

Stepping Stones Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY376771

Inspection date

04/03/2009

Inspector

Clare Perry

Setting address

Shardeloes Cricket Pavillion, Shardeloes, Missenden Road,
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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).

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

Stepping Stones Nursery School registered in 2008. It operates from Shardeloes Cricket Pavillion, on the outskirts of Amersham, Buckinghamshire. Within the premises there are 3 dayrooms, two toilet areas for children and a staff toilet, a kitchen and office. Children have access to an outdoor play area. The nursery school opens Monday to Friday during school term time, from 09.15 until 15.00 on Monday and Wednesday; 09.15 until 15.15 on Tuesday and Thursday and 09.15 until 12.15 on Fridays. There is a manager who has recently achieved Early Years Professional Status and six staff who work with the children, of these, two hold qualified teacher status, and three practitioners are currently working toward a level two or three qualification in Child Care and Education. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare register. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 38 children on roll. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The setting is satisfactory overall. It supports every child so that no group or individual is disadvantaged. All children make good progress in their learning and development and their welfare is generally promoted. However, not all the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are being met. The new owners have made progress since they brought the nursery and the planning for improvement including processes of self evaluation is developing but not yet completely effective.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure all opportunities are undertaken to encourage children to be as independent as possible and provide opportunities for them to regularly use ICT equipment
- use, effectively and consistently for all children, the systems in place to undertake sensitive observational assessments of children and to plan to meet their individual needs
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children and ensure these are in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage and maintain confidentiality
- obtain written parental permission for children to take part in outings.

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

- ensure at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises at all

03/04/2009

times when children are present and also that at least one person on outings has a current paediatric first aid certificate

- carry out a full risk assessment for each type of outing 03/04/2009
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children, including the heaters, are kept to a minimum. 03/04/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Parents are well informed and very involved in the setting. They are offered a meeting each term to discuss their child's progress, development and next steps. They are asked to contribute what they know about their child when they initially start and also as part of the child of the week programme. Most records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management and to promote outcomes are in place and effective. However, there are some omissions. The policies have not been updated in line with Early Years Foundation Stage. Some records are not maintained confidentially, and not all accidents have been signed by parents to show they are aware the accident has occurred. The fire drill does not include details of the time the practice took place or any issues or difficulties encountered. Parents are not asked to give their written consent for outings and there is no complaints log. Some appropriate risk assessments are in place, though there are no risk assessments for outings and those that are in place are not wholly effective as they have not identified the risk to children from the very hot heaters.

Inclusive practice is strong. No child or group of children are disadvantaged. They are valued and respected as individuals. They are all able to be involved in all activities and adaptations are made where necessary. Children learn about different cultures and beliefs through everyday activities and topic work. Good strategies are in place to identify children with learning difficulties and / or disabilities and to support children who are found to need additional support either internally or from outside agencies. The setting works in partnership with parents to support these children. Children are offered one to one care where possible and helped and supported well by staff to access all areas of the setting and all activities.

The manager is beginning to develop processes to monitor the provision and self evaluation and has a reasonably accurate view of the settings strengths and weaknesses and a strong vision for where she would like the setting to be and what she wants to achieve. Although she has yet to seek the views of parents and children and to involve the whole staff team in the process. Some areas for improvement from registration have been addressed but not all, this shows a commitment to improvement but it is not yet fully effective. There is a strong staff team in place and the setting is trying to recruit a permanent qualified deputy. Staff development is progressing and some staff are now working towards qualifications. However, there is currently only one member of staff who holds an

appropriate first aid certificate meaning that at times there is no one qualified in first aid on site or on outings.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are happy, confident and well settled. They enjoy a wide range of planned and purposeful activities across the areas of learning and a combination of adult and child led activities. Their likes and interests are reflected in the child of the week programme. Children are fairly independent though staff miss opportunities to encourage this further, for example, with writing their own names, putting on coats and shoes, pouring drinks at mealtimes and for the older children to cut out their own shapes during creative activities. There are good relationships in evidence throughout the setting. Children communicate freely and confidently at all levels and they ask questions to extend their understanding and knowledge. They enthusiastically join in with the music session, enjoying singing, rhymes and dancing. Children have a good phonetic knowledge are beginning to use this to sound out and spell out words such as their names and those of their friends. Older children have the opportunity to start sharing reading books with staff and at home, learning to use the pictures to tell the story and also to begin to recognise familiar words. Children are sometimes encouraged to have a go at writing their own name or initial letter sound, though this is not consistent. Children recognise some numerals and count to ten. They are able to sort by colour, number and pattern and can compare sizes of groups of objects, such as, this one has more. Children are curious and enjoy finding out about new things, though they have very limited opportunities to experience Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Children enjoy time outside everyday either in the small garden, large open space or going for walks. They move freely around the setting and are able to negotiate easily around objects and each other. They have good manipulative skills and use a variety of objects, for example, pencils, spoons' in the sand, glue spreaders and paintbrushes. Children enjoy a wide range of creative activities and experiences. They particularly enjoy cooking activities, making pancakes and mini quiches. Children are developing good habits and behaviours. They are gently reminded to be kind to their friends and asked to say sorry as appropriate. On the whole they behave well and staff have good strategies in place to deal with undesirable behaviour and use positive reinforcement such as star charts and reward stickers to enhance children's behaviour awareness and self-esteem.

Systems have recently been introduced to record children's starting points, observe them, assess their progress and plan for their next steps and individual learning. However, these are not yet being used effectively and consistently. The setting use a child of the week programme to plan for their interests and needs, this enables each child to feel special and enjoy their favourite activities and to take home Barney or Belinda bear and share what they have done together with the other children. Children are cared for by a strong staff team who support their learning well. They know the children well and ask appropriate questions to extend their learning and thinking and take time to listen. They adapt planned activities well for children's different capabilities. The environment is well organised and planned to meet the needs of the children and aid their progress. Although, the setting have

not yet established systems for free flow indoor and outdoor play. Children happily move around the different rooms to find activities. The afternoon session for the very youngest children is very calm, quiet and dedicated session; enabling these children to develop their confidence and early skills.

The setting has appropriate strategies in place to safeguard children, though these are not always fully effective. The outdoor area is not yet secure, although the setting have good strategies in place to safeguard children when they are outside. Children learn about keeping safe. They receive gentle reminders from staff such as to walk in the corridor in case they fall and not to lie on the floor in case someone falls over them or onto them. They are learning how to use resources and equipment safely and they learn about walking safely when out and about and not to run off. Children are beginning to learn healthy practices and receive gentle reminders from staff, such as covering their mouths when they cough in case of germs and risks to others. They enjoy healthy snacks and meals such as fresh fruit, breadsticks, cheesy muffins and salad. They are able to access drinking water at all times from a jug and cups at their height on the side. They independently take themselves to the toilet and manage their basic care needs. However, hand washing does not always take place appropriately before meals and children continue to wear their overalls used for painting, at snack and mealtimes.

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?	2
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?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
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?	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?	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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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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.