

# Stepping Stones Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	511221
<b>Inspection date</b>	20/01/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Sue Taylor
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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 Playgroup opened in 1987. It is located in the Bexhill Youth and Community Centre, which is close to the town centre and Bexhill railway station. The group operates from rooms within the centre. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.15 to 12.15 with a lunch club until 13.00, during school term time only. There is no secure enclosed outdoor play area. Access to the sports hall that is used occasionally is down a flight of stairs or via a pathway outside.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 23 children aged from two years on roll, of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Most children come from the local area. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs three full time members of staff, who all hold a level 3 early years qualification. The group also have a bank member of staff. The centre manager is on site and is involved with the playgroup.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

The playgroup has established working practices that support children's all-round development in a calm and caring environment. Whilst opportunities for outdoor play are very limited, children are progressing in all areas of their learning. The staff team work well together and all are involved in planning future developments. They provide a friendly and welcoming environment where children are valued for who they are.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- consider ways to provide opportunities for outdoor play and physical exercise on a more regular basis for all children
- encourage more involvement from parents in their child's individual learning needs and in contributing to the assessment process
- ensure that the processes in place clearly identify children's individual learning needs and next steps, and that these are effectively planned for, enabling continuous assessment and evaluation
- review the written policies and procedures, ensuring that they refer to the group practices and that parents are clearly informed of their availability

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

- develop the risk assessment to ensure it covers all aspects of the provision that children come into

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contact with and in particular, the use of the outdoor areas (Suitable premises, environment and equipment)

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The playgroup maintains the legally required records and documentation, although some additional detail is required for the risk assessment record to ensure all aspects are covered, including the use of the outdoor areas. The policies and procedures, that are due to be reviewed to ensure they match the group's practices, are understood by staff and are made readily available for parents to view, although they have not been clearly informed of this. These cover subjects such as, food and drink, child protection and complaints. The organisation of the room provides different learning opportunities for the children to make play choices from, in addition to some adult led activities. The staff work hard to set the room up daily and a resources plan helps ensure a varied balance of play opportunities. However, at times, a whole group activity does not meet the individual learning needs of all children. There is a very good ratio of qualified staff present each day and the higher than required adult to child ratio that enables some one to one attention. The staff get to know the children well and are warmly supportive of their individual care needs. Appropriate recruitment procedures are in place and the staff are supported in their further development with appraisals and access to training.

The setting meets children's individual care needs well and this is assisted by the positive and friendly relationships they develop with parents. The key worker ensures parents have a named member of staff they can approach to discuss their child's progress or other issues that may affect a child's care. The home link books give interesting detail about a child's achievement or interest in an activity for each day. Other shared documentation helps the staff gain a better awareness of how children are progressing at home. Regular meetings are arranged to discuss children's progress. Parents are, occasionally, ideas of how they can support children's learning at home, however these do not routinely link to their own child's individual learning needs and/or next steps.

The group have made improvements since the last inspection. They have considered the recommendations and made positive changes to routines and processes to promote children's development. Development plans for the future indicate motivation for continuous improvement.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children are making progress towards the early learning goals, supported by the committed staff team and overall, there is planned and purposeful play. However, children have few opportunities to enjoy or explore the outside environment. Resources are arranged to create different play areas that mean children can make choices about their play. For example, children make good use of the well

resourced writing table, using paper and pens in other areas such as role play. They get to explore different textures such as cornflour and water, home made play dough or coloured sand. They independently spend time looking at books in the cosy book area and enjoy taking books home to share with their parents.

The staff make observations as children play and use these to note children's progress in their learning journey. From the observations made, children's next steps in their learning are noted. Whilst there is no formal planning to show how these learning intentions are met and evaluated, the staff meet weekly to discuss children's progress. Additional individual learning or development needs are discussed with parents and supported. Children learn about different backgrounds and benefit from some parents coming to share their experiences. This values children's cultures and helps others gain an awareness of the wider world.

The room is secure and staff supervise children to ensure their safety. Explanations from staff help children learn to keep themselves safe. Children's health is promoted with pieces of fruit at snack time, easy access to drinking water throughout the session and the use of individual paper towels for hand drying. The children bring packed lunches if they are staying for the lunch club. The group have no cold storage and rely on parents providing ice packs to lessen the likelihood of perishables from spoiling. Behaviour is managed well and the staff use positive approaches with the children.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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?	3

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	3
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
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?	2

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](http://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 or 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.