number, space, shape and measure. As a result, their ability to further develop new mathematical skills is not fully extended.

Children take part in a wide range of activities, and staff are particularly skilled in promoting children's communication and language development. For example, they use skilled questioning to promote children's critical thinking during conversations as they play. They give children time to explore and talk about their ideas that have led them to play in a certain way. Children look through books and talk about the pictures and staff extend their thinking further by asking additional questions. In the garden, staff extend the youngest children's developing vocabularies as they comment on what children do, and use new words that interest them. For example, as children stamp on frozen icy grass staff say, 'Crunch' and as they touch ice staff say, 'Cold' and 'Wet'. This helps children's vocabularies to grow effectively.

Interactions with children are good. The staff are actively involved in children's play and teaching is effective. For example, staff use strategies, such as adjusting the tone of their voice and adjusting their body language to capture children's attention when having conversations with them. Children respond well to the staff interactions and often choose to play alongside them, which supports children's progress in their personal and social development.

Children often choose to stay at activities for long periods and become fully engaged and fascinated in imaginative play activities. For example, they pretend to be characters from their favourite film and perform songs to staff and their friends. However, staff do not always make full use of the learning opportunities during daily routines and at times they do not plan as well as possible for the changeovers in routine. This means that staff do not fully extend children's learning and development at these times. For example, when children are preparing to go outside or are waiting to come in from the garden, some children lose interest because there is less learning going on to keep them stimulated.

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

Children build friendships with one another and play together exceptionally well. Children are highly interested and occupied in play at all times, so they behave very well. Staff are excellent role models for children. They use consistent teaching strategies, which promote children's well-being because children know precisely what is expected of them. Children have excellent relationships with staff. The system for allocating staff to specific children is well established. The staff know their group of children extremely well and they work highly productively to ensure that there is an ongoing exchange of information between home and nursery. This exchange helps to ensure that they meet children's individual care

needs to a high standard. Parents have a strong understanding of the role of the adults and they feel exceptionally well supported and informed by their child's allocated adult.

Settling-in sessions before children start help them to feel confident in the nursery quickly. Children spend time in the nursery with their parents and staff to help them to become familiar with the environment, which builds their confidence. Staff interact in an extremely nurturing way with children. They always take time to listen and they provide cuddles and reassurance when children feel unsettled.

Children understand the importance of sharing and taking turns, such as waiting for their turn to speak during a story session. Staff praise children regularly, which builds their self-confidence. At snack times, staff sit with children, which makes it a social time as they talk to them about their lives developing children's conversational skills. Staff expect children to be highly independent. For example, children learn to collect their own plates and cutlery to lay the table and serve themselves lunch. These high expectations help children to be well prepared for school and helps them to develop very good personal hygiene routines.

The learning environments suit all children whatever their abilities and are well organised to encourage children to make decisions. Children have access to a good range of high-quality toys and resources that challenge their development successfully and are highly stimulating. Children have lots of opportunities to be outside and active in well-equipped outdoor environments. Staff take children to places in the local community, such as the local shops and the library to support their understanding of the wider world. These outings broaden children's experiences successfully.

Staff keep children very safe. Staff are extremely clear on their roles and responsibilities in keeping a safe and secure environment. They implement a range of highly effective policies and procedures and carry out regular, meticulous risk assessments of the areas used by children. These minimise hazards to children. Staff supervise children very well so they move safely between different areas indoors and outdoors. This means children get fresh air and regular exercise, which benefits their health and well-being.

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

Staff have a strong understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. They are familiar with the nursery safeguarding policy and have had training to help them identify any child protection issues promptly. All staff are clear about the procedures they must follow if they have any concerns about children in their care. Staff who are qualified in first aid are deployed effectively so that they are on hand to provide first-aid treatment in the event of an accident or incident. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures help to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff ensure that parents are well informed of the nursery's policies and procedures. Staff maintain all required documentation to a good standard to ensure that children are safe and secure.

Staff have a secure knowledge of the learning and development requirements. There are comprehensive systems, which include observation, assessment and planning, to help staff in monitoring children's progress effectively. Staff plan together and highlight specific activities for their allocated children, as they know them best. This means they can ensure that activities meet children's interests and individual needs most effectively. The leadership team has responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the educational programme, which they do effectively. Staff work well together to support children and as a result, children are making good levels of progress.

The leadership team and staff all demonstrate that they drive improvement effectively. There are effective evaluation methods in place that allow the staff team to reflect on what is going well and what they want to develop further. The manager supports staff well and ensures that they have regular opportunities to enhance their professional development. Staff receive regular and effective supervision, which provides them with opportunities to listen to feedback about their performance. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are well advised of current issues. The leadership completes improvement plans that prioritise appropriate areas of development, such as plans to develop the use of the outdoor play areas. They regularly work with local authority advisors to review practice and identify strengths and areas to improve. This joint working helps to ensure that improvement plans are fit for purpose.

Staff have good links with local schools and organise activities to prepare the older children for the eventual move into school. All value the ongoing partnerships with parents; they welcome this and use this as an opportunity to link children's family life to their time at nursery.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	EY315335
Local authority	Bristol City
Inspection number	834451
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	51
Number of children on roll	76
Name of provider	Lisa Marie Woodman
Date of previous inspection	18/08/2009
Telephone number	0117 965 7269

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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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