

Stepping Stones Alfreton LTD

Grange Mews, Grange Street, ALFRETON, Derbyshire, DE55 7JA

Inspection date	13/01/2015
Previous inspection date	03/05/2011

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

- Children's well-being is exceptionally well promoted. Staff are warm, caring and sensitive to the needs of children. As a result, children have high levels of self-esteem and feel safe and secure.
- Staff provide a broad range of imaginative and stimulating learning opportunities, to support individual learning. As a result, children make good progress.
- Staff develop highly effective partnerships with parents. They make good use of opportunities to involve parents in their child's learning. Children benefit from this as their emerging needs are responded to quickly and efficiently.
- Robust policies and procedures to safeguard children are fully implemented by staff. Consequently, the welfare of children is extremely well promoted.
- The nursery team are highly committed to improving the provision for all children. Reflective practice and clear action plans help to ensure the nursery is continually progressing forwards.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Although children in the pre-school room generally engage well in activities, there are occasions at snack time and prior to outdoor play when learning is interrupted.
- Staff working with the two-year-olds do not always allow the children the opportunity to explore and discover for themselves during creative activities. This limits enjoyment.

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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children during activities in the playrooms and the outside area of the nursery.
- The inspector spoke with staff, children and their parents throughout the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation and held meetings with the manager.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including staff suitability checks and the policies and procedures of the nursery.

Inspector

Elaine Tomlinson

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Alfreton LTD registered in 2010 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in the Alfreton area of Derbyshire and is privately managed. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a converted premises and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one with Early Years Professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.45am until 5.45pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 199 children on roll, of whom 142 are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- revise the routines for the pre-school children so they have less interruptions to their learning
- enhance the knowledge and understanding of staff who work with two-year-olds further, so they fully understand how to support children to explore and discover for themselves.

Inspection judgements

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

The nursery staff create a vibrant and welcoming environment. Children benefit from imaginative and challenging experiences supporting development across the seven areas of learning. Children's curiosity is stimulated by the interesting activities the staff provide, increasing their eagerness to explore and learn. Overall, children are well supported to develop their own learning from a good mix of child-initiated and adult-led play. Although, children in the pre-school room generally engage well in activity, there are occasions at snack time and prior to outdoor play when learning is interrupted by the routine of the day. Staff are generally very skilled teachers. For example, they intervene effectively in play, making suggestions which help to develop children's learning. Staff also ask fitting questions in order to progress children's thinking. Therefore, they learn how to solve problems. This means that children, on the whole, become independent learners who develop a good range of skills in preparation for future learning. However, very occasionally, during some creative activities in the two-year-old room, staff direct play

meaning that at these times some children become bored and disengaged in the activity.

Children are well supported to develop good communication and language skills. Staff model the good use of language and use repetition and gestures to support the learning of new words and concepts. In addition, staff learn key words and phrases in other languages, including Polish. They effectively use these to support understanding for children who speak English as an additional language. As a result, children become more confident communicators. Children's early literacy skills are well promoted. They are provided with countless opportunities to make marks and write as they play. For example, children write their own names on pictures and draw with chalks outside. Likewise, staff make good use of story sessions with older children to develop reading skills. They sing songs and play games which encourage letter and sound recognition. Therefore, older children confidently recognise the letters in their name. Children demonstrate good physical skills, such as throwing balls into baskets. They dance and move to music. Children's fine motor skills are challenged as they build models and thread hooks on to objects, including sea creatures. Younger children enjoy participating in role play with dolls. Staff extend this play by asking children questions about what the baby needs, helping them to develop a good understanding of the world around them.

Staff make use of well-organised observation and assessment procedures, including the completion of the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. This helps to ensure that play is purposeful and developmentally appropriate. When children first start, key persons meet with parents to find out more about their child, including their likes and dislikes. In addition, staff hold daily discussions with parents to share children's ongoing general development and complete termly written assessments of their abilities, which are shared with parents. Furthermore, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for well. Strong links with outside agencies and other providers helps to ensure that good information is exchanged between professionals. Staff use the detail gathered from others alongside frequent and precise observations of children to continually monitor and assess their level of development, and to inform future planning. Therefore, children's emerging needs are quickly met and they are effectively supported to make good progress.

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

The nursery offers a warm and welcoming environment. Staff are extremely friendly, caring and attentive to the needs of children. Children form close bonds with key persons and are very happy and settled in their company. This helps them to feel safe and secure. Staff make expert use of flexible settling-in periods to allow children and parents to foster warm relationships and share meaningful information with them. Children benefit from this greatly because likes and needs are identified through the process and catered for during their initial sessions. Therefore, children settle particularly well. Children are happy and content, chatting and playing cooperatively together as they develop close friendships with each other. Staff are excellent role models and show respect for children and each other. As a result, they use very good manners and learn to respect and tolerate each other's differences.

Staff consistently apply superb strategies, to ensure that children know right from wrong. They use positive language, such as 'kind hands', to support the children as they learn how to behave. In addition, staff constantly praise children's efforts, which helps them to build confidence and develop self-esteem. They reward children for helping and for caring about their friend's needs. This supports the well-being of children as they develop good self-esteem because they know they are appreciated encouraging exceptional behaviour. Staff place the utmost priority on the safety of the children. They supervise them closely, for example, as they move between environments. Equipment is in good working order and staff constantly monitor the play areas, removing any hazards to provide a safe environment. Staff skilfully explain to children how to play safely. For example, they ask questions which encourage children to think about the space needed for ball games. As a result, they develop an enhanced sense of responsibility and are learning how to keep themselves safe exceedingly well. Children are also encouraged to gain an understanding of risk. For example, they are supported to climb in different ways on apparatus while staff remain close by. These effective practices help to promote the well-being of the children.

Staff make use of excellent strategies to promote all aspects of children's independence. Children go to the toilets by themselves and wash their own hands. Staff use equipment, such as low-level sinks and a selection of different sized potties to encourage children and enable their participation. Staff talk to children about the importance of washing their hands. They use very thoughtful child-friendly prompts, such as posters, to enhance learning. Consequently, children learn how to manage their own personal hygiene needs well. Children are skilfully encouraged to carry out routines, including tidying away toys and cleaning tables. In addition, snack time provides further opportunities for children to learn how to do things for themselves. Children of all ages confidently serve their own food and pour their own drinks. They are provided with a well-balanced range of fruit and snacks. In addition, staff use mealtimes effectively to engage in meaningful discussions with children to help them understand how to make healthy food choices. Furthermore, children are provided with effective opportunities to move and be more physical outside. Therefore, children's good health is enriched. They benefit from good partnerships that the staff have with local schools. Significant information is shared effectively between settings, and staff skilfully involve children in role-play games and discussions about school. Teachers are invited into the nursery to visit their new pupils. This helps to foster this new relationship and heightens the children's emotional well-being as they move on to school.

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

The management team has a clear understanding of their responsibilities under the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means children's welfare is effectively promoted. The manager successfully implements comprehensive safer recruitment procedures, which help to keep children safe. All staff and volunteers are subject to the Disclosure and Barring Service checks prior to employment. Staff attend regular updated safeguarding training and consequently and have a good understanding of how to keep children safe from harm. They are clear about

child protection procedures and know whom to report any concerns to. This means children are kept safe and protected. In addition, staff make use of detailed risk assessments of the premises, outings and resources to ensure a safe environment, promoting robust policies and procedures through their good working practices. Consequently, children's well-being is successfully sustained.

The management team demonstrates a good understanding of their role in meeting the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager has developed in-depth processes to regularly review and monitor planning, observation and assessment documentation. This helps to ensure children are supported to make good progress. The staff team meets weekly to plan, review and discuss children's learning, resulting in any emerging needs being met sufficiently. Each staff member is responsible for ensuring that their key children's next stages of learning are provided for through purposeful play. These procedures help children to make good progress. Staff are provided with a supportive programme of professional development. The manager uses this to ensure that new staff receive a detailed induction plan. She effectively uses procedures to monitor staff's practice appropriately through meaningful observation, supervision discussions and annual appraisals. The manager provides regular opportunities for staff to attend training to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. Staff are well trained and qualified to meet children's needs.

The staff team are very passionate and dedicated to providing good quality care and education. Since the last inspection they have developed a comprehensive programme of evaluation, meaning that staff and managers now regularly critically reflect on practice. This has highlighted additional areas for improvement and detailed action plans are in place to support the development of the nursery. For example, a 'finding out room' has been developed to enhance children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff work especially hard to foster excellent relationships with parents, other providers and external agencies. As a result, interventions to support children's learning are implemented quickly and efficiently. Staff demonstrate their commitment to partnership working, through the encouragement and support they provide for parents. This means parents are actively involved in their child's learning through enhanced practices, including 'chatterboxes', which they use to encourage more conversation at home. Parents speak very highly of the staff team and value the care and education they provide. The management team takes every opportunity to develop its links with other settings. Therefore, children's information is effectively shared in order to promote continuity of learning. Appropriate interventions from external agencies are effectively sought, so that children can receive the support that they require. This means that the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well met.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

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	EY418015
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	851890
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	91
Number of children on roll	199
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Alfreton Ltd
Date of previous inspection	03/05/2011
Telephone number	01773521343

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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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