

Stepping Stones Pre-School and Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY312228
Inspection date	06/05/2009
Inspector	Cynthia Walker
Setting address	The Institute, Main Street, Cononley, KEIGHLEY, West Yorkshire, BD20 8LJ
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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 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 and Nursery was registered in 2005 and is privately owned. The nursery operates from the village institute where children have access to a main playroom, large hall and supporting facilities. There is no access to an outdoor area, but children are taken out on regular walks and visits within the local community. The nursery operates from Monday to Friday from 09.15 until 12.00 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday and from 09.00 until 15.30 on Wednesday and Thursday, term time only.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Child Care Register. A maximum of 16 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 22 children from two to under five years on roll, some in part time places. There are six staff employed at the nursery, all of whom work on a part-time basis, of these four hold appropriate early year's qualifications to at least NVQ level3. The setting provides funded early education for three and four year olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children enjoy their time in the nursery and make good progress. The nursery provides effective learning opportunities to meet all the children's needs and effectively promote their welfare. Staff use their knowledge to support and help children understand and have a positive attitude to people or children who are different to themselves. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and have clearly identified targets for the future. Staff work well with parents and carers to ensure the needs of all children are met by valuing each child as a unique individual.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop the methods for identifying the children's next steps in learning within the observations to ensure they consistently link to information in the planned programme of activities
- introduce staff appraisals to monitor their suitability which links to their professional development

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider and staff work as an effective team to provide quality care and education for children. Documentation which is required for the safe and efficient management of the setting is well organised and reflected in practice to support all aspects of children's needs. There is a sound recruitment and vetting procedure which establishes the suitability of staff and promotes the children's safety.

Although the nursery is committed to the professional development of the staff team, a system for conducting appraisals on the staff team is not in place to ensure their ongoing suitability is monitored and maintained. The policies and procedures are reflected in practice, for example, behaviour. Effective risk assessments ensure appropriate actions are taken to manage and eliminate risks to children within the nursery and on outings.

The provider has completed a detailed evaluation document which takes into account the views of the staff and gives a clear indication of their targets for improvement which includes developing the outdoor play. Regular questionnaires to the parents and carers allow them to reflect on the quality of the setting and include comments, such as, friendly, approachable, quality staff. All staff have a good understanding of child protection to enable them to effectively safeguard the children in their care.

Parents and carers receive effective information about the nursery through a detailed information booklet as children begin their care which includes aspects of the curriculum. Regular newsletters ensure information is updated and includes the activities the children will be involved in. Information about their children's progress is shared through the key worker system and planned sharing of assessment folders at the annual parent's evening. Systems are in place to liaise with other provider delivering the learning programme to children to support their continuity of learning by using 'link books' which parents have highlighted in questionnaires as a 'great idea'.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The staff team have a good knowledge of the learning and development requirements and are confident in helping children learn appropriately both in and outdoors. Assessment records have recently been reviewed and a new format for recording observations is now being used called 'The Learning Journey'. The key workers have a good understanding of the children's individual learning and their next steps for learning are identified in the observations, however, they do not consistently reflect how the individual children's learning will be extended. Regular discussions ensure the key workers record the individual children's future learning on a detailed evaluation sheet, this information is used to identify the learning intentions for the next week's programme of activities. Planning also reflects the children's interests and indicates where enhancements are made to the continuous provision. The balance of adult and child led activities enables children to have an enjoyable and challenging experience. The creative organisation of the nursery encourages purposeful play and exploration enabling children to make independent choices and be active in instigating their own play and learning.

The staff actively engage the children in activities and encourage their participation and development by using effective questioning and support. They skilfully introduce activities and experiences which encourages children to make connections by thinking things through, for example, as they take the children's wheelchair to the toilet area to see if it will fit into one of the cubicles. Children are confident communicators as they contribute and respond to discussions at circle

time. They use language to explain to other children how the brakes work on the wheel chair and explain that they have a teddy at home called 'Arthur'. The walk to the school field provides a wide range of interesting opportunities for children to explore and investigate as they carefully examine snails using a magnifying glass and compare their size and patterns of the shells. Whilst at the field they discover beetles and woodlice and run to check if the geese have got any goslings. They wander through the wooded area and carefully examine the bluebells and carefully blow the dandelion heads. Children identify the numerals on the house doors and at circle successfully count the number of boys and then girls who are present at nursery. Staff encourage children to estimate if there are more boys than girls and then to count the total number of children.

The nursery is committed to good quality care which actively promotes children's health and well being. They enjoy being active and understand the benefits of physical activity as they run and chase around the field or skilfully represent butterflies as they move gently to music in the hall. The introduction of simple road safety on the journey to school as they listen for cars before crossing the road reinforces children's understanding of danger and how to stay safe. The sensitive introduction of resources raises the children's understanding of disability. During discussions children explain that 'if they can't walk properly we can't go in the hall' or 'if I couldn't see I wouldn't be able to see my rabbit'. Children behave well in response to the consistent responses from staff and have developed positive relationships as they play cooperatively at activities, such as play dough. Certificates are awarded to children for being kind, helpful or being a superstar which parents identified as having a positive impact on their 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

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?	2

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?	2
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?	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

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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