



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Stepping Stones Day Nursery**

**Stepping Stones Day Nursery  
Penymynydd Road  
Penymynydd  
CH4 0LG**



**Date Inspection Completed**

15/07/2019

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| <b>Ratings</b>   | <b>What the ratings mean</b>  |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Excellent</b> | 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 |
| <b>Good</b>      | 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.   |
| <b>Adequate</b>  | 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.   |
| <b>Poor</b>      | 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   |

## Description of the service

Stepping Stones Day Nursery operates from a converted building in Penymynydd. The service operates from two separate buildings known as little nursery and big nursery. The registered person is Helen Bowyer. Care is provided from 8:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday, closing for bank holidays and Christmas. Places are available for children up to the age of 4, when they start full time school. Funded places are currently offered for children aged three as part of Early Entitlement but this is not going to be available after July 2019. The service is registered to care for up to 30 children.

English is the main language. This is a service that does not provide the Welsh Language 'Active Offer'.

## Summary

| Theme                                     | Rating |
|---|--------|
| <a href="#">Well-being</a>                | Good   |
| <a href="#">Care and Development</a>      | Good   |
| <a href="#">Environment</a>               | Good   |
| <a href="#">Leadership and Management</a> | Good   |

### 1. Overall assessment

Children confidently express themselves and know their opinions and ideas will be met with interest. They feel safe and happy with staff they have formed positive relationships with. Children interact well and enjoy the opportunities available to them. They develop a range of skills well as they have access to appropriate opportunities. Staff keep children safe and promote a healthy lifestyle. They interact positively with the children, teaching them positive social skills through being good role models. Staff plan a range of suitable activities and opportunities that promote children's development and help them to progress. The environment is child centred and inspires children to play and learn. Risks are managed well and resources are varied and of good quality. Leadership is effective and they ensure regulations are met. Staff are managed well and self evaluation is completed regularly and ensures improvements are made. Leaders develop positive partnerships that make sure information is shared and they have links with the local community to support them with the care they provide.

### 2. Improvements

Since the last inspection the service has;

- purchased more inspiring resources and activities for outside,

- ensured children in big nursery have access to more variety of resources, with the purchase of sand and water trays, bikes and trikes and new cameras; and
- some areas of the nursery have been re decorated to make them more inviting and clean.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

We made recommendations relating to care and development and the environment.

# 1. Well-being

Good

## Summary

Children communicate confidently and effectively with others. Their ideas and opinions are listened to and they express themselves freely. Children feel safe as they develop positive relationships with staff and form friendships with their peers. Children interact well with others and feel happy at the service. They enjoy the activities available, which supports their learning and development.

## Our findings

Children had a strong voice and made positive choices and decisions about how they spent their time and what they wanted to do. Children were moving around and confidently chose and accessed resources they wanted. Their ideas were considered in some of the planning, ensuring their interests were met. Children communicated their ideas and needs well with staff and they knew they would be listened to. They were given the time and space to eat and were relaxed enough to ask for more if they wished.

Children felt safe as they knew the routines of the service and what was going to happen next. For example, children in “big nursery” knew when they came in from playing outside they lined up to wash their hands. Children developed a strong relationship with staff who they were content to be in the care of and with whom they knew understood their needs. They had formed friendships and it was very evident that children liked playing alongside their friends and staff. Children were confident to move around the environment as it was familiar to them and they felt comfortable.

Children interacted well with others, including staff and children. We saw no incidents of unwanted behaviour and children of all ages were learning to be polite and share, with very few reminders from staff. In the “small nursery”, we saw the younger children happily allowing others to be involved in their activity. For example, a child was interacting with a member of staff, playing round and round the garden. Another child approached them, wanting to join in. They waited their turn and both children smiled and laughed when it came to the part of being tickled. Children were settled and happy at the service.

Children enjoyed the activities and opportunities available to them. There were lots of smiles and laughter heard as the children played and learnt together. Children felt valued as they were listened to and their achievements and comments were celebrated. They developed a range of skills through the resources and activities provided for them. They were inspirational and encouraged children to be curious. For example, the children were having immense fun launching a rocket made from an empty bottle with a little bit of water in and a pump when they were outside.

Children were able to develop a range of skills. They could independently use facilities such as toilets if they were able to and resources were stored so they could be freely accessed. Children in “big nursery” were encouraged and supported to self register so they learnt to recognise their name. Children had access to suitable resources that helped them learn through their freely chosen play activities. They also had opportunities to complete planned, adult led, focused tasks where they could further develop their individual skills and make good progress.

## **2. Care and Development**

**Good**

### **Summary**

Staff generally follow effective policies and procedures to support them in keeping children safe. They promote a healthy lifestyle with nutritious food options and regular opportunities planned for children to be active and get fresh air. Staff manage interactions extremely well, they are good role models and promote positive social skills. Staff plan a range of activities that support children's development and play opportunities help children learn new skills.

### **Our findings**

Staff understood safeguarding and the procedure to follow, should they have concerns, was displayed in every room and was easy to follow. However, we noted that the training a number of staff had completed on child protection was not up to date but there was evidence that training had been identified and booked for these staff. Staff kept detailed registers of children's attendance. It recorded the time of arrival and departure, alongside who dropped them off and who collected them. Regular fire drills were completed and new staff and children were considered when they were planned to help ensure everyone was aware of the procedure to follow should they have to evacuate the premises. Policies and procedures were generally embedded in practice and helped to ensure children were kept safe. However, we observed a member of staff not fully following the nappy changing procedure, which could lead to cross contamination. Staff were aware of the importance of protecting children from the sun. They made sure children wore hats and had sun cream on before going outside.

Staff implemented positive practices that helped children lead and learn about a healthy lifestyle. Healthy meal and snack options were provided, which was evident on inspection of menus, daily diaries and during observations. Drinks of milk or water were provided, although there was no free access to water when children played outside. Staff planned and ensured children had regular opportunities to be active and get fresh air, by accessing the outdoors.

Staff promoted children's social skills and were good role models for the children. They communicated with them consistently well and made experiences such as lunch and snack time enjoyable and sociable, by sitting with the children and talking about things that interested them. Staff celebrated achievements and good behaviour, using positive words of encouragement when children behaved appropriately. Staff rewarded children with certificates to celebrate a particular achievement. For example, star of the week and caring heart award.

Staff knew the children well and planned suitable activities for the ages and stages of development of the children. Planning in place covered all areas of learning and considered age ranges and developmental needs of the children, including those with additional



learning needs. For example, children in “big nursery were encouraged to self register. Children had photographs of themselves with their names underneath. Those who were able to were just provided with their names to help their recognition skills. Planned activities were evaluated at the end to identify how well they had gone. Staff provided interesting opportunities to inspire the children to learn. For example, during the morning some children took part in a baking activity where they made biscuits. Staff got the children to try and remember the recipe and method and to write this up in a book outside in the den area. Good individual progress and development records were kept on all children and a lovely book of photos and work the children had created was kept and shared with parents.

### **3. Environment**

**Good**

#### **Summary**

The environment is safe and any hazards are identified, eliminated where possible, or managed well to reduce the possible risks to children. Suitable spaces indoors and outside provide enough space for children. All areas are child centred and inspire the children to play and learn. Resources are of good quality and suitable for the ages and stages of development of the children, inspiring them to learn through their play.

#### **Our findings**

The environment was safe, with positive and effective procedures in place. Risk assessments were completed on all areas used by the children and hazards were identified and managed well. For example, when children were playing outside the external gate was kept secure and there was also a barrier used to prevent children from going near the gate. Entrances to both buildings was secure and visitors were controlled and recorded, so they were always authorised.

The environment provided suitable spaces for children to play and learn. The two buildings used provided enough space for children to be able to be grouped according to their age so suitable activities could be planned. For example, there was a room upstairs in the “big nursery” that was sometimes used by children who had attended school in the morning. This allowed them to access activities such as those with small parts which were not suitable for the younger children attending downstairs. All areas were child centred, with lots of photos and children’s work displayed, giving the children a sense of belonging and value. All areas were light, bright and welcoming.

The outdoor environment was utilised effectively and the improvements made had resulted in nearly all the spaces being inviting and inspiring. However, we noted an area used for storage was a little cluttered and was not suitable for children to access independently. There were areas for children to explore the world around them, which included opportunities for planting and digging. The outdoors was now somewhere where children enjoyed being and somewhere where they could explore, play and learn.

Resources were of a good quality with lots of opportunities provided for children to play with natural materials. For example, sand, water and mud for when they wanted to dig or plant. Most resources were stored effectively in themed boxes that were labelled with pictures and words so children knew what was in them. Storage also helped to ensure resources were kept clean and well maintained. Leaders had equipped the service with suitably sized chairs and tables so children were comfortable and could be independent.

## 4. Leadership and Management

**Good**

### Summary

Leaders manage their service well, ensuring all paperwork is well organised, contains relevant information and is up to date. Regular self evaluation is conducted and leaders listen to and consider the views of others when planning and making improvements. Partnerships are developed with parents so information can be shared. Links with the community ensure children have a sense of belonging and this helps with their transition into full time school.

### Our findings

Leaders had a suitable statement of purpose in place that included all the required information. It gave parents the details of the service needed for them to decide if the care offered was suitable for them and their child. Policies and procedures were updated regularly to reflect current practice. All paperwork was well organised and easy to find, including children's records, which contained all the information needed so staff could provide the care required.

Leaders regularly assessed the service and care offered. They completed an annual quality of care report that considered the views of parents, staff and children. Parent questionnaires were sent out and the results from these were analysed by leaders and responded to as part of the process. They were also used when planning future improvements and changes to the service. For example, parents had commented on the general appearance of the outdoors. This had been addressed and improvements had been made. Leaders considered advice given to them from outside agencies. The recommendations made during the previous inspection had been considered and changes had been made. For example, more resources were now available in "big nursery".

Staff were managed well and they all knew what their roles and responsibilities were, helping the service to run smoothly. Most training was up to date and if not there was evidence some had been booked. The file inspected on a new staff member was complete and showed there was a robust recruitment process to ensure staff were suitable to care for children. For example, all relevant checks had been completed and references and information had been collected to ensure they were suitable to care for children. There was evidence to show annual staff appraisals were completed and staff had regular opportunities to talk with leaders to ensure information was shared and training needs identified.

Positive partnerships were developed with parents through regular communication. There were opportunities for discussions during drop off and pick up times, records completed on individual children and photo books of activities were made available for parents. Diaries were completed for the younger children, and these were sent home daily so parents knew how their child had been and what they had been doing that day.

Leaders had close links with the local school, which aided transition. Teachers visited the service and staff showed and displayed pictures of the teachers the children would have when they started school. This allowed the children to become familiar with the new adults that would be caring for them. Opportunities were provided for children to visit places of interest within the local community, enhancing the children's sense of belonging. These included trips to the local park and woodland.

## **5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

### **5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections**

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

We made the following recommendations;

- to revisit the nappy changing policy with all staff to ensure the correct procedure is being followed to help avoid cross contamination,
- to ensure children have access to drinking water, especially when playing outside;
- to ensure all core training is renewed in a timely manner so it is kept updated, and
- to tidy up an area outside where some of the resources are stored. This will allow children to access them independently and ensure they are kept well maintained.

## **6. How we undertook this inspection**

This was an unannounced full inspection undertaken as part of our schedule of inspections. One inspector visited the service on 15 July 2019 from 9:00 to 15:30.

We:

- Inspected a sample of documentation including, risk assessments, policies and procedures, registers, a new staff file and three children's files;
- observed practice and completed observations using our SOFI 2 to evidence the children's engagement and the care being provided by staff;
- spoke to the children, staff and registered person;
- inspected areas used by the children, and
- gave feedback to the registered person on the day.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## 7. About the service

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Type of care provided  | Children's Day Care<br>Full Day Care   |
| Registered Person  | Helen Bowyer   |
| Registered maximum number of places  | 30   |
| Age range of children  | Currently 0 – 4 years.   |
| Opening hours  | 8:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday closing for Christmas and bank holidays  |
| Operating Language of the service  | English  |
| Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection                            | 4 April 2017   |
| Dates of this inspection visit(s)  | 15 July 2019   |
| Is this a Flying Start service?  | No   |
| Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service? | Yes (this is only available up to end of July 2019)  |
| Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?                     | This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh Language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of children who use, or intend to use the service. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh Language in social care.' |
| Additional Information:  |  |

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