

STEPS

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	956291
Inspection date	01/12/2008
Inspector	Joanne Wade Barnett
Setting address	37 Waterloo Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2SW
Telephone number	01732 363642
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

St Stephen's Pre-School opened 1979. It operates from a church hall in Tonbridge town centre. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to provide care for a maximum of 30 children under the age of five years. Registration also includes provision for children on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The premises are fully accessible and there is a large secure outdoor play area. The group is open Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:30.

There are currently 71 children, aged two years to five years, on roll. This includes 46 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are nine practitioners working with the children. Of these, eight hold recognised early years qualifications. There is one member of staff who is currently working towards a qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children's individual needs are clearly recognised and this enables practitioners to offer a fully inclusive setting as children are nurtured and supported. A strong key person system allows practitioners to make plans that meet the needs of every child. Practitioners have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and some practitioners effectively evaluate children's learning. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and have a strong commitment towards seeking out, and making, continual improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure observation and assessment of each child achievements, interest and learning styles are linked to their next steps
- expand the use of everyday programmable toys, electronic toys to ensure children are more engaged in technology

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Practitioners hold appropriate qualifications. There is a strong commitment with all practitioners to further training, which ensure their knowledge and skills remain up-to-date and reflect current practice. There is a comprehensive range of written policies and procedures which are regularly updated to ensure they contain all necessary information and reflect the requirements of the Early Years Foundation

Stage. Policies, such as the equal opportunities policy, exemplify the good priority practitioners give to inclusion. This is evident in the activities children participate in which promote their understanding of diversity. Detailed risk assessments are regularly carried out including daily checks at the start of each session. This ensures appropriate action is taken to eliminate risks.

Links with parents have a positive impact on children's learning and development. Newsletters and open days keep parents fully informed of children's progress. Additionally children's profile forms and daily discussions give parents an opportunity to share their knowledge of their children with the practitioners. Parents have very positive views about the service they receive. They describe staff as 'friendly and approachable' and the pre-school as 'welcoming and fun'. They say the progress that their children make during their time there is 'good'.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Relationships between children and practitioners are good so children are happy and secure. As well as this, the key person system is robust and offers children very good support. Practitioners sit at the children's level and ask the children questions about the task they are engaged with. The environment is set out to encourage children to initiate their own play experiences. This encourages the development of concentration and critical thinking skills. Children are able to access resources easily, such as arts and crafts, construction and imaginary play. However, the use of programmable toys is less evident. Practitioners acknowledge the children's achievements, which boosts the children's self-esteem and confidence.

Good operational links that staff have established with other professionals enhance the quality of children's learning and development. Practitioners share their knowledge of the children which helps to ensure that the needs of every child on roll are met in full. Frequent observations and assessments of the children enable practitioners to establish children's starting points and existing abilities. This allows practitioners to make plans that take account of the children's capabilities and personal interests, although not all practitioners sufficiently evaluate their observations in order to identify children's next steps in their learning and development needs.

The children's welfare is given a high priority. For instance, sensible boundaries teach them simple, but effective ways to stay safe and nutritious snacks promote the development of healthy tastes and preferences. Children take part in interesting activities that cover all areas of learning and give them lots of scope in which to have fun and enjoy themselves. For example, they delight in playing with wet sand outside, which promotes their creative and sensory development. They like listening to traditional Christmas stories and new stories, such as 'The Stick Man', which encourages their literacy skills and helps them to develop an appreciation of reading.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.