

Stepping Stones Private Day Nursery

20 Claremount Road, Boothtown, HALIFAX, West Yorkshire, HX3 6JQ

Inspection date	08/01/2015
Previous inspection date	28/03/2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	3
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		2
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 create an accessible learning environment because resources and activities are set up at child-height. Consequently, children make choices and engage in independent learning.
- Children's learning is enhanced by staff following children's lead as they play, taking full account of their interests and by parents being closely involved in supporting learning.
- Children's emotional and physical well-being is ensured as a result of a successful key-person system and settling-in arrangements and effective healthy lifestyle initiatives and practices.
- Children are safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and are vigilant about children's safety, providing good levels of supervision.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Assessments are not monitored rigorously enough by leaders, in order for more detailed information to be provided about the progress of individuals and all groups of children, in order to narrow any achievement gaps with greater success.
- Staff do not fully maximise opportunities to obtain more precise information from other providers, in order to foster a more successful, shared and consistent approach to children's learning.

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 activities and care routines in the three main playrooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector spoke with children and staff at appropriate times during the inspection and conducted a joint observation with the manager and deputy manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and deputy manager.
- The inspector looked at children's records of learning, assessment records and planning documentation, alongside sampling a range of other documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff working with the children and viewed the provider's self-evaluation document and improvement plans.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and their written responses, alongside the views of the nursery's local authority adviser who was present during part of the inspection.

Inspector

Rachel Ayo

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Private Day Nursery was registered in 1995 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a converted church building in the Boothtown area of Halifax, and is owned by a private individual. The nursery serves the local and wider area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three rooms set on two floors; the first floor is accessed by stairs. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, eight staff, including the nursery manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications; one is at level 2, five are at level 3 and one is at level 4. The manager holds Early Years Teacher Status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round, except for the week between Christmas and New Year. The opening hours are from 7am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 61 children attending; 44 of whom are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop the systems for assessing children's learning, to provide more detailed information about the progress of individuals and all groups of children and narrow any achievement gaps with greater success
- strengthen partnership working with other providers, for example, by consistently obtaining precise information that promotes a more successful, shared and consistent approach to children's learning.

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is good because qualification requirements are well met. This contributes to staff having a secure understanding of the seven areas of learning, how children learn and how to promote an inclusive environment. Consequently, they provide a variety of well-planned activities across the whole of the curriculum. These engage children and help them make good progress in their development, given their starting points. These are reflected in detailed weekly planning that evidences how children's interests and individual next steps for learning are incorporated. These are informed by regular observations and assessments of children. This begins with a precise assessment of what children already know and can do, which involves parents completing a development document, in order to share what they know about their child's skills on entry to the nursery. Records of learning are very user friendly and include photographs,

which gives parents a lovely insight into their child's unique learning journey. Parents are well informed about their child's progress, for example, through very regular meetings. In addition, there is an ongoing exchange of information between parents and their child's key person about how they can support children's next steps for learning together. Consequently, there is a shared and consistent approach to helping children make the best possible progress. Furthermore, parents are encouraged to contribute their own observations of their child's emerging interests or any new achievements, for example, through 'wow moments' slips. Home learning resources, such as book bags and information about supporting the letter of the week, additionally involves parents in children's learning.

Staff create a welcoming environment in which there are child-accessible labelled toys and a variety of activities set out. As a result, children are acquiring the capacity to develop and learn effectively and be ready for future learning as they move to school. This is because they are left alone to explore, make discoveries, solve problems and learn new skills through self-initiated play. Consequently, they develop confidence, independence and a positive approach to learning as they eagerly take part in activities. Babies happily explore objects that make noises. They copy actions, such as shaking a musical instrument or banging objects together, and enjoy exploring natural media and materials. Younger children enjoy exploring the texture of the ice blocks and squidgy dough. Such experiences ignite their curiosity as they prod and poke the dough and observe the ice blocks melting. Children in the pre-school room show creativity and excitement as they engage in role-play activities or paint a picture for their parents.

Staff monitor children's engagement in activities and know when and when not to intervene, so as not to interrupt children's learning. They motivate children and support and extend their learning and critical thinking skills. For example, they are enthusiastic and talk to children while taking part in their play and investigations. This enhances children's enjoyment and concentration and helps them to develop their own ideas, make links in their learning and develop new skills and knowledge. For example, as staff sit with children during ice play they ask questions, such as 'what does it feel like?' and compare the dripping ice to drops of rain. As they play alongside children with the dough they describe different processes, such as how to make a large ball or roll the dough flat, in order to cut out shapes. As children do this, they show good hand and eye coordination with dough tools.

Staff effectively promote children's early mathematical and reading and writing skills, in preparation for school. For example, they provide resources that help children to solve problems and develop an understanding of measure, such as weighing scales and puzzles. Children are able to observe print in their environment and learn to recognise words, such as their name. For example, coat pegs are individually labelled and the pre-school children take part in self-registration on arrival. Furthermore, children enjoy listening to stories; staff make these interesting and sustain children's attention by asking frequent open-ended questions to encourage their involvement and extend their vocabulary. Staff engage in purposeful dialogue with children as they play and during care routines. This helps children to become confident communicators and especially supports babies' and toddlers' early communication and language development. For example, they are encouraged to experiment with sounds, link words to objects and string words together to

form simple sentences. Children who require support with this aspect of their development are identified at an early stage and supported through language programmes and close partnership working with parents or carers and other professionals.

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

Children develop secure attachments with their key person as a result of effective settling-in arrangements, which ensure their emotional well-being. Parents and carers are closely consulted on their children's individual needs during this period through effective information sharing with their child's key person. For example, they are asked to detail the daily home routine, complete an All about me document and a development checklist. Consequently, each child's key person helps children to become familiar with the nursery and to feel safe within it through a shared and consistent approach. Consequently, because children feel happy and secure, they are confident to explore and try out new things and develop a strong sense of belonging. The process is strengthened by staff completing settling-in summaries over the first few weeks. This guides their initial planning to meet children's individual needs and find out about each child's uniqueness. Furthermore, staff carry out their key child's care needs, which helps babies and young children to feel secure due to a strengthened bond. The success of children's move to a new environment is reflected in the positive interactions observed between staff and children. For example, babies relatively new to the nursery smile, gurgle and attempt to make sounds as their key person talks to them as they feed them their mashed banana. As children move through the nursery or leave for school, staff effectively support their continued sense of security. For example, all necessary information about children's care and development is shared and staff use stories to help prepare children. Staff also use different story books to help support children's emotional well-being as they experience other significant personal events at home.

All age groups are encouraged to manage self-care tasks appropriate to their age and stage of development, helping them to develop good levels of independence. For example, babies hold their feeder cup using two hands and readily indicate that they are ready for another spoonful of banana through non-verbal gestures and sounds. Toddlers are encouraged to feed themselves, developing their hand and eye coordination. More able children are encouraged to serve themselves at lunchtime and develop independence within hygiene routines, such as washing hands before eating and after toileting. They are also encouraged to put on their own coat in preparation for outdoor play. Care practices are effective in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. For example, staff use frequent praise and encouragement to foster children's self-esteem and confidence. They support children's social skills and understanding of appropriate behaviour through good role modelling and positive strategies, such as the tidy-up song and reward charts. These are also used in conjunction with parents, for instance, to support children going through particular stages of development, such as toilet training. Consequently, children behave well and respond to instructions, learn to use good manners and are very sociable, for instance, during meal times. Children play happily with their friends and cooperate and listen to others during small group activities.

Babies' physical well-being is well ensured. They have regular 'tummy time' to develop

strength and support their developing mobility and learn other new skills. For example, they delight in bobbing up and down as their key person supports them in standing. Furthermore, their key person recognises and responds to signs of tiredness, offering a warm and comforting cuddle and rocking babies gently in the slouch chair. Staff encourage children to learn about practices that contribute to a healthy lifestyle from an early age, such as talking about the importance of using soap to remove germs when washing hands. Meals and snacks are well balanced, safe and wholesome and are effectively planned over a four week period. These are freshly prepared by the nursery cook, sourced from local produce wherever possible and effectively meet children's individual dietary needs. Children also contribute their ideas and help to make things. Consequently, children learn to make positive choices about what they eat from an early age. The nursery is also involved in a tooth brushing programme and have gained a dental award for their contribution to improving oral health in the under-fives. Children have daily access to the nursery garden where they benefit from fresh air, learn about the effects of exercise, also promoted through indoor music and movement sessions. They also have opportunities to take managed risks. For example, they develop confidence as they use the slide and climbing apparatus. Children also learn about dangers and keeping themselves safe through discussions about road safety and why they wear high visibility tabards on outings. Visitors from the local community are also invited into the nursery to enhance this aspect of children's learning.

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

The provider and management team have a good understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the safeguarding and welfare and learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, children's well-being is promoted; they enjoy learning, grow in confidence and are well prepared for moving on to school. Staff use a tracking document to help them monitor children's progress, in order to ensure early intervention where children are identified as working below expected levels of development. However, systems to monitor and compare the data for individuals and particular groups of children are not yet fully embedded, to fully highlight any gaps in children's learning and promote a strong focus on narrowing any achievement gaps. The safety of children is well-considered and reflected in robust safeguarding arrangements, such as the thorough recruitment and vetting of staff. This includes, for example, observations of individual's interaction with the children as part of the interview process and a clear induction and probationary period once the position is offered.

Staff have a secure understanding of possible signs of child abuse or neglect and of internal and external reporting procedures, where concerns of this nature arise. Reporting procedures are clearly displayed in all nursery rooms. Furthermore, the nursery works very closely with other agencies and professionals to safeguard children. Staff identify and minimise hazards to promote children's welfare. There is secure entry to the nursery and staff complete head counts and checks on areas as children move between indoors and outdoors. This ensures that children are supervised at all times. This continues as children use physical apparatus in the garden, for example, in order to minimise any accidents and promote children's welfare. As part of the effective risk assessments, the manager

monitors and reviews accidents, in order to identify patterns or unsafe practices that need addressing.

There is strong self-evaluation in place, cascading from the management team to the staff working directly in the rooms. All are closely involved in reviewing the strengths and areas for development that will continue to improve children's achievements over time. For example, very regular meetings take place between the provider and management team as well as the whole staff team. Since the last inspection, the manager, new to the post at that time, has introduced many new initiatives and made significant improvements. For example, actions have been addressed, improving hygiene routines, observation, assessment and planning systems and the key-person system. The manager cascades her high expectations and aspirations to the whole staff team and provides effective leadership by spending time working directly in the nursery. Areas for improvement are accurately and honestly identified and the nursery work closely with their early years advisory team, devising clear development plans. There has been a sharp focus on raising the consistency and quality of teaching by supporting individual's professional development. This is achieved through targeted supervisions and training plans, informed through close monitoring of staff's practice, for instance, through peer observations which include video recordings. There has been a strong emphasis on training focusing on the different ways in which children learn and effective teaching strategies to support this. Staff's extended knowledge of early years practice has a positive impact on children's achievements.

Strong relationships are formed with parents and carers, in order to build trust and work in partnership to meet children's individual needs. They are well informed about the nursery when children enrol, such as through information packs, the insightful nursery website and information in the nursery entrance. Furthermore, photographs of the areas of learning and the staff team are displayed for parents. Ongoing communication is very successful and there are many different ways the nursery achieve this. For example, daily diary sheets are shared each day, there are many notices displayed as well as information, such as the nursery menus. Newsletters are also issued regularly. Furthermore, parents and carers are invited to community events and are supported in accessing other services, in order to positively impact on children's care and learning. Parents' and carers' views are actively encouraged, for instance, through recently distributed questionnaires, in order to help inform and improve the service. Parents' comments are very complimentary about the nursery and care of their children and the improvements they have seen. Staff work well with other professionals as and when necessary to meet children's individual needs and support their learning. Where there is shared care, staff record children's interests and next steps in their learning in a link diary, in order for other providers to promote a shared and consistent approach. However, staff do not consistently obtain precise enough information from some other providers, in order to complement children's experiences and work together with greater success.

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	303706
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	976849
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	53
Number of children on roll	61
Name of provider	David Charles Marsden
Date of previous inspection	28/03/2014
Telephone number	01422 323231

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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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