

Stepping Stones (Botley) Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Isobel Randall

Setting address North Hinksey C of E School, North Hinksey Lane, Oxford,
Oxfordshire, OX2 0LZ
Telephone number 01865 794287
Email sherryrayson1@hotmail.com
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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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 was originally registered in 1972 and it registered at its present setting in 2004. It operates from a modular building in the grounds of North Hinksey Church of England School and children join with the school's Reception class at certain times of the day. The Pre-School is also registered to operate a breakfast and after school club during term time and an out of school play scheme in the holidays. The setting is registered on the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register as well as the Early Years Register. Sessions are from 07.45 to 08.45 for the breakfast club, 08.45 to 15.15 for the pre-school, 15.15 to 18.00 for the after school club and 07.45 to 15.45 for the out of school holiday play scheme.

The setting can care for no more than 52 children at any one time on all registers. Children may attend for one or more sessions at the discretion of the staff and committee. There are currently 53 children on the pre-school roll of whom 49 are in receipt of government nursery education funding. This includes four two year olds and 30 three year olds. The remainder of children are four years old. Twelve staff work with the children on a full or part-time basis of which ten have a relevant early years qualification to level three or above. Two members of staff are employed as general assistants. One graduate is working towards Early Years Professional Status with a further member of staff undertaking the Early Years Foundation Degree. The group receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. They have also undertaken and gained the Oxfordshire Partners in Quality Assurance Scheme Award.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Children make good progress in this effective pre-school setting. There are efficient systems in place that include accurate self-evaluation which have resulted in good improvements since the last inspection. Leaders promote children's development and welfare well and demonstrate good capacity for further improvement. There is now scope to improve the way staff use assessment to plan the next steps in children's learning, as well as developing more opportunities for children to use outdoor areas. There is excellent planning for inclusion that is based on thorough communication with parents and links with relevant organisations, and this ensures that all children have equal opportunities to develop well.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- use records of progress more effectively to monitor the extent to which children are progressing across different areas of learning
- further develop the outside area in order to extend opportunities for outdoor play

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Leaders have accurately identified areas for improvement through close collaboration with staff, parents, the adjacent primary school and the local authority. Since the last inspection they have improved the level of staff expertise. Responding to the recommendations made at the time of the last inspection, leaders have invested well in a range of tools and equipment whose use is planned into appropriate sessions. For example, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) has been improved and its use is expanding. As part of their quality assurance, in consultation with the local authority, the staff are compiling a computer-based system to record and analyse assessments of children's performance. This new system is intended to allow staff to analyse closely the impact of their planning on children's progress towards the early learning goals as this is a relative weakness in the settings use of assessment. At present, tracking concentrates on each child's progress, with an overview of the impact of activities on individuals and groups. Key workers make meticulous notes of observations of all activities, using them to form profiles which are the basis of regular planning meetings. As a result, they plan securely for learning objectives that build accurately on each child's attainment but this does not sufficiently inform them of the rate of progress children make or the next steps in their development in all areas of learning. With the local primary school, the setting is a partner in a Partnership Foundation Stage Unit, and representatives of both school and pre-school parents and management staff work closely together within a Joint Steering Committee to formulate working procedures for the joint sessions held daily, as well as larger projects such as the planned improvements and development of the outside play areas.

Excellent relationships with parents focus closely on improving children's experiences, for example, through strong parental representation on the management committee. Children's good development is promoted by effective policies on behaviour management, equality and diversity, special educational needs and disability, use of equipment and resources and arrangements for the provision of food and drink. Clear policies for child protection, staffing, employment and student placement help towards ensuring the children's safety. Parents voice approval of detailed and open communication through notices, conversations, letters, contact books and a web-site, allowing them to complement their children's experiences in the pre-school at home. Their interaction with staff is helped by clear policies for complaints, confidentiality, parental involvement and non-collection of children. Parents are welcomed into any sessions to work along with their children. A recent joint learning session for parents, staff and children was well attended. Parental questionnaires show their approval of provision, while the very few concerns have been addressed in full.

The leadership team use meticulous procedures to provide outstanding care for children's safety and well-being. Their excellent provision has a very positive impact on children's feeling of being safe when playing with each other or talking to visitors. Hygiene procedures have been examined and addressed in detail since

the last inspection. Children happily wash their hands thoroughly as a matter of course after messy activities or going to the toilet and before eating. All staff hold certificates in food hygiene and paediatric first aid. They have been trained to deal with allergies and are fully aware of children's food preferences and medical conditions. Child protection procedures are completely in place, as are checks on staff and others who have contact with children. Fire drill records along with checks on the premises and equipment are up to date. Generous staffing ratios ensure that children are closely supervised at all times. Managers ensure that children are taught to keep themselves safe. Access to the premises is carefully controlled so that everyone entering the area is identified then accompanied by a member of staff.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Parents say that their children enjoy coming to the pre-school. Children relate well to each other and to the staff, especially to their key workers. Staff encourage the children to choose independently from the wide range of activities and resources. These are well organised and are matched well to children's individual needs and interests. Through discussion of experiences, the staff encourage children to develop a good awareness and understanding of the world around them. Children learn about healthy eating and hygiene in the activities planned for them. They find out about healthy food by taking turns to help staff prepare nutritious snacks. Children wait patiently to wash their hands before sitting down to eat. Children learn to stay safe by having well guided and supervised access to a good range of toys and equipment. When using scissors, children know how to hold them safely and can explain why they have to do so. They learn to climb safely and to dress appropriately for different activities. There are good opportunities for taking exercise and although outdoor areas are limited, the staff have arranged with the adjacent school that part of its grounds be made available to increase space for ball games. There is a good range of safe equipment for physical exercise in spite of the limited space

Children learn to play together harmoniously, knowing how to take turns and how to lead. A group of children playing on a wooden train pointed out that it would be dangerous to allow any extra passengers, and so the others would have to wait for the next train. They behave thoughtfully towards each other. Children who stay for the after school club play happily with older children who join them from the school. They enjoy taking responsibility for clearing away their equipment, setting it out for the next sessions and laying tables for snacks.

Children reading quietly enjoy stories and are keen to share the content of their books with others. They like to explore materials such as sand and water, talking about how much is in the container and whether they need more. Work displayed on the walls shows that they are making good progress in applying numbers and writing captions to their drawings. One group talked about the number of breadsticks and slices of pepper they were eating as a snack while describing their taste and texture. Some children label their drawings, write their names confidently and can tell the difference between their name and that of another similarly named child. Children use the computer confidently and know how to load

and use a game that requires them to match shapes and colours.

All children have opportunities to make good progress. Children's learning difficulties are recognised and addressed, with support from external agencies when required. Parents state that children who were very reluctant to communicate have grown in confidence so that they now talk readily. More capable children are encouraged to write in sentences. Parents also help. For example, parents who do not speak English with their children at home provide staff with commonly used words in their home language so that children understand instructions and make themselves understood. Children at an early stage of learning English therefore gain in confidence quickly and so make good progress. Staff combine classes with the Reception class of the adjacent school for part of the day so that children are well prepared to move on into the main school.

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?	1
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?	1
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?	2
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

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 the last inspection

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.