

Stepping Stones Alfreton LTD

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	03/05/2011
Inspector	Karen Byfleet
Setting address	Grange Mews, Grange Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 7JA
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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 Pre-School transferred to the current premises in 2008. It registered as Stepping Stones Alfreton Ltd in 2010. It operates from the ground floor and playrooms upstairs in Grange Mews in the town of Alfreton, Derbyshire. The upstairs rooms are accessible via a staircase. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school and out-of-school club serves the local area and surrounding villages. The setting opens five days a week. Sessions are: breakfast club 7.45am to 9am, pre-school 9.15am to 11.45am and 12.45pm to 3:15pm, lunch club 11.45am to 12.45pm and after-school club 3.15pm to 5.45pm. A holiday club operates 7.45am to 5.45pm.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for 63 children, all of whom may be in the early years age group but none of whom may be aged under two. There are currently 131 children on roll and of these 101 are in the early years age group. This includes children who receive funding for early education. The setting employs 10 members staff who work with the children. All of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff value and recognise the uniqueness of each child that attends. Children are happy and settled within an organised and welcoming environment and are making excellent progress in their learning and development. Partnerships with parents are very well established ensuring children's welfare needs are consistently met. Partnerships with other providers and professionals are also well established to ensure consistency and coherence in children's care and learning. All required documentation is securely in place to ensure children are well safeguarded. Management evaluates the provision and there is a sound vision to move the setting forward and maintain continuous improvements. However, the views and ideas of all staff, children and parents have not been fully implemented into the self-evaluation process.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- implement a systematic approach to self-evaluation which includes the views and ideas of children, parents and all staff.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are effectively safeguarded. The setting has devised and implemented a clear policy and procedure which follows the guidelines of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any child protection concerns. Effective procedures around the use of cameras and mobile telephones within the setting help to further protect children and staff. Good recruitment procedures are in place to ensure all staff employed to work with the children are suitable and no students or unchecked staff are left alone with children at any time. All policies and procedures are made available to parents within the welcoming reception area and these are reviewed on an annual basis. The security of the premises is good. The main doors are kept locked at all times with a door bell to alert staff to parents and visitors arriving. All visitors are requested to sign in and out of the building. The outdoor play area is also safely enclosed. Risk assessments are carried out and reviewed for all the premises and outings and daily checks of resources and the playrooms further ensures children's safety. Regular emergency evacuation drills are carried out and recorded. This helps to enhance children's understanding of how to stay safe in an emergency.

Children's health and welfare is promoted well. Parents supply packed lunches for those children that stay over the lunch period and staff work well with parents to ensure the packed lunches are healthy and nutritious. A healthy snack and drink is provided by the setting. Children are able to access fresh drinking water at all times as they each have their own water bottle. All required documentation with regard to the administration of medication and the recording of accidents is fully in place and all staff hold a valid first aid certificate.

Partnerships with parents is excellent. They are kept fully informed of their child's progress through daily verbal conversation and regular key worker meetings with parents keep them informed of their child's learning and development. Children's learning journals are readily available for parents to access at any time. Staff produce a termly newsletter for parents which informs them of the current topic and how this will be planned over the term, including the areas of learning to be covered. It also enables parents to contribute to the children's learning as they are asked to bring items relating to the topic from home. For example, family photographs, something belonging to dad or grandad or clocks and watches, to be used on the interest table. Partnerships with other providers and professionals are good. Staff work well at forming partnerships with other providers. They use daily link books that enable the sharing of information around children's interests, learning and development and welfare needs. Staff also meet with other professionals, such as health visitors, speech therapists and early years advisors to ensure children with additional needs have their individual education plans implemented effectively.

The manager and staff self-evaluate the provision but have not devised or implemented a systematic approach to how this is monitored or that the ideas and suggestions of all staff, children and parents are included. Staff recruitment procedures are sound. All staff have suitability checks and references are obtained

prior to them being employed. Training and professional development is monitored through ongoing dialogue and annual appraisals.

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

Children are very happy and settled in the well-organised environment and they are making excellent progress in their learning and development. Staff are very enthusiastic and motivated and fully interact with the children, making learning fun and challenging. Staff are very attentive, warm and caring towards the children, especially new children and those on settling-in visits, helping them to feel safe and secure. They include established children in helping the new ones to settle, for example, a member of staff introduces an older child to a new starter and is asked if they would look after the new child and help them to use the computer. The older child is really happy to do this and invites the new child to join in. The environment is extremely well organised. Children are separated into two age groups which ensures they have the space and resources suitable to their ages and abilities. All children are able to self-select activities. There is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated play. Staff plan interesting and highly effective activities which cover all the areas of learning through planned topics that have been chosen by the children. For example, children were asked to choose their favourite story and Cinderella came out top. Staff then planned a term's activities around the story which ended with the wedding of the Prince and Cinderella to coincide with the Royal Wedding. Children thoroughly enjoyed all the activities and acting out the story. The next book is about a chocolate factory and staff have again planned highly interesting and innovative activities which cover all areas of learning. For example children are making family trees, role play is set up as a sweet shop and an imaginative area has been set up as an invention area where children are being encouraged to invent their own designs.

Staff make regular spontaneous and focussed observations and complete development records for each child. They then use these to help them plan the next steps in children's learning to ensure progression is suitable and challenging for all ages. Children have regular access to activities and toys which encourage and develop skills such as problem solving and communication. For example, sorting shapes, jigsaws, sewing boards and looking at books, both individually and as a group. Toddlers and older children participate in a wide range of craft and creative activities such as painting, collage and malleable play. Staff allow and positively encourage the children to be creative in their own way. Through activities such as role play, children have many opportunities to use writing for a purpose. For example, they have appointment books when playing hairdressers or pet shops and menus when playing cafes. Free mark-making activities are constantly available with a good range of suitable resources. Children have free access to technology as they access the computer, play cameras, money tills and telephones in role play. Toddlers have a different theme planned 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and have been planting beans and have the role play area set up as a flower shop.

Children throughout the nursery have very clear boundaries as a secure behaviour

management policy is in place which all staff know and follow. Children are given lots of positive praise and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with in a sensitive, positive way, as staff reason with children and use explanation that each individual child can understand. The children are very cooperative and play extremely well together, forming strong relationships with each other.

All children have daily access to the outdoor play area where there is a wealth of resources for climbing, balancing and investigative play. Physical equipment is also readily available indoors with the use of climbing frames, small treadmills and slides. Staff talk to the children about the value of exercise and consequently children are developing a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles as they talk about being strong and fit.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met