

Stepping Stones Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY390463

Inspection date

15/09/2009

Inspector

Melanie Eastwell

Setting address

Melton Community Centre, Cross Street, KETTERING,
Northamptonshire, NN16 9DH

Telephone number

01536 520124

Email

steppingstoneskettering@yahoo.co.uk

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School opened in 1996 and was re-registered in 2009. It operates from two rooms within the Melton Community Centre in Kettering, Northamptonshire. It is open from 9.00am until 2.45pm each weekday during term time only.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 34 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 63 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part time places. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 12 members of staff, nine of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and the pre-school provides funded early education for three and four year olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Exceptionally well developed knowledge of each child's individual needs ensures that staff promote all aspects of children's welfare and learning with great success. Children are safe and secure at all times and enjoy the highly positive and sensitive interactions from the staff. Children make excellent progress, given their age, ability and starting points because the partnership working between the pre-school staff, their parents, the local schools and other agencies is a key strength. This significantly contributes to ensuring that the needs of all children are very well met. The pre-school has embraced the process of self-reflective practice which ensures that the many areas of strength are celebrated and well targeted plans are in place for continued future development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing further the systems for self-evaluation and quality improvement processes to extend effective practice and further promote outcomes for every child.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare, care and development are given the utmost priority in this friendly and expertly organised provision. The owner and staff team are absolutely

committed to providing a fully inclusive experience for all children and this is underpinned by the robust policies and procedures that actively support all the systems within the pre-school. The requirements for safeguarding are fully in place and are monitored through rigorous risk assessments and clear procedures.

Thorough systems are in place for the recruitment and ongoing support of suitable staff and the owner ensures the staff are able to access ongoing training in order to further promote the outcomes for individual children.

Children benefit greatly from the impressive partnerships between the staff and their parents. For example, families who speak English as an additional language are provided with information relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage in their first language. They are invited to provide the staff with translations of phrases or words their child may use as well as phonic labels to display around the room to assist the children during their settling in period. Parents are welcomed by the staff who get to know them well and offer support and guidance as requested. This develops strong partnerships where parents feel confident to be in the pre-school because their views and opinions are valued. Parents have regular access to their child's record of achievement file and tracker document. They are invited to attend parents consultation meetings twice each year and receive daily feedback from the staff about the activities their child has enjoyed participating in. The partnership working extends into the local community. For example, effective links are in place with the local schools to ensure that children experience a smooth transition when they leave the setting and the pre-school staff liaise closely with other agencies that are involved with any of the children attending to ensure a consistent approach.

The owner and staff team are dedicated to continually improve their practice which ensures that areas for further enhancement are clearly identified and well managed. For example, they set targets for the group each year and work towards these on an ongoing basis alongside regular evaluation of their daily activity with the children. Involvement in the self-evaluation process from the children and parents is one aspect that has been identified for refinement to ensure that any suggestions or ideas they have can be considered for inclusion to benefit the children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children's confidence and progression is greatly enhanced through the high quality interactions they enjoy from the skilled key workers during child initiated and adult led activities. The staff enjoy becoming immersed in the children's play and successfully manage a balance to ensure they promote language, confidence and curiosity while ensuring the child leads the play. For example, children explore the sand in a tray. They fill up and empty a variety of different containers and watch the sand fall through the holes in some of the containers. They have access to digital cameras and are encouraged to take photographs of their friends and surroundings which can then be downloaded to the computer and printed off.

Children enjoy engaging with books and listen intently to stories read willingly by

the staff both in a group and on a one to one basis. Although, there is no outside play area on the site of the pre-school the staff have been very pro-active and creative in their planning for outdoor play for the children. Some of the members of staff have completed training in 'Forest School' activities and children are regularly taken to a local country park to enjoy a 'Big Adventure'. This involves activities that are based on outdoor activities such as exploring woodland, digging in the soil and creating dens. The children also enjoy going for walks around the local area, visiting the park or shopping for their snacks.

Activities are successfully planned around the children's interests which promotes their learning in all areas. All members of staff have input into the planning for the activities for their key children to ensure that any individual requirements are managed effectively. The planning is done on a weekly basis, although, changes can be made from day to day according to the children's interests and suggestions. Children's progression in their learning is managed very well. Key workers record regular observations and seek information from parents about their child's achievements at home. Key workers use this information to ascertain children's individual starting points and successfully build on these through the written observations, photographs and samples of their work. The observations are linked to the relevant areas of learning and the key worker monitors the records to ensure a balance across the six areas of learning throughout the child's time at the setting. Children's achievements through their identified next steps for learning are recorded in a tracker document that compliments the observation file. Therefore, each child's progression can be clearly seen.

All children in the pre-school enjoy having access to high quality, imaginatively planned, well presented and inclusive activities that are suitably challenging and individual to their learning requirements. The quality of staff interaction with children is exemplary. They are confident to engage them in their activities and children gravitate towards the activities where the staff position themselves. Children's imaginations are enriched through the key workers involvement and suggestions during games with the physical play materials and in the home corner. Children are equally able to play independently. For example, they move freely between the activities and select their own papers, writing materials, scissors and sticky tape from low-level units and use these items purposefully in their play.

Children show good familiarity with the daily routines, their independence skills are promoted through such activities as choosing when they come for a snack, collecting their own cutlery, cups and plates at lunch time and clearing them away when they have finished. Children benefit from the range of healthy lunches and snacks that are provided at the pre-school. A cook is employed and careful consultation with parents ensures that any specific dietary needs are managed effectively. Children demonstrate feelings of safety and security within the pre-school. For example, they approach the staff for comfort and reassurance and to ask for items they want. They enjoy spending time with the staff and are confident to initiate conversations with them. Children receive stickers at the end of each session for a variety of reasons such as trying hard, completing an activity or helping to tidy away that they proudly show to their parents and other members of staff. These activities demonstrate children's growing confidence and sense of

belonging at the pre-school and their developing self-esteem that is nurtured and promoted by the staff team.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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