

# Stepping Stones Nursery Day Care of Children

Victoria Road  
Tain  
IV19 1AU

Telephone: 01862 893 847

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
19 August 2021

**Service provided by:**  
Stepping Stones Nursery (Tain) Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2009010748

**Service no:**  
CS2009232698

## About the service

The service has been registered since May 2010 and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 58 children at any one time of whom a maximum of nine children may be from three months up to 18 months old and a maximum of eight children may be attending primary one. Stepping Stones Nursery is situated in a residential area in the town of Tain.

The service is delivered within two buildings and both have access to secure outdoor play spaces. We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection carried out by two inspectors on 12 August 2021. We gave feedback on 19 August 2021.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. These are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

## What people told us

All of the children attending were happy to interact and speak with us during the inspection. Their comments included:

"Hat on".

"My sun cream".

"Put it back up".

"I wonder what's in there?"

"Can I see?"

"I'm going to get it out".

"This is my spaghetti".

"Can I have a pan?"

"I'll take that one please".

"We made scarecrows".

"I painted that one blue, it was orange".

"There's my friends".

We contacted five parents during the inspection. The majority commented that overall, they strongly agreed

that they are 'happy with the quality of care my child receives in the service'.

Comments included:

"Stepping Stones provide an outstanding service".

"I feel well informed and communicated with".

"Both my children are very happy at nursery and run in excited to meet the staff and other children in the morning".

"The staff are clearly happy in their role and the children are well educated".

"Every member of staff at the nursery have been carefully selected to compliment each other and provide a well rounded team to support the children attending".

"They love and respect the children as continually think outside the box to provide activities for them that are stimulating, exciting, age appropriate and of course fun!"

"The staff at Stepping Stones are really wonderful".

"They go the extra mile to provide care that meets the needs of the child".

"The team are happy to take on suggestions and are always prompt in replying to any concerns or questions that I have had".

"The introduction of the Family app is wonderful, such a great resource and has really allowed us to feel involved in our child's day whilst we are at work".

"The staff went above and beyond to support us".

"I was so impressed. I am extremely happy with the quality of care my child receives and couldn't praise them more".

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of this inspection. We reviewed the service quality assurance systems and development plan.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme to be very good.

We saw that children were settled, confident and happy. They received warm, nurturing care from staff who were responsive to their needs. Staff gave lots of encouragement and praise to children who felt valued and secure in their environment.

Children were encouraged to explore their surroundings through timely interactions from staff. Consistent language development strategies were observed during the inspection and this led to children's experiences being richer and supported their personal learning.

Children enjoyed lunch in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere. Staff sat with children, encouraged them to chat and learn positive table manners. Homemade meals were provided by an external caterer, these were nutritious and supported children's health and well-being. We suggested introducing real cutlery to mealtimes to further support children to develop their cutlery skills.

Information shared was used to make sure that children received the support and care that was right for them. For example, staff understood the needs of younger children and their parents' wishes for sleep and rest and for administration of medication. This enabled children to follow their own routines.

Face to face handovers took place at drop off and collection time and staff used the family app to communicate virtually with parents and carers. One parent commented that the introduction of this had "really allowed us to feel involved in our child's day whilst we are at work".

Effective infection prevention control measures were in place, staff and children were protected from the risk of infection spreading

Children were protected from harm and supported to reach their potential through staff being well informed and confident in the processes to follow if they had any concerns. Detailed records were kept for children and shared when children were experiencing change, and staff had developed strong links with external agencies which helped keep children safe and well.

### Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

### Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

## Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme to be very good.

All children had access to safe and secure outside spaces which were resourced, and supported their development. Areas for shade and shelter had been provided to protect children from the effects of sun and rain. Extensive use of loose parts provided children with opportunities to use their imagination and be creative. Children were supported by staff to take positive risks and to fully explore their environment which developed children's resilience, health and wellbeing.

We observed children engrossed in their play and leading their own learning. Children could choose between a variety of resources which supported energetic play as well as problem solving and curiosity. A large polytunnel which had been added to the outside is where children could learn about growing their own plants. Sand and water play was available to promote tactile play. Children were encouraged to be independent as they moved between areas and developed their skills.

Children enjoyed a bright, welcoming and calm nursery environment where children could play, learn and relax. All playrooms were clean, tidy, and well decorated with well-maintained furniture and natural materials. This encouraged children's curiosity and creativity. Younger children could explore treasure baskets filled with sensory, real and natural resources.

Resources provided supported developing skills and enhanced children's opportunities to progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Staff reviewed children's use of resources and areas to make sure that children were engaged and challenged.

Children's artwork was attractively displayed at low level so they could see their work. Children spoke to inspectors about what they had done which showed they felt valued and were developing a sense of pride in their play and learning.

Broken or damaged resources were removed or fixed promptly and this meant that children experienced a safe environment.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of staffing

## Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme to be very good.

Arrangements were in place to ensure all staff had the necessary skills, experience, qualifications and values to provide good quality childcare and education. All staff had required pre-employment checks and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

We saw warm and nurturing interactions between staff and children. Staff were knowledgeable about each child's needs and responded to them positively. Staff spoke to inspectors confidently about children's individual routines, likes and dislikes. They used the information gathered from observations and parents to provide care that was right for children. Children were treated as individuals and their rights, needs and choices were respected.

Induction procedures were in place for new staff which incorporated national guidance. Staff told us they felt supported in their roles by the management team, room supervisors and colleagues. They were given time to observe practice and get to know children. Children experienced compassionate care from staff who understood their roles and responsibilities.

Staff took responsibility for their own learning and maintained effective records of this. They reflected on the impact of training undertaken on their practice and the outcomes for children. Staff had recently undertaken refresher training in food hygiene, first aid and child protection. Children received the care they needed from staff who were trained and competent.

We observed staff working well together as a team. Staff spoke about their staff charter which had been developed by all staff. This promoted a shared understanding between the team of expectations and an ethos of trust. Staff understood their personal responsibility to follow professional codes of conduct and knew the procedures to follow if they had concerns about a colleague's practice.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

We evaluated this quality theme to be very good.

The manager understood the importance of robust quality assurance processes. They had developed a comprehensive quality assurance calendar, evaluating against key improvement resources including How

Good is our Early Learning and Childcare. The manager evaluated the quality of the service, evaluations were recorded and shared with staff. This meant that staff were able to make improvements where needed and children benefited from a culture of continuous improvement as a result.

An improvement plan detailing the vision, values and aims of the service was in place. Key areas for action had been identified with an emphasis on supporting children's health and wellbeing. The manager and staff team took into consideration the views of parents and children, using online surveys shared with parents and by observing children's interactions and play. Parents commented 'the team is happy to take on suggestions'. Parents and children had a meaningful role in how the service developed.

The manager held monthly staff meetings. This gave all staff the opportunity to reflect on what had gone well and discuss areas for improvement. Staff were encouraged to contribute towards these meetings as the manager recognised the importance of including the whole staff team. Staff felt valued and were motivated as their opinions were listened to.

Strong relationships had been built with other professionals and within the local community. The manager told us that they had worked closely with the speech and language team as they developed their own training processes. This meant that staff received additional training and support in using language development strategies. We observed staff use skilful strategies throughout the nursery which had a positive impact on children's experiences and self-confidence.

The manager undertook annual appraisal and reviews with staff, supporting them in their roles and identifying training that would develop their knowledge and skills. Roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and staff were deployed to work where their knowledge and skills would have the best impact on children's lives.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

**What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection**

## Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

#### Recommendation 1

In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service, the provider must ensure that no member of staff is employed to provide care within the service until all appropriate recruitment checks have been carried out, including PVG checks.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state that 'I am confident that people who care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited'. (HSCS 4.24)

This recommendation was made on 28 November 2019.

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

Safer recruitment practices are in now in place. All staff have the necessary pre-employment checks undertaken before starting.

### Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

### Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

### Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
10 Oct 2019	Unannounced	Care and support
		4 - Good
		Environment
		4 - Good
		Staffing
		3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership
		4 - Good



Date	Type	Gradings	
18 Aug 2017	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed Not assessed 4 - Good
4 Sep 2015	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good
13 Aug 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good
8 Apr 2011	Announced (short notice)	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good 3 - Adequate

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