

# Stepping Stones Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 400332  
**Inspection date** 09/07/2009  
**Inspector** Michele Crichton

**Setting address** Stokesley Primary School, 5 Springfield, Stokesley,  
Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS9 5LW

**Telephone number** 079505 02647

**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 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 Playgroup opened in 1992 and is registered solely on the Early Years Register. It operates from a stand-alone classroom building in the grounds of Stokesley Primary School in Stokesley, North Yorkshire. It has its own enclosed play area, toilets and wash facilities. The playgroup serves the local area. The group is registered to care for 21 children at any one time. There are 23 children from two to four years currently on roll, 10 of which are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group is open from 09.00 to 11.30 five days a week during term time. Six staff work with the children, five of whom have appropriate early years qualifications, one of which has many years experience and is working towards a qualification. The playgroup has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties, disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Some aspects of the provision are outstanding. Staff create a stimulating and inclusive environment that respects and nurtures individuality. Outstanding relationships with parents add further to the good quality learning opportunities that the setting provides. The playgroup shows a good capacity for continuous improvement.

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

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

- improve the opportunities for children to use information and communication technology
- include the arrangements for problem solving, reasoning and numeracy to match the rest of the short term planning that is used.

## The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leader and deputy within the playgroup ensure that all policies and procedures are robustly in place to safeguard and promote children's welfare which is outstanding within the playgroup. Arrangements for medication and dealing with children's individual medical needs and disabilities are exemplary. Standards of hygiene are high. The vast majority of policies and procedures are systematically countersigned by all working members of staff to demonstrate their contribution or understanding. Vetting procedures for staff who work with children are robust. There are extensive induction procedures with additional training and development needs of staff being constantly reviewed. Self-evaluation is good and developing further. Regular staff meetings provide good opportunities for everyone to contribute ideas, to discuss issues and suggest improvements. Through this

procedure all areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been dealt with effectively.

Excellent relationships with parents and others mean that children's transition times are as seamless as possible. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the provision offered by the playgroup. They particularly praise the constant communication with staff, the way they cater for children's individual needs and the amount of information they receive.

Regular assessments ensure that staff know all the children well and it is clear from the records kept that every individual makes good progress during their time in the playgroup. However, children make insufficient use of the computers.

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

Provision for children both indoors and outdoors is equally good. Each provides a good range of interesting and stimulating opportunities to learn and have fun in a safe and secure environment. For example, outdoors children play together well and cooperate ably when they look for spiders together to put into observation spheres. Inside, individuals become engrossed creating paintings and collages from a wealth of colourful and tactile materials.

Children relish a wide range of healthy and unusual foods to try, from savoury rice to assorted breads of the world and cheeses, so much so that they frequently ask for more. Children plant a range of seeds and grow their own sunflowers and herbs or lettuces, which they have at snack time. Children are confident and eager to show visitors the wealth of photographs on display reflecting the wide range of experiences and activities they enjoy. For example, their recent gala day is a popular subject of conversation or their photographs from home that contribute to their latest topic on the seaside. Children thrive in this setting because staff are extremely sensitive to the needs of the individual. Children's key workers make detailed observations of their development and this, coupled with overall good planning and regular assessment, ensures that all children make good progress. Current planning for problem solving, reasoning and numeracy is of a different format to the other learning areas. Although overall it is effective, practice is inconsistent in this area.

While providing vigilant care at all times, staff also encourage children to, for instance, explore and play with a range of resources and materials giving rise to opportunities to discuss safety issues, the importance of thinking about others and the value of creative play. Staff's warm manner and regular use of praise ensures children feel totally at ease in the setting but also clearly understand the boundaries for behaviour.

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	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

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