Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Stepping Stones 4 Schools Out of School and Holiday Club

Christ the King Primary School
Everest Avenue
Llanishen
Cardiff
CF14 5AS



Date Inspection Completed

19/04/2024

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About Stepping Stones 4 Schools Out of School and Holiday Club

Type of care provided.	Children's Day Care Out of School Care
Registered Provider	Stepping Stones 4 Schools LLP
Registered places	50
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	5 September 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

Well-being	**Good**
Care and Development	**Good**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and Management	**Good**

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

Summary

Children have a strong voice and readily express their wishes to staff who listen to them. They have a strong sense of belonging as they attend the school setting during the day. They form strong friendships and are very familiar with routines. Children are enthusiastic and interested in their play, especially playing outdoors.

Staff understand and implement policies and procedures to promote safety for children. They positively interact and engage with children in a kind and positive manner. Staff make sure there is a good selection of age-appropriate activities and resources available to keep children engaged in physical and imaginative play.

Leaders have appropriate policies and practices in place to ensure the environment is suitably safe, secure, and well maintained. Staff implement these well. There is ample space indoors and outdoors for children to access a good range of activities and resources.

The leadership and management of the service is effective. Leaders use self-evaluation effectively to identify and make improvements. Staff keep parents well informed and up to date about their child's experiences. They work closely with them in making decisions about their child's well-being.

Well-being — Good

Children are confident communicators as they know that their wants and needs are considered fully by staff. For example, children's have a choice regarding what food they want. They make their own decisions about how they spend their time at the setting and can direct their own play. We saw children initiating games and asking for support from staff when needed, for example, a child asked a member of staff to play a game of tennis.

Children feel happy and safe at the setting where their well-being is promoted and valued. They enjoy their time playing with their friends and spending time with the people who care for them. Children help themselves to resources and many undertook imaginative play enthusiastically. They join in routines such as registration and teatime confidently, which supports their sense of well-being and familiarity. They smile as they receive praise for good behaviour and like that staff take time to show an interest in what they are doing.

Children interact positively with their peers and participate in friendly conversations with staff. They engage cooperatively in their play, with one child asking another "*Shall we play restaurants*?" Children enjoy riding on skateboards, playing football and balancing on equipment outside. Older children engage younger children in their play, making adjustments so they can join in easily. Children are very polite and naturally use good manners without prompting and confidently ask for help if they need it. Children explore the environment and engage in play opportunities both inside and out with great ease.

Children are enthusiastic and interested in their play. They have a good range of interesting opportunities indoors and outdoors. Children actively take part in child led play with support from adults, as needed. They are encouraged to take part in activities which result in a good feeling of achievement, for example, being encouraged to balance further on the wooden equipment.

Children are developing their independence skills suitably. They choose activities and resources from the selection available. Children take responsibility for their own belongings, such as their coats and bags, storing them and collecting them when they leave. They confidently use the toilet facilities independently, telling staff as they go and help tidy up.

Care and Development — Good

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They follow a useful set of procedures to ensure they meet the health and safety needs of children. Staff are clear about implementing the child protection policy if they have any concerns. Managers ensure that children's individual dietary requirements and preferences are identified and information regarding children's allergies is relayed to relevant staff. Staff have individual care plans in place for children with medical needs or allergies which support them to provide safe care. Staff do not usually administer non prescribed medication and leaders have reviewed the medication policy to make this clear. Staff implement good hygiene routines to promote children's health, including encouraging children to wash their hands at appropriate times.

Staff are kind and caring towards the children. They are responsive and nurturing, which means children approach them with ease. Staff are on hand to offer advice and oversee the children in an unobtrusive manner. Staff work well together to supervise the children and promote children's social behaviour. They implement the behaviour management policy successfully and act as good role models, being kind and respectful towards each other and the children. As a result, there is little unwanted behaviour at the setting because children are clear regarding staff expectations.

Staff support children well, giving them space and time to decide on the activities they want to follow as the focus is on self-directed play and learning. They plan activities flexibly and are led by the children's wishes. Staff enthusiastically participate in activities with the children, extending their focus and reinforcing the rules of the games. For example, they join in football and tennis, as well as supporting craft activities. Staff speak to children about their interests and about their school life and staff are aware of children's preferences and hobbies.

Environment — Good

Leaders have effective policies and practices in place and ensure the environment is suitably safe, secure, and well maintained both indoors and outdoors. They carry out risk assessments that are useful and are reviewed regularly. Staff complete daily checks for all areas, including the toilets and outdoor area. They report any issues to the school who address these promptly to minimise the risks to children. There is a well-practiced entry system in place to the main school and external gates have a fob system to gain entry. Systems are in place to ensure the outdoor area is checked prior to use. This includes checking gates are secure. Leaders liaise with the school to ensure appropriate maintenance checks are undertaken for fire equipment, heating, and electrical systems. Staff practice fire drills with children on a regular basis so they are clear about how to evacuate the building in an emergency.

Leaders provide plenty of play spaces for children to move freely and explore, for both older and younger children. They mainly use the school hall, but another classroom is also set up that has good access to the outdoors and toilet facilities. Children eat food at large dining tables used for school dinners which provide plenty of space for children to sit and chat as they eat. Staff use the school kitchen which provides suitable facilities that meet the environmental health standards. Leaders have safety measures in place to ensure that children can use the extensive outside play opportunities. Staff store resources in a well organised and easily accessible way, with many resources in an outside shed that they access daily.

Leaders invest in resources that stimulate the children’s interest and imagination. Staff put out a wide variety of resources, such as small world and craft materials. We saw a few children using the resources inside, but most children enjoyed playing with the facilities outside. Staff ensure resources are well maintained. They regularly clean them and check for breakages.

Leadership and Management Good

Leaders have a good understanding of current best practice and show a commitment to continually improve the quality of the service provided to children and parents. They manage the setting in line with the regulations and national minimum standards. Leaders have developed a suitable range of policies and procedures and make sure all staff follow them. There is a statement of purpose, which has recently been updated to clarify a few areas. Leaders are very experienced in childcare and play. They spoke knowledgeably about topical practice matters and their plans to meet the revised national minimum standards regarding changes to training requirements.

Leaders complete an annual review of the service, which helps them to maintain standards and plan for improvement. They seek the views of parents, children, and staff, to identifying areas for development. They put plans in place to achieve the necessary improvements. There is a complaints policy available for parents and they have recently expanded this to make the procedure suitable for children if they wish to raise any issues.

Leaders strive to maintain a team of well trained, confident staff through access to a good range of ongoing training to keep their skills updated. They demonstrate a clear understanding regarding recruiting staff safely and records show that they carry out staff checks in line with the regulations. There are secure systems in place to ensure that staff have Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) that are less than three years old. Leaders deploy staff well to meet the required adult: child ratios and ensure there is an appropriate number of qualified staff in childcare and/or play work. Staff are offered good support and guidance by the management team during informal supervision and appraisals sessions.

Leaders work well with numerous other professionals and have good links with the school. They have developed positive partnerships with parents. Staff have conversations with parents as they collect their children and use emails and text messages to communicate other relevant information.

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

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

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

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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