

Stondon Stompers Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 219300
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Inspector Susan Ennis

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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 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

Stondon Stompers Pre-School is managed by a voluntary committee. It opened approximately 30 years ago and operates from three rooms in the village hall. It is situated in the village of Lower Stondon, near Henlow, Bedfordshire. It is open each weekday during term-time only, from 09.30 to 12.00. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The Pre-School is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 50 children may attend the pre-school at anyone time. There are currently 33 children in this age range on roll. Most children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are four members of staff, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ Level 2.

The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA)

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Staff create a welcoming and safe environment in which children feel confident to experience the range of activities provided. Planning is flexible and ensures that all children enjoy their time at the pre-school and generally make steady progress in their learning and development. The pre-school has built a very good relationship with parents and carers keeping them well-informed and involved with the running of the setting. The pre-school also works closely with the local school to promote the welfare of all children and ease their transition into full-time education. The voluntary committee, manager and staff review practice as an ongoing procedure. They are starting to identify the pre-school's strengths and areas for improvement and are committed to ongoing progress to therefore ensure that they continue to respond to the needs of the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve further the use of planning to demonstrate how children's individual needs are met
- improve the use of reflective practise to raise awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement
- increase the range of resources to increase children's understanding of the wider world.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- develop the use of observation and assessment to 22/05/2009

show children's progress towards the early learning goals and highlight any areas of concern or further challenge (Assessment arrangements).

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school's practical policies support the efficient daily running of the group and help to ensure that children are consistently offered a safe and secure environment. Good staff knowledge and thorough procedures relating to safeguarding children ensure that their welfare is promoted and they are well protected at all times. For example, there are robust procedures for checking staff are suitable to work with children and a rolling program of training to further increase their knowledge of, for example, caring for children. Comprehensive risk assessments for all areas and outings ensure that hazards are minimised or removed. Ongoing explanations from staff help children to gain a clear understanding of safety issues, such as the relevance of using their 'walking feet' when inside.

The setting works well with parents and carers and ensures that there is a thorough exchange of information, which is used to promote children's development and welfare. On starting at the pre-school, parents are introduced to their child's key worker and asked to complete a child profile form which details information such as the child's independence skills enabling staff to start to plan for their further progress. Parents and carers are also kept well-informed about the activities through a weekly newsletter containing 'this week we have been ... ' and 'you can help at home by...' involving them in the children's learning. Parent consultations are also planned for the near future to further increase parent knowledge about their child's development and learning. The pre-school also liaises closely with local school which is attended by most of the children. Joint projects take place benefiting the children at both settings. For example, a 'Hector's house' activity frame was built following a joint fund raising project to benefit the children's physical and social skills.

The voluntary committee and new manager have made many changes to improve the outcomes for children at the pre-school. For example, staff now wear tabards and name badges to promote a positive professional team and enable parents and visitors to identify them more easily. They have made a positive start to identifying the group's strengths and areas for improvement by sending out a parent questionnaire and looking at the self-evaluation form completed by previous staff. They are passionate about progressing the pre-school's practice but also realise that this is an area for further consistent monitoring.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are offered varied opportunities to help them soundly progress and develop across all areas. Information is obtained from parents and carers about children's abilities and preferences and this is used to inform initial assessments.

Staff record children's attainments through use of observation and assessment. However, as children's profiles are not kept up-to-date areas of progress, concern or for further challenge are not identified and therefore, children's individual needs are not fully met.

Children's learning is soundly encouraged through discussion and spontaneous explanations as well as focused activities to extend their learning. Staff mostly plan activities based around themes and the children's ideas and choices. For example, a discussion about pirates leads to a boat and papier-mâché crocodile being made and children singing pirate themed songs at the end of year concert. The current theme of mini beasts was also chosen from the children's discussions and used to cover the areas of learning, such as expanding their knowledge and understanding of the natural world as they look at the stick insects brought into pre-school and search for creatures outside, enthusiastically telling staff when they find some ants and then asking to use the digital camera to take their photo, also developing their ICT skills. However, as planning does not currently differentiate for children's individual needs some activities are not encouraging the children to reach their full potential.

During activities, staff soundly support children in their development. When using paint they learn about colour and patterns as they use the zigzag sponges and whilst playing with clay they develop their sensory skills as well as their imaginations as they make wiggly worms. Their number skills are encouraged as they count the number of children in pre-school and talk about the number of legs on the model spider. When playing outside, they actively develop their physical skills as they use large syringes to draw up water and squirt it at the wall and climb up the climbing frame and down the slide. Children enjoy their time at the pre-school forging friendly relationships with the staff and each other. Their behaviour is good as they learn the setting's rules and follow the positive roles set by the staff. All children are treated with equal concern and respected individually. Their understanding of the wider world is promoted, however this is an area that needs further improvement.

Children's health and welfare are well-promoted as the staff take effective steps to minimise the spread of infection and develop children's understanding of healthy living as they for example, learn to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating snack. They are encouraged to learn about healthy eating as they are encouraged to try the healthy snack options provided including various fresh and dried fruits, salad items and crumpets and bread sticks. Their independence is promoted as they pour their drinks and spread their bread using a choice of toppings including honey which they know when asked came from 'honey bees.' They are also learning about their own safety as they know to wait at the kitchen door to be escorted down the steps by a member of staff and confidently tell everyone that 'you need to be careful or someone will get hurt' whilst moving to actions, rhymes and songs.

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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
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?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
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?	3
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?	3
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?	3

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

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