A report on

Stepping Stones Magor

Magor Primary
Sycamore Terrace
Magor
NP26 3EG

Date of inspection: October 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

About Stepping Stones Magor

Name of setting	Stepping Stones Magor
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Stepping Stones Magor Limited
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Stephanie Saunders, Zoe Ross
Person in charge	Stephanie Saunders, Zoe Ross, Kathryn Ambrose
Number of places	26
Age range of children	2-4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	24
Number of children who receive funding for early education	2
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 8:00am to 3:15pm
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is not making a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	First inspection post-registration
Date of previous Estyn inspection	November 2019
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	14/10/2025
Additional information	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**Excellent**
Learning **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	
Care and development	**Excellent**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Good**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1. Make more effective use of observations and assessments to plan the next steps in children's learning.

R2. Continue to strengthen monitoring processes and self-evaluation to clearly identify impact of provision on children's development.

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Nearly all children have a strong voice in making decisions independently that influence everyday experiences . They move between areas freely, transporting toys and resources to support their play. When the doors are open, children can choose between indoor and outdoor spaces. They do so eagerly, engaging with the wide range of stimulating resources and activities on offer. Children express their views confidently knowing their interests and preferences will be considered in every aspect of their time at the setting.

Nearly all children are exceptionally happy and settled. They cope with separation from their parents and carers well, relishing their time at the setting. Nearly all children form strong, trusting emotional attachments with the small team of practitioners with whom they are extremely familiar. They readily approach practitioners, communicating with them in a variety of ways appropriate to their stage of development. They eagerly invite practitioners into their play and approach them for assistance, comfort or reassurance whenever they want to. For example, children gesture when they need support with operating a digital camera. Others are delighted when a practitioner responds to their invitation to get down on the floor and play. They show by their demeanour they are confident that practitioners will always show an interest and respond. Nearly all children are familiar with routines and expectations at the setting, adding to their strong sense of belonging. For example, they go eagerly to the sink areas to wash their hands in preparation for snack.

Most children are starting to form friendships according to their age and stage of development. They play contentedly alongside each other and are beginning to co-operate and share resources well. For example, children co-operate happily together as they build with magnetic tiles and make room for another to join them when listening to a story. Many children are learning to consider the needs of others well.

Nearly all children are highly engaged in their play and learning. They thoroughly enjoy both adult led activities and opportunities to lead their own play. They concentrate for sustained periods of time on their own interests outdoors and take part enthusiastically in adult led dancing activities.

Nearly all children show an increasing level of independence at the setting and have worthwhile opportunities to develop these skills further. For example, many children take off their coats and hang them on pegs without prompting.

Learning (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting):

There is no report on children's learning. This is because the number of three or four-year old children present at the time of the inspection that do not receive funded education elsewhere was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They have a thorough knowledge of safeguarding issues and follow the

setting's safeguarding procedures diligently. Practitioners record accidents, incidents and pre-existing injuries accurately and share this information with parents promptly. Leaders monitor these records to identify patterns and trends and pro-actively address any issues as they arise. Practitioners are vigilant and attentive in their care of children to ensure that snack and mealtimes are highly enjoyable, relaxed, sociable and safe. They are very knowledgeable about children's individual health needs and are conscientious in following safe procedures to ensure these are met. They promote healthy lifestyles, offering a choice of healthy snacks and ensuring children have access to daily outdoor play experiences. Practitioners carry out fire drills regularly, which help children know what to do in an emergency. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners are excellent role models. They are exceptionally kind, calm and patient. They bring warmth, humour and positivity into all their interactions with children and are very responsive to children's attempts to communicate. Practitioners are outstanding in the way they manage and support children's behaviour. They use praise and regular encouragement to good effect and use positive phrases to encourage the behaviour they want to see. They are calm, reassuring, sensitive and thoughtful in the way they support children to resolve disagreements.

Practitioners are highly nurturing, sensitive and alert to the needs of children in their care. All practitioners know children exceptionally well and respond to their needs swiftly. Practitioners are highly skilful in the way they support children who may have recognised or emerging additional learning needs. They are very observant and thorough, ensuring that children receive effective support as required. They use communication boards and visual supports to help children communicate and participate fully. They follow professional advice and are pro-active in finding ways to support children, ensuring that all practitioners follow a consistent approach with each child. This approach ensures strong and consistent provision and a solid commitment to ensuring the best outcomes for the children in their care. They communicate well with each other sharing valuable information as key workers. They work closely with parents, carers, professionals and outside agencies to provide excellent support for the children at the setting.

Teaching and assessment (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Practitioners know the children well and use their understanding of child development to plan a broad range of engaging and authentic learning experiences. Practitioners are responsive to children's interests and fascinations, often planning activities in the moment and adapting provision to meet individual needs. Daily routines are flexible and allow children ample time to play and pursue their own interests.

Practitioners provide a stimulating environment with a wide range of high-quality, open-ended resources chosen to reflect the children's interests and developmental needs. They plan activities that are both adult-led and child-led, allowing children to make choices about their learning. For example, children are given the option to join group activities or continue with their chosen play. As a result, nearly all children are engaged and motivated in their learning.

Practitioners model language well and introduce a rich range of vocabulary during activities. They use open-ended questions to encourage children to think and explain their ideas. Practitioners integrate literacy, numeracy, and digital skills into daily routines and play, such as modelling counting during games and encouraging children to use digital cameras and torches. They make effective use of the Welsh language in daily routines, which supports children to develop their understanding and confidence in using simple words and phrases.

Practitioners recognise and respond to children's play, adapting resources and activities to deepen engagement and learning.

Practitioners support children's social, moral and emotional development successfully. They build warm, trusting relationships and are gentle and attentive in their approach. Practitioners model positive communication and respectful interactions, helping children to feel heard and valued. They use praise and encouragement to reinforce expectations. As a result, children learn to share, take turns and understand right from wrong. Practitioners use the children's natural curiosity by developing experiences that encourage them to think about and appreciate the world around them. They help the children grow plants in the outdoor area and observe the changing seasons.

Practitioners record observations suitably and use these to understand children's interests. Practitioners record observations suitably and use these to understand children's interests. They are knowledgeable about how they support children to move forward in their learning generally, often responding in the moment to children's needs. However, practitioners do not always use their observations to plan the next steps in individual children's learning effectively.

Practitioners celebrate children's cultural awareness effectively. Children learn about Welsh traditions and explore their local community by visiting a nearby shop. Practitioners celebrate diversity and inclusion, for example by providing dolls with diabetes equipment that reflect the experiences of children at the setting. As a result, children feel valued and represented.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure the environment is safe and secure. The site is modern and well maintained. External doors are locked, and practitioners allow only authorised access to the setting. They ensure that a record of all visitors is maintained. Practitioners are alert to emerging risks and complete daily safety checks of the environment to identify and, where possible, eliminate any risks to children's safety. Leaders ensure that risk assessments for all areas and activities are in place and always followed by practitioners. The setting is very clean, and leaders are organised and vigilant, ensuring the standards of cleanliness and safety are consistently maintained.

Leaders and practitioners ensure environment is warm, welcoming and decorated in such a way as to make it inviting to children. It provides an effective environment for play and learning. The room is thoughtfully laid out to provide a wide variety of areas and resources to stimulate children's interest. For example, the home role play area is resourced attractively to invite children to play, and a cosy corner with a child sized sofa provides a restful space for children to look at books or relax. The tables and chairs are at children's height and provide a suitable place to eat snack and lunch. Many toys and activities are

stored in manageably sized baskets at children's height enabling them to access what they want to play with freely. Toilets and wash hand basins are clean and suitable in number, and children access them accompanied by a practitioner as they are within the school site. The outdoor environment is safe and provides worthwhile opportunities for children to play and learn in the fresh air. The setting's position within the school supports their transition and ensures the process of picking up and dropping off to the school nursery is simple and enjoyable for children.

The setting contains a large quantity of high quality, interesting and developmentally appropriate resources, ensuring that children have a good variety and choice. There is a mix of natural and man-made materials with many attractive wooden resources. Practitioners regularly check toys, equipment, and resources to ensure that they are clean and in good condition. Leaders regularly review the environment and resources and make frequent improvements. For example, a relaxing den and softer lighting have been added to create a calming area for children.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have established a clear and purposeful vision for the setting, which is well understood and shared by practitioners and parents. They are passionate about creating a welcoming and homely ethos where children can develop their skills successfully in a supportive and warm environment. Leaders are very dedicated to their work and the whole team works together effectively for the benefit of the children and families in their care. Leaders promote a culture of safety and well-being. This leads to a positive working environment, which ensures a happy setting for children and practitioners. There is a clear statement of purpose, which accurately reflects the provision.

Leaders are approachable and foster a positive ethos where children and staff feel valued. Practitioners' feedback is listened to and acted upon, contributing to a sense of belonging and professional respect. Leaders act as positive role models and are highly visible in the setting, engaging with children and supporting practitioners. Practitioners have appropriate qualifications and valuable experience in nurturing children's well-being and supporting their learning. The hard-working and enthusiastic team of practitioners are proud to be valued members of the workforce and are passionate about providing a homely environment for the children. Practitioners are given regular opportunities to attend a variety of beneficial training which focuses on aspects such as communication and observations. This is beginning to a positive effect on practitioners' knowledge and understanding in improving provision and meeting children's learning needs.

Leaders accurately identify the settings strengths and areas for improvement. They have begun to implement changes that have a positive impact on children's well-being, for example, the introduction of a sensory area. Leaders make effective use of funding to enhance provision and are committed to ongoing improvement.

Leaders have begun to develop effective processes for self-evaluation and monitoring, however these are at an early stage of development. This means that, currently, it is difficult for leaders to clearly identify the impact of their provision on children's development.

Leaders make effective use of external agencies to support children with additional learning needs and facilitate smooth transitions to school. This collaborative approach ensures that

children's individual needs are met and that transitions are well supported. Practitioners arrange for children to go on trips around the local area to expand their learning experiences more widely, such as when visiting the local shop.

Leaders and practitioners have created a welcoming and inclusive environment where parents feel valued and actively involved in their child's experience. They foster strong connections and put purposeful strategies in place to strengthen these partnerships further. For example, parents are invited to participate in interactive sessions, such as woodland story-telling and open mornings. The setting responds flexibly to parental suggestions, demonstrating a commitment to partnership working.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (http://careinspectorate.wales) (www.estyn.gov.wales)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

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