

Stepping Stones Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY302404
Inspection date 25/11/2008
Inspector Helen Penticost

Setting address Gossops Green Community Primary, Kidborough Road,
Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 8HW

Telephone number 01293 542999

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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 Playschool has been registered in its current location since 2007, although it has been an established group since 2002. The nursery is privately owned and operates from Gossops Green Community Primary school in Crawley, West Sussex. Children have access to two classrooms and a fully enclosed outdoor play area. There are toilets with nappy changing facilities. The nursery is open Monday to Friday during term time from 09:00 until 11:30, and from 12:15 until 14:45 Monday to Thursday. The setting offers a lunch club on Fridays. A maximum of 52 children aged from two years to under five years may attend at any one time. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register.

The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup is in receipt of funded educational places. A team of ten staff and three volunteers work with the children, eight of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children make exceptional progress as they are cared for in a stimulating environment, where enthusiastic staff expertly plan challenging activities, to meet all children's individual needs. Highly effective observation and assessments systems are in place and are shared regularly with parents to develop strong partnerships. The well organised leadership and management enables continual development and improvement. This ensures that a highly inclusive environment is provided which develops excellent outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- maintain the system of self evaluation to ensure continual improvement and better outcomes for children

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The proprietor and staffing team have a clear vision for the setting, which is firmly focused on the development of children, in a supportive and stimulating environment. Strong emphasis is given to regular reviews of all aspects of the playschool, which enables practitioners to evolve their practice, to promote better outcomes for children. The setting must maintain the system of self-evaluation to ensure continual improvement and high standards of care and learning. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which therefore promotes the welfare and learning and development for children. They work effectively as a staffing team, consequently, children enjoy a very safe

environment, which is carefully planned to provide rich learning opportunities both inside and out. Staff are extremely well deployed and perceptive as they work within the free flow environment, to ensure that all children are very well supported in their play and learning. Learning intentions are clearly highlighted and show differing levels of attainment.

All of the documentation, policies and procedures required to support children's welfare are in place and are maintained to a very high standard. There are rigorous recruitment procedures to ensure that children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff. Staff attend regular training in child protection issues, giving them the knowledge they need to safeguard children from harm and abuse.

The partnership with parents and carers is effective in supporting children's well-being. All children and parents are warmly welcomed by staff, on a daily basis, and they take this opportunity to informally exchange pertinent information about the children and the day's activities. Comments from parents include that staff members are consistently friendly, approachable and considerate and that because of the high quality care, children are happy and confident. Children comment that they 'like playschool because it's fun!' Effective links with the community, school and other agencies ensures easy transition to school and in particular benefits children who may have additional needs.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children make excellent progress because it is effectively monitored. Clearly documented observation records help to ensure they are appropriately assessed by their key worker on a continual basis. Written observations clearly identify what children know, understand and what their interests are and these are used systematically to plan for the next steps in their learning. Children are constantly praised for their efforts across the whole of the playschool. Children know that their work is valued because staff display it prominently and they take countless photographs, which promotes children's confidence and self-esteem. There are very good arrangements to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are acquiring English as an additional language.

The setting, resources and equipment throughout are exceptionally well organised to thoroughly promote children's independence. They benefit from further opportunities such as preparing their own snacks and pouring their own drinks to develop confidence in their own abilities. Everyday routines such as snack times are used very well to encourage children to engage in conversation, express their own ideas and to learn about healthy food and good hygiene. Children are extremely well supported in all aspects of their time at the setting. The enthusiastic staffing team constantly interact with children, extending vocabulary and supporting their learning. For example, staff fully engage themselves in role play scenarios, helping children to extend their creative and drama skills.

The setting has a book lending service which helps to foster children's enjoyment of the written word. This service has been extended to include educational

computer games and story sacks at the requests from parents. Children have very good opportunities to recognise their own name as they self register at the beginning of the session, as they hang up their coats and as they have snack.

Children have access to a vast range of technological equipment at all times. They use torches to view hidden objects within a box and carefully selected computer programmes interest and challenge children, who concentrate intently on their work for extended periods of time. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through clear explanations from staff reinforcing and they are enabled to take risks in safe surroundings. For example, scissors are freely available and children use large climbing apparatus within the school's gymnasium, where staff are always on hand to fully supervise. Children's behaviour is very good and they are involved in discussion about their feelings. Staff act as positive role models and use methods such as good behaviour 'tickets' that the children take home to share with their parents.

Comprehensive risk assessments are systematically completed, ensuring that all safety measures are in place and effectively implemented. Children thrive because staff effectively follow clear health and hygiene procedures. Highly effective daily routines ensure children wash their hands automatically after visiting the toilet and undertaking messy play, which helps them understand the need for good personal hygiene. Children understand why they must wash their hands and this is discussed regularly with the children. The proprietor ensures that staff attend first aid training to enable staff to give appropriate care to children if required.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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.