

Stepstones Day Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY341028
Inspection date	23 February 2007
Inspector	Carolyn Mary Hasler
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Registered person	Stepstones Day Nursery Ltd
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stepstones Day Nursery is run by Stepstones Day Nursery Limited. It opened in 2006 and operates from a purpose-built building, of a large community hall. It is situated in a residential area in north Enfield within the London Borough of Enfield. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are 15 children on roll. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00, 50 weeks in the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children come from a wide catchment area, as well as the local community. The nursery employs 6 staff. Five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about good hygiene, because they have good role models to follow. They see staff washing down tables before they eat, and children are shown how to wash their hands. Children's learning of personal hygiene is generally well supported. They have clear picture and word labelling to help them to understand how to wash their hands and keep their teeth clean.

The toilet area is resourced well with steps to reach the toilets, seat size reducers and potties, however, systems to identify when resources are running out are not consistently applied. Although children wash their hands in the bathroom when they have been to the toilet. They all use the bowl and towel within the play room to wash their hands before eating. This means that children are not protected sufficiently from cross contamination of germs and therefore children's health is not sufficiently safe guarded. Children can access immediate medical attention because most of the staff have first aid certificates and the setting has a first aid kit close at hand. Systems are in place to underpin the children's good health such as appropriate permissions and records. Children's sleep routines are respected and staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's individual needs are met.

Children access fresh air and exercise, they have access to a large hall when the weather is unsuitable and can use the garden to run about in and have fun. They enjoy playing with the parachute, running under when it balloons in the air. Children enjoy building in the play ground, their imaginative development is fostered well by staff who are a tentative and help them develop their own ideas, bringing learning into the garden successfully.

Children can access drinks throughout the day, this area is well sign posted and children can pour their own drinks when they feel thirsty. Children learn about eating healthily because food is prepared fresh on the premises and most food is cooked from fresh ingredients. Children have the opportunity to try new and exciting fruits. Their environment encourages a positive image of natural ingredients through posters displayed on the walls. Children are not always encouraged to make choices about what they eat, such as during meal times. This is because food is set in front of them, however, they do help themselves to snacks. The staff have good systems in place to identify those children with special dietary needs, to ensure that individual needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into a secure and comfortable environment which has been brightly decorated with children's work and posters. Upon arrival children are greeted from staff who know them well and enter into conversations about how children are, helping children feel that they belong. Children separate from their parents well, happy to let them go and get on with their day. The resources are clean, well maintained and brightly coloured and children are eager to get down to play. Furniture is child size and children are comfortable helping themselves and moving around their environment without restriction. There is a good variety of interesting and suitable resources available which are appropriate to the age range and abilities of children at the setting.

The children learn about how to play safely, staff provide them with good role models and help them to understand when playing can be dangerous. For example, when playing in the large hall children were strongly encouraged to put the balls in the corners of the room so that they could run around safely. They learn about how to keep themselves safe when on outings, staff teach children road craft skills and they practise these in real life situations and in play, reaffirming developing knowledge. Staff inform that children learn how to evacuate the premises in the event of a fire. Fire evacuation is said to be practised frequently. The premises are well resourced with fire safety measures to alert staff immediately to a fire and staff know how to evacuate the building. Systems to monitor safety issues such as a fire evacuation log book and visitors log book are not in place or not recorded accurately and this means that children's safety has not been sufficiently safeguarded.

Staff demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how to safeguard vulnerable children. Although they have comprehensive policies and procedures to follow, should they have safeguarding concerns and understand that concerns must be passed to direct line managers, they are not secure in their understanding of the four different categories of abuse, signs and symptoms. This means that children are not sufficiently safeguarded from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They build secure relationships with staff who are kind and sensitive to their needs. They provide children with good role models of how to behave towards one another. This helps children build friendships with each other. Younger children play parallel, while older children begin to understand the concept of co-operative play. All children engage in large group activities, enjoying circle and story time together. Staff welcome children's contributions to conversations and children are confident in their speaking skills as they talk about things that interest them. Their imaginative skills are encouraged and extended as staff help children think about what they will need to build a house and open up an imaginary tool box. They use giant construction equipment to build and create structures. Children enjoy playing with small world equipment that is exciting and interesting. Resources to support small world play are from natural materials, such as bark, bog wood and moss or alternatively smoothed woods. This gives children opportunities to explore nature and natural substances, exploring all their senses. Children enjoy art and craft materials, exploring how paint makes patterns and what happens when colours are mixed. They are creative in other ways enjoying Chinese music in the background and playing with musical instruments such as rain sticks and shakers. Children enjoy and achieve at this setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about their own and others' cultures and lifestyles because staff create a culture of understanding and respecting others' views and interests. Children feel comfortable talking about their home experiences sharing important news such as new pets. They talk about recent trips into London to watch and take part in the celebrations of the Chinese New Year. All the children have been learning about the Chinese New Year, enjoying the brightly coloured display on the wall and eating Chinese food with chop sticks. They have been making red envelopes to collect chocolate money in. The staff inform that children have also had opportunities to learn about other cultural celebrations. Play resources and equipment such as small world, puppets and musical instruments provide children with opportunities to explore, investigate and question in an environment where adults are sensitive and informative. Children are learning about important people within their community like police officers and the Lolly Pop Lady. Children are given opportunities to role play and also to meet special people.

The setting does not currently care for any children with additional needs, however they demonstrate a good understanding of the issues and are committed to offering all children opportunities to meet their full potential. The setting has appropriate policies and procedures to support children with special needs and they have a nominated person who will support and work closely with children, their families and professionals. The setting ensures they make all reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs.

Children behave well because staff engage them and support their play. All children are engrossed in their play and are learning to play very well with each other. The staff use consistent age appropriate strategies with children to support their behaviour. Talking to children calmly and sometimes removing them from the situation. Children are learning how to share and take turns and begin to learn how to respect others' feelings and views. Politeness is encouraged and good behaviour such as helping to tidy up is praised with words such as calling children superstars. Children's small achievements are acknowledged and the staff's emphasis is on good behaviour. The setting has a behaviour management policy which underpins how staff support children. As a result children are very well behaved.

Children benefit from secure relationships between staff and parents. On first contact with the setting, parents receive a brochure with a synopsis of policies and procedures. New families using the service are supported through a key worker system so that children make secure relationships with a key member of staff before parents leave. Children and parents visit the setting prior to starting and can request a home visit. All parents receive daily informal and formal information from staff regarding their child's day, in addition parents receive regular news letters informing parents of what is going on at the setting. Parents are invited to take part in nursery life through the parents' rota and can make suggestions through the suggestion box. Parents share they feel happy with the service their children are receiving. There is a formal and informal procedure for making complaints, however this is not in line with changes in regulation.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe because the setting has a robust recruitment procedure in place, ensuring that all members of the staff team are suitable to have contact with children. This includes checks completed by the Criminal Records Bureau. A high proportion of the staff hold childcare qualifications and all demonstrate good child care skills. This means that children are well cared for.

The setting has a comprehensive operational plan in place giving parents clear aims and objectives to support children's needs. The grouping and layout of the setting ensures children are supervised at all times and correct ratios are maintained. The setting provides a wide variety of play experiences for children who have good levels of self esteem. Staff deployment ensures that all children have opportunities to take part and gain attention. The management of staff is supported well, they meet fortnightly to discuss planning and hold monthly team meetings. Staff appraisals are three monthly. The organisation of health and safety routines are satisfactory, the setting recognises that some aspects need to be addressed. Children who are attending this setting enjoy themselves and are challenged, they are making good progress. Children are positive contributors to their community. The setting recognises that some aspects of working in partnership with parents needs to be addressed.

The organisation of paper work is satisfactory, most were available for inspection. However, some records were disorganised and a few could not be found for inspection. Confidential records and information on children is stored securely and the manager is aware of her responsibility to retain information once children have left her care. Confidentiality and privacy of children and their families is respected.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- promote and maintain good hygiene through appropriate washing routines
- ensure that all records pertaining to children's safety are completed and maintained
- review the complaints procedure to fall in line with current regulations
- develop staffs knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk