



Inspection Report

Stepping Stones Day Nursery

**18 Bush Row
St Thomas Green
Haverfordwest
SA61 1RJ**



Date Inspection Completed

23/09/2022

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About Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Vivienne Hickey
Registered places	42
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	22 January 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

<u>Well-being</u>	Good
<u>Care and Development</u>	Good
<u>Environment</u>	Adequate
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Adequate

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report

Summary

Children are relaxed and happy at this setting. Their needs are met well, and they have regular opportunities to make their voices heard. Children are very engaged in a variety of interesting play activities.

Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They interact with children with genuine warmth and kindness. They provide a good range of play and learning opportunities, as appropriate for the different ages of children who attend. They are developing their understanding and implementation of the Curriculum for Wales.

The environment is developing. There have been significant improvements to the main play area and the outdoor area, and the people who run the setting have identified further improvements to be made. However, not all areas of the setting are well-maintained and decorated and we have identified this as an area for improvement.

The leadership and management of the service is adequate. The people who run the setting provide sufficient information to parents who are very satisfied with the care provided. They provide good support to staff and encourage them to attend regular training. However, we have made a number of recommendations in relation to the leadership and management of the setting.

Well-being

Good

Children are well-settled and relaxed at this service because their individual wants and needs are considered and met. Children make choices regularly, such as choosing what activities they do. Older children have good opportunities to contribute their ideas for activity planning by making mind maps and using an 'ideas box'. Babies' routines and preferences are observed and discussed with parents to ensure that staff meet their needs well.

Children experience a good sense of belonging because they have good bonds of affection with staff. Babies are cared for by a consistent staff team who know them very well. Younger children confidently approach staff for a cuddle or help when needed and older children chat happily with staff, sharing experiences and exploring ideas.

Children co-operate well with others. They know the routine of the setting and the expectations for behaviour. Children follow directions from staff such as helping each other to tidy up. Older children are familiar with the reward system and what type of behaviour results in rewards. Children play well together and show consideration for each other. For example, a group of older children encouraged another child to join them in the 'hobbit house'.

Children are enthusiastic and interested in their play and learning. They are very engaged in a variety of play activities. For example, during our visit, older children enthusiastically told us about the game of 'dinosaur tag' they were playing. Younger children concentrated for an extended period when exploring sand. Babies explored the room confidently and engaged happily in looking at a book with a member of staff.

Children enjoy a good range of interesting opportunities indoors and outdoors. They have consistent opportunities to lead their own play, as well as participating in planned adult-led activities. For example, children developed their communication, problem-solving and social skills during role-play as 'teachers'. They have some opportunities to develop their independence, such as putting on their own shoes but there are also missed opportunities for children to do things for themselves at snack time and lunch time. During our visit, adults did many things for them at these times, such as giving them their cups, pouring their drinks, and clearing everything away for them. Following our visit, the people who run the setting sought further support and took action to begin improving this.

Care and Development

Good

Staff have a good understanding of their role to keep children safe. They implement the nappy changing policy effectively and follow safe hygiene processes. They are confident in the improved system for safe collection of children. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities should they have a child-protection concern. All staff attend regular training in safeguarding and paediatric first aid. A sufficient number of staff also have current food hygiene training. They keep appropriate records in relation to accidents and medication. They also record and monitor children's sleep and nappy changes. Staff supervise children well.

Overall, staff have a good understanding and knowledge of child development and individual needs and how this affects children's behaviour. Interactions are positive, demonstrating warmth and kindness. For example, a member of staff crouched down to a baby's level and gently stroked their hand to reassure them and a member of staff talked to older children in an age-appropriate way about respecting each other's preferences.

Staff are developing their skills and knowledge to implement the Curriculum for Wales. Many staff support children's learning and play well by using open questioning and seizing opportunities to make links with previous learning or experiences. For example, a member of staff talked about a book that a child had chosen, naming colours, and linking it to a discussion about the child's pet at home. Another member of staff supported a child's construction activity, asking questions such as, "*What would happen if you put those on there?*" Staff observe children regularly and use observations to plan for the next steps in children's play and learning. They provide good support for children with additional learning needs. The Curriculum for Wales was in the early days of implementation during our visit and the people who run the setting are committed to seeking ongoing training and support to continue to develop this.

Many staff are committed to providing opportunities for children to use and develop the Welsh language. They make good use of each other's skills by drawing on Welsh-speakers' knowledge to support them to use the language. They are aware of children's language needs and Welsh-speaking staff ensure that children from Welsh-speaking backgrounds can converse bilingually. However, the staff team do not always use incidental Welsh consistently.

Environment

Adequate

The people who run the setting ensure that the environment is generally safe and secure. There is a secure system for entry to the setting and there is a record of visitors. There are risk assessments in place which identify a number of control measures to reduce risks, which we saw in practice at our visit. However, risk assessments do not cover all foreseeable risks. Some of the risks, not identified in documentation, were addressed in practice but others were not, such as the potential risk posed by black mould. The risk of electrical failure and the consequences for the fire-detection system were not fully considered at the time of our visit. This was addressed following our visit and there are now contingency plans in place should the electrical smoke alarms fail.

The people who run the setting ensure that the environment is generally clean and a suitable temperature for children's care. They have taken some action to improve the maintenance of the building, such as addressing an issue of damp on the stairwell. However, there is a small patch of black mould in the kitchen area. There is also peeling paint and the wall surface is damaged in some areas of the setting. There is an action plan in place to address issues of maintenance and to improve ventilation in the setting. While no immediate action is required, this is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action.

There has been a significant improvement in the layout and resources in the play area for children aged two and over, as well as in the outdoor area. The indoor play area now has well-planned areas for play and learning. There are sufficient, varied, good-quality resources available to allow children to explore and develop their independent play. The outdoor area has improved enormously. It is used frequently, and children have a range of exciting resources to explore, such as a construction area, a mud kitchen, and a walking balance trail. The babies' environment provides plenty of space for babies to explore freely and the sleep room is airy and a comfortable temperature. The people who run the setting have taken a considered approach to the improvements made thus far and sought advice and support from the local authority early years team as part of their planning and implementation of new resources. They have also identified further improvements to the environment as part of their action plan for the setting.

Leadership and Management

Adequate

Leadership and management at the service is developing. The people who run the setting provide a satisfactory statement of purpose which is a basic reflection of the service provided. They implement a range of policies, most of which are compliant with regulations and national minimum standards. However, the staff disciplinary policy does not provide for disciplinary action where staff have not followed appropriate child-protection procedures and the complaints policy does not include information about how children can make complaints. The people who run the service do not have sufficient oversight to ensure that they and the staff adhere to all policies. For example, there is no system to record pre-existing injuries, in line with the safeguarding policy.

There are safe recruitment processes in place and a suitable system to ensure that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are updated regularly. The people who run the setting ensure that staff receive regular appraisal and supervision. Staff feel well supported and they are confident that they can raise any concerns they may have. The people who run the setting and staff confirm that regular team meetings and management meetings take place, but they do not keep records to show what is discussed or any resulting actions. They also confirmed that suitable induction takes place when a member of staff begins work at the setting but there are no records to demonstrate this. There is a culture of professional development and staff are offered regular opportunities to complete relevant training.

The people who run the setting review the quality of care appropriately. They seek the views of children, their parents/carers, and staff. They seek advice from the local authority early years team to make improvements to the setting and take opportunities to apply for funding to support them. As well as ensuring they complied with the changing guidance in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic, they have made a number of improvements to the environment and have identified further improvements to be made, as set out in the setting improvement plan.

The people who run the setting have suitable partnerships with parents. They provide basic information to parents about the children's well-being and progress. The people who run the setting agree contracts for the children's care, but these are in the name of the setting rather than the registered person. Parents had signed these, but they had not been signed by the registered person. Parents, who provided feedback, told us that they were very happy with the service provided. The person in charge has made links with other settings in the local area and visited to observe the environment and share practice and ideas.

Recommendations to meet with the National Minimum Standards

R1 Develop further opportunities for children to practise their independence skills.

R2 Update and expand the risk assessments for the service to include all relevant risks.

R3 Improve the monitoring systems to ensure all staff are fully following the setting's policies.

R4 Update the policies for staff discipline and complaints.

R5 Ensure that all contracts are signed on behalf of the provider and that they fully meet the requirements of the national minimum standards and the insurers.

R6 Improve record keeping at the setting.

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people’s well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
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37	There is peeling paint, damaged walls and a patch of mould in the nursery. Ensure all areas of the nursery are reasonably decorated and maintained.	New
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Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children’s well-being.
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children’s well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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