

# Stepping Stones Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	511673
<b>Inspection date</b>	14/05/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Coral Hales
<b>Setting address</b>	36 Shaftesbury Street, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 1JF
<b>Telephone number</b>	07796 644970
<b>Email</b>	
<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 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 Pre-school opened in 1997 and operates from rooms within the community centre in the town of Fordingbridge, Hampshire. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 35 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 42 children on roll of whom 29 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school is open five days a week during school term times from 09:00 to 16:00 and operates an additional lunch club from 12.00 - 13.00. The pre-school supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

There are six members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff continues to train. The pre-school are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is satisfactory. The senior staff team are very new to their role. They are very motivated and have clear ideas and aims for the pre-school and demonstrate the capacity to maintain and make continuous improvement. Staff provide a welcoming environment and children are happy and settled and enjoy themselves. Staff know the children well giving them suitable support, however, children with English as an additional language are not always fully integrated. Effective working partnerships with parents ensures continuity of care. Staff have established good links with the local school to ensure children's individual learning needs are shared.

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

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

- take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children by ensuring that security systems work effectively to prevent visitors and other centre users from accessing the pre-school unobserved
- further extend information gathered about children's starting points to ensure sufficient challenge and stimulation for their learning and development
- develop the learning environment, resources and teaching methods to enable children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning and help all to embrace differences in ethnicity, language, religion and culture.

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

Senior staff are new to their role as managers and are implementing ongoing improvements and are beginning to establish effective team work. New routines have been introduced and staff are still developing their understanding of these. As a result they are not always clear about their roles or the focus of planned activities. Staff recognise the need to use reflective practice to help identify where their strengths and weaknesses are and have completed a self-evaluation document as a team.

Staff have established satisfactory working partnerships with parents and links with others for example, the local school, are good. For example, the teacher visits the setting and meets the children due to go to school in September. Documentation is reviewed and updated as necessary and all policies and procedures are known to staff and shared with parents.

Recruitment systems are in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. However, some processes used to ensure suitability are not fully effective.

Staff have a suitable understanding of safety issues and daily checks are carried out. Although a written risk assessment is in place this has not identified the risk to children when the main door remains unlocked at times allowing access of others into the premises unannounced.

Children are kept safe because the staff who care for them have a suitable understanding of child protection issues. They are aware of their responsibility to protect them and a safeguarding policy is in place and this is available to share with parents.

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

Children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals, given their age, ability and starting points. Staff are well qualified and have a secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and provide a suitable range of activities and experiences for the children. Planning is currently being reviewed and changes implemented to ensure it links to children's identified learning needs and the expectations of the early learning goals. Children are not always effectively challenged or stimulated and opportunities are missed to extend and develop their learning. Staff interaction with the children varies during the session which results in children who are not supported quickly losing interest in a task. Key persons effectively observe and monitor children's progress and their individual needs are noted although it is not always clear how this information is used to plan for their next steps.

Children co-operate well with one another for example, in the role-play area. They enjoy working with the student who helps them to create an Italian restaurant after they finish making paper pizzas. Children's vocabulary is developing well and they all listen to the member of staff as she tells them about the tadpoles collected

from the local pond. They all enjoy looking at them to see if they can see the tiny legs. They ask questions and then listen to a story that helps to extend their understanding. They enjoy making their own choices about what to play with, several choose to play with the brightly coloured feathers, they recognise and name the different colours and throw them in the air and are fascinated as they float slowly down. Others choose to go out into the outdoor area, and play in the sand, talk to staff and run around having fun using a good selection of wheeled toys riding around the roadway and show increasing control of their bodies.

Children begin to learn about the benefits of a healthy diet as they enjoy healthy snacks of fruit and as they eat lunches prepared by their parents. Sometimes staff promote and extend children's learning, for example, by telling them that food is fuel to help their bodies work. They are given clear explanations about how to develop suitable hygiene routines, and are able to independently wash their hands in the sink within the playroom. Children enjoy a range of activities, which contribute to their good health and they have access to the outdoor area throughout the session. This helps them to develop a positive attitude to exercise and they improve their physical skills and are able to move freely and safely within the premises. Staff carefully monitor and supervise the children to ensure they are kept safe when playing.

Children are learning how to respond in emergencies and routine fire evacuations are practised and recorded. Staff safeguard and promote children's welfare, and required procedures and consents are in place. Children begin to learn about simple road safety through discussion and observation and role-play in the outdoor area.

Children enjoy good relationships with the staff and with each other. They are well-behaved and are sensitively supported by staff when issues arise. Positive strategies for managing behaviour are used and this helps children to learn to understand behaviour boundaries and play happily alongside and with each other.

## 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.	3

### 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?	3
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?	3
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?	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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

