

Stepping Stones Montessori Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Linda du Preez
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Montessori nursery is privately owned and was registered in 1996. The nursery is accommodated in large community premises, which belong to the neighbouring church. The nursery uses two large rooms, a kitchen, toilet facilities and a small enclosed outdoor area for supervised play. The nursery is situated in the Telegraph area in London Borough of Lewisham.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm all year round. It is registered on the Early Years Register for a total of 29 children in the early years age group, with no more than 16 children under three years old, and of these, not more than nine may be under two years old at any one time.

The nursery supports children with special education needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. The nursery is funded to provide free early education to children aged three and four years. Children come from the local community area.

The nursery employs eight members of staff, who work a variety of sessions. This includes the registered provider who holds an Early Years Degree and three members of staff who are qualified at level 3. The nursery operates in line with the Montessori educational philosophy and receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in this calm stimulating nursery, as they feel valued and extremely secure. Overall, children make good progress in their learning and development and have their individual learning needs well met. Excellent relationships established with parents result in a valuable exchange of information. Overall, the nursery has established good links with other provisions within the community to promote continuity in children's learning and development. Ongoing self-evaluation by the provider and her team identifies priorities for improvement. This results in a continually improving nursery that meets the needs of children to a good standard.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider ways plan regular opportunities for children to experience physical challenges and opportunities indoors and outdoors
- develop the arrangements for sharing relevant information with practitioners in other early years settings children may attend in order to ensure effective

continuity and fully support transition to school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider implements robust recruitment procedures to check the suitability of staff who work directly with children. The staff team gives good attention to safeguarding children, they use risk assessments effectively to monitor safety issues. The safeguarding policy is shared with staff and parents to keep them informed of their responsibilities. Staff and children practise emergency evacuation procedures regularly, so they understand what to do should the need to evacuate the premises arise. All of the required records and documentation are well organised and updated regularly.

Play and learning resources are of good quality and staff use them effectively to support children's learning and development. Staff create an enabling environment that encourages children to be independent and make their own choices. The experienced staff team also offer a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play as they encourage the children to be independent, whilst supporting them if necessary.

Staff value the unique qualities of every child and family and effectively promote equality across all aspects of the provision. This is clearly demonstrated in meaningful activity planning to enable children to learn about each other's cultures and backgrounds. For example, they take part in a diverse range of celebrations, food tasting, stories and dressing up.

The provider and her team use self-evaluation well and monitor how things are progressing and identify areas for development. The views of parents and children are incorporated into future plans for the nursery. A particular improvement includes the system for observations, assessment and planning arrangements to enhance the learning opportunities that children receive. The nursery has addressed all previous recommendations; there is a clear vision for future development and on-going improvement.

Staff build outstanding relationships with parents, who state they are exceptionally happy with the care provided. Parents receive excellent quality information about their children through discussions, meetings and newsletters that keep them up to date with planning and routines. Staff share exchanged relevant information on targets for each child's learning which helps parents to be involved in their child's learning records. This also helps to support children's learning at home.

There are good partnerships and well-established working relationships with other agencies. These enable the nursery to work alongside other professionals as and when the need arises, in order to support children's individual needs. The nursery has developed some positive links with other settings and most feeder primary schools to support children as they move on to school, although these are not fully established.

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

Each child has a special person who monitors their progress and helps them to feel settled and secure. The key persons manage their roles exceptionally well and form highly positive relationships with all children. Babies enjoy regular cuddles and confidently explore the well-equipped environment. They crawl around, selecting toys to feel, bang and shake. Children shout out and laugh with delight as they play. All children grow in confidence as they develop their social skills, interacting well with each other, such as, pretending to have a picnic in role play area and forming friendships.

Children show great deal of interest in the toys, resources and experiences provided at the nursery. For example a child selects Russian dolls from a basket and takes them apart carefully and lines them up in size order. She describes them using mathematical terms such as largest, smallest and middle size. Children are very vocal and clearly able to express their opinions about what they want to play with. Staff encourage children in all age groups to develop an interest in books and provide well-resourced comfortable story areas in both rooms. Consequently babies enjoy looking through age appropriate books, toddlers enjoy pointing out pictures and say familiar words and older children recall story lines confidently. Children enjoy developing their understanding of information technology as they use programmable toys These experiences enable children to develop good skills for their future development.

Children select toys independently and benefit from being in charge of their own choices. Furthermore, they pack away carefully after playing and have an exceptional understanding of how to keep the environment clean and safe. They wipe the tables, tuck in their chairs and tidy away as they play. Children work positively together and support one another. For example a child cannot find a water spray bottle, so another child stops what she is doing and helps him to find it. Children are extremely well behaved and show an excellent awareness of responsibility for their own and others' safety in the nursery. For example, children quickly pick up a piece of carrot from the floor, explaining that it is 'slippery and people can slip and fall over'.

Children have good hand washing procedures and learn from the signs displayed around the nursery. They develop an understanding of healthy eating as they enjoy helping to prepare fruit for snack time and enjoy healthy warm meals for lunch. Children benefit from use of the outdoor play area where they enjoy a wide range of outdoor equipment. However, there are occasional missed opportunities to provide children with regular challenging physical activities when the outdoor area is not available for use, due to bad weather.

Staff encourage children's thinking by asking many open-ended questions and showing a genuine interest in what children have to say. This enables children to think critically and communicate with confidence. For example, children talk about days of the week and months of the year, they talk about the weather and develop

an understanding of the natural world.

Staff are very good role models, they create an atmosphere, which is calm and welcoming with an abundance of opportunities for children to enjoy learning through play.

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	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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