

Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY316669
Inspection date 22/01/2009
Inspector Susan Thomas-Pounce

Setting address Foxes Piece School, Newfield Road, Marlow,
Buckinghamshire, SL7 1JW

Telephone number

Email

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 Pre-School registered in September 2005 with the present owner, although the pre-school has been running for nine years. It operates from two classrooms in a separate unit within the school grounds of Foxes Piece School, in Marlow. A maximum of 40 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open every weekday during term time only from 9.00 to 12.00. There are two outside play areas for the children to use and they can access the school playing fields regularly. There are currently 34 children on roll, of whom 20 are in the early years age group and receive funding for nursery education. There are 13 two year olds on roll and 21 three and four year olds. The pre-school serves children mainly from the local community and surrounding areas. The setting has provision to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those that who are learning English as an additional language. The setting employs seven staff. Three hold a NVQ level 3 qualification of whom one is the managing supervisor. The owner is working towards a level 3 childcare qualification. One member of staff holds a level 2 qualification in childcare. The Pre-School is registered on the Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register and Voluntary Childcare Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

All staff successfully promote welfare, learning and development. As a result, children's individual needs are generally well met and they are all valued and included in the activities and experiences on offer. Children's learning and development is appropriately supported through a varied range of activities and games. Systems of observation and assessment are satisfactory and developing well. Systems to evaluate the provision and practice are developing but opportunities to use this information to its full potential are not yet fully established.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the organisation of the setting to include effective procedures to evaluate and identify areas for improvement
- develop closer links with the local school to improve transition for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- improve the inside learning environment and Nursery resources
- improve information and communication technology resources to better support their future economic well-being

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider has improved the setting's practice. The recommendations on the quality and standard of care and education made at the last inspection have been

adequately dealt with. Documentation meets statutory requirements and staff have a clear understanding about safeguarding issues and attend training to maintain current knowledge. There are also a number of staff with current first aid training, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The experienced staff team work well together. Advice and support is sought from the local authority so that recent changes are effective, most notably in the implementation of assessment. Partnership with parents is developing well and good links have been established with other professionals from the local authority. This has ensured individual children's needs are fully met, especially in relation to those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are informal links with the local school. These are not as strong or as effective as they should be to aid transition or develop the experiences of the children who attend the setting.

Children feel valued and included. They form good relationships with their key person and enjoy the experience of having their own place for personal belongings. Children's welfare is safeguarded through effective child protection policies and procedures. Staff understand the importance of treating children as unique individuals through effective inclusive practice. Self-evaluation is not yet sufficiently robust to ensure all weaknesses are identified in order to monitor the impact of any improvements made. There is now scope to improve the organisation of the setting to include effective procedures to evaluate and identify areas for improvement. The manager and staff are fully aware of these current shortcomings and have plans to improve self-evaluation.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are happy and settled within the setting as they freely access and enjoy the continuous play provision practitioners provide in all six areas of learning. Information about children's starting points, their skills and abilities, are obtained from parents to enable staff to create a smooth transition to the Nursery. Staff have all attended in-house Early Years Foundation Stage training and systems for planning, observing and assessing children's ongoing progress and achievements are now in place. The process for observation, assessment and planning for individual children is developing well, although there is still more to do to ensure consistency across the setting. Staff are using the new formats and systems to plan the next steps in children's learning. Children move confidently around the setting and freely choose what they wish to do, both indoors and outside. They use their imaginations well as they engage in role-play games with a range of resources and also as they act out scenarios with small world figures. Children make independent choices and decisions about what they would like to play with and how they would like to spend their time from a range of resources available. Practitioners are supportive but not intrusive in children's play, which creates a beneficial balance of activities that the children choose for themselves and adult focused learning. Through the appropriate deployment of resources and activities, children have a suitable basis to develop a positive understanding of the wider world. However, children have not had sufficient access to use information and communication technology and other programmable resources to support their future economic well-being. The inside learning environment and the nursery resources are often not attractively presented enough to provide sufficient

challenge for children to extend their learning across all areas. Children's welfare needs and self-care skills are fully encouraged to support their independence. They learn how to wash up and dry their plates and mugs and pour their own drinks. Children behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. For example, they understand that they should walk indoors. Both younger and older children interact well with each other, enjoying opportunities to socialise, communicate and spend time engaging in cooperative play.

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?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
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 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

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.