

Stepping Stones Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	200779
Inspection date	17/09/2008
Inspector	Christine Lynn Williams
Setting address	Claverdon Church Centre, Church Road, Claverdon, Warwick, Warwickshire, CV35 8PD
Telephone number	01926 843234
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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 opened in 1968 and is community run by a parent committee. It operates from three rooms within a church hall in the village of Claverdon, Warwickshire. The pre-school serves the local area and has strong links with the community and nearby school. There is a fully enclosed play area available for outdoor play.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 18 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Of these, 11 children receive funding for early years provision. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and whose home language is not English. There are suitable procedures and facilities for supporting children with disabilities. Although there are steps to the front of the building, a ramp is provided along with disabled toilet facilities.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions and a lunch club is also provided during the spring and summer terms when children preparing for full time education may stay until 13:00.

The setting employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications, while one is working towards a recognised early years qualification. Parent volunteers often help at the group which also receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. Play space and resources are used flexibly and creatively to meet the needs of the children and key persons are effective in supporting each child and helping them to develop a strong sense of belonging. There is a clear commitment to working with other agencies to ensure that all children's learning and welfare needs are met and children benefit from high adult support and positive attitudes and role models. Good arrangements exist to encourage children's good health and safety and to promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Parents are valued as partners and are encouraged to be involved in both the running of the group and in their children's learning and achievements. Some aspects of the group's self-evaluation are strong, with clear plans made for improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review and extend the systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the provision and link these to children's individual learning and development needs
- ensure that the safeguarding children policy and procedure is in line with

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidance and procedures.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management are strong with effective operational routines and contingency arrangements ensuring that the setting runs smoothly, even when key staff members are absent. Staffing arrangements are organised to meet the needs of children and there are robust employment and staff checking procedures. Staff are vigilant in safeguarding children, particularly when members of the public are using the building. However, not all information and guidance is up-to-date and this affects staff's ability to fully protect children. Staff constantly reappraise the environment and activities children use and make any necessary adjustments to ensure children are kept safe, healthy and making good progress. Some aspects of self-evaluation are very effective within the setting. The group's management committee and staff have a shared vision for the future and work together to ensure improvements are made when necessary. For example, children's story times have been altered to ensure they provide a rich learning experience for all age groups and operational documents and records have been recently re-organised and reviewed. Evaluations and an analysis of children's progress is regularly carried out, however, these are less well developed and do not clearly link to children's individual learning and development needs.

Inclusive practice is promoted well. Children are treated as individuals and close relationships are developed between key persons, children and their families. Positive steps are taken to work closely with parents and outside professionals in order to overcome any difficulties a child may have and staff are knowledgeable about children's home backgrounds and cultures and organise learning activities that reflect these. Parents are well informed about how the setting runs, the progress their children are making and how to support their children's learning at home. There are clear policies and procedures in place and these support the positive experiences offered to all children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning and development and respond enthusiastically to the many interesting and stimulating activities offered. They often become involved and absorbed when learning new skills and sometimes squeal with delight when playing team games. Children are active learners who enjoy close attention and lots of opportunities to become creative and critical thinkers. Key persons work with children in small groups and good staffing levels ensure children get plenty of adult support and personal attention. A high emphasis is placed on developing children's social skills and independence and this encourages them to develop good self-esteem and positive attitudes and behaviour. As a result, they willingly help to tidy away their toys and beam with pride when being chosen to be the helper of the day. Staff show a clear understanding of EYFS and plan creatively and flexibly. Play space is used well to offer children a safe, yet challenging, place to learn, while the educational programme reflects children's individual interests and learning needs. Children communicate well with others as

they play and investigate and are developing confidence in the use of numbers and counting. They experience the weather, seasons and the natural environment when playing outside and have the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active. Staff use information from observing children to assess their progress and set targets for their next steps. Praise is constantly given and children's achievements both in the pre-school and at home are actively recognised and rewarded.

Involvement of parents and carers as partners is consistent and effective. Children really benefit from the warm welcome given to their families and the opportunities provided for them to become involved in the different aspects of pre-school life. For example, parents run the group's management committee, often volunteer to help out in the group and support their children's learning at home. Staff and parents share their knowledge about children and work together collaboratively to support, guide and nurture the children. Staff are committed to working closely with parents and other professionals, including the local school, to ensure all children are included and develop to their full potential. Carefully considered resources and activities are used effectively to encourage children to value all members of society and children learn to count, sing and repeat simple phrases in French and Spanish to reflect the different languages spoken at home. Regular walks around the village and trips to the local church and school enhance children's links with the local community and help them develop a strong sense of belonging

Effective steps are taken to promote children's safety, good health and well-being. Children learn to recognise the importance of different aspects of a healthy lifestyle as they are offered nutritious snacks and get plenty of fresh air and exercise. Their health needs are known and met and a wide range of physical activities are provided which help children learn to climb, balance, pedal and co-ordinate their bodies. Regular risk assessments and safety checks ensure children enjoy a safe environment and they are beginning to understand how to keep themselves safe as they learn safety rules such as being careful when using the climbing frame.

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 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.