

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY349515
Inspection date 05/11/2008
Inspector Rosemary Musgrove

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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).

Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School is privately owned and was registered in its current premises in 2007. It operates from a classroom in Jolesfield Primary school, Partridge Green, which is accessible to wheelchair users. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:30 and from 12:30 to 15:30 for two afternoons each week, during term time. The pre-school is registered for 20 children aged from two to under five years. There are currently 17 on roll who are all within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom 13 receive funding for early education. Children attend from the surrounding villages. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language, although currently there are none on roll. There are seven members of staff. Of these, six hold suitable qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The good knowledge of each child's individual needs ensures that staff promote all aspects of children's welfare and learning with success. Children are safe and secure and benefit from a vibrant learning environment. This means they are confident and enthusiastic to learn and make good progress. The cohesive team of staff have a positive attitude and strive to continually monitor and improve the learning outcomes for the children. The partnership with parents and the local school is effective and ensures that the setting meets the needs of all the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop a system for gathering information from parents regarding children's starting points
- provide more opportunities for children to see print and familiar words around the pre-school.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school is led and managed by an enthusiastic, dedicated team. They create a common sense of purpose between adults who work together. Self-evaluation is well developed and includes the views of staff and parents. It is effective in identifying strengths and areas for development. Currently, the setting is working on outside improvements. These will allow free flow opportunities for the children in order to improve their learning outcomes. The effective use of staff appraisal alongside a training programme ensures that staff develop their professional skills. Staff ensure that all children have an inclusive learning experience and adapt activities accordingly, such as; they use a visual timetable for

children with hearing difficulties. The pre-school maintains clear policies and documentation to support children's welfare and these include a complaints procedure. Effective safeguarding policies and clear guidance for checking the suitability of adults mean that children are well protected. Risk assessments are thorough and contain a good level of detail. This means children are safe in the setting and whilst on outings. Before children start, parents visit the pre-school and browse a range of information. They complete a form that gives details of their child's comforters, toys and pets; however, the setting does not gather information about the children's individual starting points. Parents are very happy with the care their children receive. In particular, they value the sensitive, caring staff and the daily communication books.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children really do thrive and enjoy their time at the setting. This is because adults have a good knowledge of individuals and make learning fun. This means children make good progress and show positive attitudes to learning. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the EYFS learning and development requirements and are confident in helping children learn effectively. Planning and assessment is developing well. This is because staff have a considered and thoughtful approach tailored to children's interests and the steps that help them progress. They use observations to plan learning activities that stimulate and inspire the children. For example, if a child demonstrates an interest in pirates or dinosaurs, staff plan activities around these ideas. A strength of the setting is the independence of the children. They confidently select their favourite toys and engage adults and other children in their activities, for example, writing a shopping list and going to the shops. Children cover a wide range of exciting activities in all areas of learning. In particular, they demonstrate proficient skills in information and communication technology. They confidently use the mouse to select the right colours to fire a rocket or to complete a painting package. They are also confident at using a tape recorder and headphones when they choose to listen to a story. These positive features mean that children are developing skills to help them in their future learning. Staff interaction is a contributing factor to the children's success. They all use appropriate dialogue and vocabulary and this encourages children to progress in their language development skills. Children have a wealth of opportunities to talk. They enthusiastically chat about their firework experiences or their dough hedgehogs. They enjoy stories, listen intently and join in with enthusiasm. Children have opportunities for mark making both inside and outside, for example, they use brushes and pens on a large white board; however, there are limited opportunities for them to see print and familiar words around the pre-school. Children readily use numbers during day to day activities and some can confidently count to 12. Children in the setting enjoy learning in the outside environment and enthusiastically collect the autumn leaves from the play area. They develop an awareness of the wider world and other cultures when they celebrate Diwali and Chinese New Year.

The pre-school works in partnership with parents, other providers and agencies to provide cohesive care for individual children. Parents comment on the effective open door policy and links with the reception class at the local school. The indoor and outdoor environment is well organised and this means children move around freely

and independently as they select their favourite play materials. Popular choices are the role play equipment, dressing up clothes and the cutting and sticking area. Children in the setting are well protected because the designated person has attended recent training and understands her role in safeguarding children. Effective procedures are in place for identifying any child at risk of harm. The setting has a good awareness of health and safety issues. They encourage children to tidy up in order to eliminate trip hazards and are aware of the needs of the youngest children as they use the steps to go outside. Children learn how to carry scissors safely and to walk inside the building. Children begin to develop a healthy life style. They enthusiastically wash and dry their own hands, choose a healthy snack and help themselves to water whenever they are thirsty. They enjoy physical activities and demonstrate good coordination skills on the wheeled vehicles. The pre-school keeps clear medication and accident records and have written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. Children are treated as individuals and adults speak to them with genuine interest and respect. This means they are well behaved and show care and consideration for other people and resources. Children benefit from lots of praise and encouragement and this helps them develop a positive attitude to their learning.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

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?	Good
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	Good
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	Good

Leadership and management

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

Quality and standards

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

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 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 registration.

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.