

Stepping Stones Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY382637
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Inspector Georgina Emily Hobson Matthews

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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 opened on this site in 1994, with a change of ownership in 2008. It operates from one room in a church hall, in the town of Wymondham, in Norfolk and is accessed via a level entrance. At the present time, there is no outdoor play area. The pre-school provides care for children from the surrounding areas and is open each day from 09:15 until 11:45 during term time.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register to care for 26 children aged from two to under five years. There are currently 29 children on roll, all of whom are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the pre-school is in receipt of nursery education funding. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The proprietor manages the provision and holds a level 3 early years qualification. She employs six part-time staff to work with the children, five of whom hold level 2 or 3 qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The provision is satisfactory. The new manager and her staff team create a warm and welcoming environment in which children feel secure. As a result, children are at ease and therefore confident to explore and try new things. Generally, children's welfare is promoted satisfactorily and the team is beginning to focus and to identify areas for improvement within the provision. The pre-school generally works effectively with other professionals to meet children's needs and has some systems in place to work in partnership with parents in order to integrate children successfully.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- demonstrate how you will provide an outdoor play area or plan for outdoor play on a daily basis and in what time frame.
- develop the key person role to enhance links with parents and to develop links with other EYFS providers
- develop a quality improvement process as the basis of ongoing internal review against a robust and challenging criteria
- review the pre-school's existing policies and make children's written records accessible to parents.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school has established a team of staff who work well together and who are committed to making improvements within the provision. Most staff members

hold early years qualifications. Appropriate recruitment and induction procedures are in place and staff have a satisfactory understanding of safeguarding procedures in order to protect children from harm or neglect. Regular staff meetings provide opportunities for reflection and to target areas for improvement. Although currently the pre-school has no robust process for ongoing internal review. The manager and her team have carried out a basic risk assessment of the setting and carry out daily checks each day before the arrival of the children. The learning environment within the church hall is organised satisfactorily and activities are generally planned to meet children's needs. However, the provision does not have access to an outdoor play area or plan for outings on a daily basis. The pre-school has an ample range of resources that are changed regularly. A proportion of activities are child initiated with sensitive adult support. For example, a child sets up a show for a small group of children and the 'audience' claps and pretends to take photos. This is extended with the support of a staff member and the children issue tickets for others to join in the show.

The proprietor provides parents with some basic written information about the pre-school and invites them to access the group's policies. However, some policies do not reflect current practice in order to fully inform parents. The pre-school has experience of caring for children with additional learning and/or development needs and works closely with other professionals to provide appropriate support. Parents are offered sensitive settling-in procedures and the pre-school operates a key person system. Opportunities to discuss children's ongoing progress are offered at the beginning and end of each session and a notice board and regular newsletters display information about forthcoming events. Parents' satisfaction with the pre-school is reflected in their positive feedback.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff members have a satisfactory understanding of the EYFS although some are less confident of their ability to deliver this effectively. The key person gathers some information from parents about children's starting points prior to the commencement of care. However, this is not always sufficient in order to challenge the more able children. Information obtained from parents of children with English as a second language is not always successfully cascaded to all members of the team in order that each child's needs are met when their key person is not on duty. The staff team use the EYFS to plan for children's learning and make regular observations of children's play. From these, key persons usually identify and plan for the next steps required in each child's learning although when this step is achieved, it is not always recorded within the current system. A recent open morning enabled parents to access and discuss their child's progress records although these records are not accessible to parents at all times in order to fully involve them in their child's learning. The pre-school has not yet developed links with other settings that provide EYFS for children attending in order to ensure effective continuity and progression.

Children are generally interested and involved in their play. They are confident in their approach to each other and as they talk about their families during group activities. Children behave well and assist responsibly in daily routines. They enjoy

their time at pre-school and are able to share resources, to take turns and to play cooperatively in small groups. Children develop their social skills, particularly during snack time, where they chat easily to each other. They are encouraged to make decisions and to develop independence as they wash their hands, collect their snacks, pour drinks and clear the table when finished. Children enjoy listening to stories as they snuggle up with a member of staff. They also access a book corner independently, handle books with care and concentrate as they look at pictures. Children recognise their own names, link sounds to letters during their everyday play and have lots of opportunities to mark make. They recognise numbers during board games and learn to count as they sing songs such as 'Sausages in a pan'. Children sort animals into different categories, consider which is the tallest or shortest and think about 'how many more'.

Children observe the growth of sunflower seeds and cress and use natural materials such as leaves to create a collage. They learn about people who help in the community on a trip to the local fire station. Friends of the pre-school share their knowledge with the children as when a lady shows the children how to use chopsticks at Chinese New Year. Children learn to operate equipment such as tape recorders and simple computer programmes. They have opportunities to explore different materials such as compost, clay, bubbles, sand and water. Children's creativity is encouraged as they paint, print, dance, sing, dress up and involve themselves in imaginary play in a home corner, a veterinary surgery and a garden centre. They explore a variety of physical movements as they manoeuvre cars, scooters and tricycles in an area of the hall. Children learn to move with control and co-ordination on a large climbing frame and a balancing beam. They learn to throw and kick balls and bean bags and to manipulate small tools during sand and water play. Children learn about how to be healthy as they are encouraged to bring nutritious foods to pre-school for snacks. Staff members talk to them about which foods are good for them and use books, posters and role play areas to promote discussion. Fresh drinking water is available throughout sessions to encourage children to become aware of when they are thirsty. Children develop good hygiene as they wash their hands after toileting and before eating. They learn how to stay safe as they practise fire evacuation, discuss road safety and listen to gentle reminders such as why they should not run in pre-school.

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.	3

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?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

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?	3
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?	3
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 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.