

# Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY395220  
**Inspection date** 25/09/2009  
**Inspector** Michelle Tuck

**Setting address** William Barnes Primary School, Bridge Street,  
STURMINSTER NEWTON, Dorset, DT10 1BZ

**Telephone number** 07778336928

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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## 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 registered at the current premises in 2009, having been registered since 1993 and is managed by a committee. The group operates from The William Barnes Primary School in Sturminster Newton, North Dorset. Children use a class room with dedicated toilet facilities and a secure outdoor play area. Access to the building is via a ramp to the front of the building and there is level access at the side.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory part and voluntary part of the Childcare Register. to care for 20 children aged from two years to the end of the early years age group at any one time. There are currently 18 children on roll. The pre-school is open five days a week during term time only, from 08:45 to 11:45 and one afternoon a week they are open from 12:15 to 15:15, including a lunch club.

There are five members of staff who work with the children, one of which is currently on maternity leave. The supervisor has begun her Foundation Degree in Early Years and is qualified to level 3. Her deputy is also qualified to level 3 and one member of staff holds a level 2 qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Well-developed knowledge of children's individual needs ensures that staff successfully promote many aspects of children's welfare and learning. Children feel safe and secure at all times so, within the given routine, they develop the confidence to enjoy and explore the experiences offered to them. As a result, children make good progress, given their age, ability and starting points. The partnership with parents, the local school and other agencies is a key strength of the setting and contributes significantly to ensuring that all children's needs are well met. There is a commitment to further training in order to further improve outcomes for children.

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

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

- ensure children are encouraged to wash their hands after wiping their nose
- ensure the fence outside is fixed securely and does not pose a hazard to children
- update the complaints procedure

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

Safeguarding children is given high priority at the pre-school and staff encourage children to think about their own safety through asking questions, for example, 'is it safe to climb on the wall?' and 'how can we do it safely?' Some staff having completed training on playing outside have gained in confidence to set challenges and allow children to take risks in a safe environment. Safeguarding policies are clear and reflect Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. There are robust systems in place for checking staff suitability and recording their Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. This protects children. Comprehensive risk assessments are completed on the premises and outside areas used by the children, which has identified and addressed all potential risks effectively. This further promotes children's safety.

Staff actively promote equality of opportunity so that all children make good progress in their learning and development. Children's family backgrounds are valued and staff sensitively promote their understanding of differences, through the provision of resources and activities. Each child is actively supported through the well established key person and their parents welcome the partnerships which have been established between home and the pre-school. Policies and procedures are freely available to parents and most are appropriate and up-to-date. The complaints procedure contains all the necessary information including contact details for Ofsted, however it also contains some information which is out-of-date and no longer relevant. The setting uses and manages its available resources effectively to meet needs of children so they make good progress in relation to their starting points. For example, children can access most resources for themselves and staff listen to what children are interested in and would like to do, effectively incorporating this into future plans. Staff are well deployed to support individuals and groups of children. The supervisor and her deputy have begun to evaluate their practice, successfully identifying areas to improve. Other staff, parents and children are also asked for their opinion which also contributes to the evaluation of the pre-school.

The use of free-flow play between inside and outside is very well promoted to meet the needs of all children and narrow the achievement gap, as it has been identified by the supervisor that some children greatly benefit from learning through outside play. A safe outside environment is provided for the children to climb, balance and play. However the fence rail directly against the wall is not secure and the wood is untreated which could pose a hazard to the children. The staff have risk assessed this area and as it is only a temporary fixture the children are closely supervised, to help ensure their safety, until the permanent metal guard is in place. Children from all backgrounds are valued and stereotypes challenged, for example, boys that wish to play with the dolls are well supported by staff, through the provision of accessories and the role modelling of how to use them. The environment is well presented and welcoming to children and parents, although the layout and organisation is still in its infancy, staff are clear how they want to develop the environment to inspire learning. For example, children are provided with clipboards and writing utensils outside also tents and cushions to

enable children to take their role play outside.

The setting have positive partnerships with parents, implementing an open door policy and easy access to children's development files. Newsletters, parent consultation and informative notice boards and policies keep parents well informed about the setting and their individual child's progress. Links with other settings delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have been sought and the sharing of information is beginning to develop. The supervisor works closely with other agencies to improve outcomes for children and meet individual needs, such as seeking advice on effective behaviour management strategies.

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

All children learn and develop well in relation to their starting points and capabilities as described by their parents and key person. This is because adults have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan activities which are relevant to each child. The children enjoy their learning and are interested and well motivated to learn. They are involved in their own choice of activity, supported by attentive staff. For example, children pretend to be 'superheroes', the supervisor made a selection of capes for the children to wear and the staff encourage conversations about what they are doing, when in-role, for example, the children give themselves different superhero names and help the less confident children to choose names for their character. Good quality of planning for individuals ensures that each child is offered an enjoyable and challenging experience across all areas of learning. Information from observation and assessment is well used to plan activities that are tailored to the needs and abilities of individuals. As a result, children are active learners, able to be creative and think critically. They explore a wide range of different materials through their senses and eagerly join in music and songs. A key person is not allocated until the child shows their preference to a particular member of staff during the initial settling-in period in order to meet individual needs effectively and form positive relationships. This shows a commitment to child initiated and child led care and learning.

Children are secure and develop a sense of belonging to the setting. They self-register on arrival using name cards. They clearly understand the routine and sit well for the short circle times, stories and music sessions. Children learn how to keep themselves safe by walking, not running and understanding pre-school rules and boundaries. Children are well supervised by staff's deployment of inside and outside areas, including the toilet facilities. When asked what makes them feel safe at pre-school they confidently answer, 'the staff'.

Children develop a good understanding of personal hygiene, washing their hands before snack time and after using the toilet, however they do not routinely wash their hands after wiping their nose. Children benefit from healthy and nutritious snacks such as toast and at least two different types of fruit or vegetables each day. They develop their independence by pouring their own milk or water at snack time and through easy access to a jug of water and beakers throughout the session. Packed lunches are provided by parents but staff promote the importance

of healthy eating. Children relish the time they spend playing outside, either in an extension of their inside role play, or making kites and attempting to fly them.

Children quickly respond to the request to tidy away. They work together to prepare for the next part of the daily routine and in their play. For example, they patiently wait their turn to play a musical instrument for the others to guess which instrument it is, they take part with enthusiasm and ask permission to have a run around before they do so, showing that they know the rules. Children are developing an understanding of calculation through practical activities such as counting the shapes they make with play dough and adding one more. Children willingly take part in everything on offer at the pre-school, they are confident and have good self esteem.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

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

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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