

Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY297420
Inspection date	21/01/2009
Inspector	Beryl Richmond
Setting address	Manor Infant School, Teachers Way, Holbury, Southampton, Hampshire, SO45 2QG
Telephone number	023 8089 7025
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 opened in 2005 and operates from three rooms in Manor Infant School, Holbury, which is situated in the Waterside area of Southampton. It is open from 8:30 to 16:00 daily. A voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community manage the pre-school. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 31 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 26 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting is part of the Pathfinder Scheme and is able to offer 15 hours of funded nursery education each week. Children attend mainly from the local area. The pre-school welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are seven staff, including an administrator, of these, three staff hold level 3 early years qualifications and the majority of the rest hold level 2 qualifications or are working towards this qualification. The pre-school is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Registers.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Stepping Stones Pre-School provides a good education for its children enabling them to make good progress in their learning and development. Arrangements to ensure children's safety and welfare are outstanding and the staff provide very well for their emotional development. Because of good relationships with parents and children, children settle happily, are fully included in activities and enjoy their time in the pre-school. The pre-school has improved well since the last inspection and there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement. The capacity to improve further is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop children's speaking and listening skills by encouraging them to answer in sentences and by modelling role-play situations for them
- improve the way that information from self-evaluation is recorded so that the work of the pre-school is evaluated in terms of its impact on children's personal development and achievement

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff team have addressed well the welfare point for improvement recommended in the last inspection report. In order to safeguard children, all legally required policies and procedures are in place and risk assessments are carried out very effectively. Children are supervised very well. Very thorough checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with the children. Accident

books and medication details are very well documented. In the last inspection report, the pre-school was asked to improve staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning and the early learning goals, and to improve assessment and planning systems. Staff have received training in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are now good records in place that collate together information from ongoing and planned assessments to build up a complete picture of what a child knows and can do. Key workers use this information well to plan the next steps in each child's learning.

Arrangements for children to become more independent by being able to select resources and look after themselves are good. The setting is welcoming to all children and the staff understand their needs well. The staff have good relationships with parents and there are strong links with the infant school. Staff evaluate the success of what they have provided for the children and they take account of children's interests as they emerge during the week. Because of the good and improving provision, it is clear that self-evaluation has been effective. However, the pre-school's self-evaluation form is still in draft form and the impact of the pre-school's provision on children's achievement and their personal development is not expressed clearly enough.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The indoor areas are bright, colourful and well organised and resourced so that children can move around easily and access resources well. The adjacent outdoor areas are also well resourced with a range of static equipment for the children to climb, explore and develop their spatial awareness and physical skills. Children often choose to be in the outdoor area but there is no cover, which restricts its use for play and learning in all areas of the curriculum during bad weather. However, the pre-school has the use of the infant school hall so that children can always enjoy physical activities. Staff have a consistent approach to modelling and reinforcing good behaviour that enables the children to stay safe and healthy. Children know about washing their hands before eating food and they are developing good habits. For example, they choose to have their healthy snack when they are ready at the snack bar. There is a very good focus on developing children's social skills, such as listening to others and playing cooperatively and kindly with other children. Relationships are excellent. In terms of children's language development, staff interact satisfactorily with children by talking to them and encouraging them, particularly on a one-to-one basis. However, children are not encouraged enough to answer questions with more than one word answers and consequently very few children speak in sentences. Children love dressing up and there is a good range of clothes to suit all children's interests. However, staff do not model role play stories or situations with the children enough so that children develop their speaking and listening skills and learn the appropriate vocabulary.

Good weekly planning has an overall theme related to an area of learning, for example, winter, to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. All other areas of the curriculum are linked to this theme. Because of this, learning is meaningful for the children and their interests are also well catered for. Children

enjoyed predicting what would happen to their ice cubes when they were taken outside and left in the sun. Key workers usually plan sufficient challenge for the children.

Children have their own name cards so that they have good regular opportunities to recognise how their name is spelt. They are given good encouragement to become independent, for example, by self-registering when they arrive at the pre-school. Staff provide good support for children who are beginning to learn letters and sounds by encouraging children to say the sounds and supporting them with wooden letter resources.

Children play their part well in the smooth running of the setting by behaving well and by being helpful, for example by feeding the fish. Overall, children are developing the necessary skills to become successful learners except there is insufficient staff intervention to promote vocabulary development.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	1

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?	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?	2
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?	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

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

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints that required the provider to take any action.

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.