

First Steps Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	105976
Inspection date	06/10/2010
Inspector	Julie Neal
Setting address	C/O Stoke Hill First School, Stoke Hill, Exeter, Devon, EX4 7DB
Telephone number	01392 251 885
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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*.

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Description of the setting

First Steps Community Playgroup has been registered since 2000. It is a registered charity and is run by a voluntary management committee. The setting is within the grounds of Stoke Hill First School in Exeter. There is an enclosed area for outdoor play, and children also use the school playgrounds.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide care for a maximum of 24 children at any one time, none of which may be under two years of age. There are currently 51 children in the early years age range attending at different times. The setting is open from 8.a.m. to 3.05.p.m, Monday to Friday, term time only.

There are seven members of staff working regularly with children, four of whom have appropriate early years qualifications to Level 3, and another is working towards completion of Level 2 . Part time staff are also employed to provide additional cover when needed. The setting receives funding for the provision of early years education for three -and four-year old children, The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met well. Children benefit from an extremely inclusive environment where very good relationships with parents and others involved in supporting individual children's welfare, ensures staff are well informed regarding each child's requirements. Effective process of monitoring children's learning ensures they make consistently good progress towards the early learning and development goals, relative to their starting points. Good systems of self evaluation are effective in identifying areas for development, and are used to make action plans that are well focused on promoting high quality outcomes for children. Most documentation in place meets requirements. However, an omission in children's registration records means that a specific legal requirement supporting safeguarding is not met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that information about who has legal contact with individual children, and who has parental responsibility, is provided by parents in advance of a child being admitted to the provision (Safeguarding and welfare)

29/10/2010

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

- develop systems of record keeping to include confirmation of the suitability of those associated with the running of the provision, such as committee members, and ensure that evidence of these checks is available for inspection

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management in the setting is strong, resulting in a confident and enthusiastic staff team who demonstrate good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall, children are safeguarded well. However, it is a legal requirement that providers obtain information about who has legal contact with a child, and who has parental responsibility. This is not included in all children's records, although where these issues have had impact on individual children's wellbeing, staff have noted this appropriately. Staff demonstrate extremely good awareness of issues that may raise safeguarding concerns, and the setting is experienced in working co-operatively with other agencies to protect vulnerable children. Safeguarding policies are shared with parents in order that they are aware of the settings' responsibilities in this area, and there are strict procedures in place to ensure the safe collection of children. Employment procedures ensure all staff working with children are suitable to do so, and evidence is in place to confirm they are appropriately checked. Others associated with the running of the provision, such as committee members, are also checked to ensure they are suitable for their roles and responsibilities. However, the setting does not have a system in place to ensure that information confirming this is easily available for inspection. Visitors are asked to provide suitable identification and their presence recorded. Parents are encouraged to spend time in the setting, for example, bringing particular skills to share with children, and helping with activities. They are provided with very clear information regarding what is and is not appropriate for their role, for example, that they do not assist with personal care. Risk assessments are thorough and reviewed appropriately. These are supported by comprehensive daily checks that include all areas of the premises, outdoor areas, and equipment. Risk assessments are conducted prior to any outings that take place, including those excursions that may involve parents as additional helpers. Documentation supporting children's care and wellbeing is, overall, in place and maintained appropriately. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and shared with parents. Registers and records of attendance confirm when children and staff are present, and that children benefit from good levels of adult support. Written permissions from parents are in place where appropriate, for example, to seek emergency medical treatment if needed, and any accidents or incidents involving children are carefully recorded.

Good systems of self evaluation are in place and enable the staff team to identify areas for improvement that result in high quality outcomes for children. For example, children enjoy an immensely inclusive environment because staff

identified that they could do more to celebrate the diversity of cultures and languages within the setting. Staff worked closely with parents to gain a thorough understanding of different customs and traditions, in order that they can explore and celebrate these with children in a meaningful way. Children who have home languages other than English are supported very well as they settle and become familiar with their environment. For example, staff ensure they are able to communicate reassurance to children who may become anxious, such as, being able to comfort them in their home languages that 'mummy will be back soon'. Parents are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the provision, and this has led to further improvements that promote inclusion. For example, staff and parents are working together to produce information about the setting in languages other than English. Staff show an ongoing commitment to improving children's learning experiences. For example, following an audit of the learning environment, staff have reviewed how they arrange space and resources. Children's thoughts and ideas were included, and the result is a well organised extended learning environment providing good levels of individual choice.

Partnerships with parents and carers, and with others involved in supporting the needs of individual children, are very good. Children who have specific learning and development needs benefit from the effective systems of sharing information that result in good individual plans that promote their progress. Good relationships with the local school results in very well organised transitions for children as they approach school age, ensuring they are familiar with their new environment. Some children also attend other settings that provide the Early Years Foundation Stage, such as nurseries and childminders. Staff make links with these providers to share information regarding children's progress in learning, and to ensure consistency in identifying developmental aims and objectives. Parents are made very welcome in the setting and settling in periods are used well to enable them to get to know key people who will be involved in their children's care. Staff ensure they gain a thorough understanding of parents requirements in respect of their children's care, for example, ensuring that any religious, cultural, or medical needs are recorded and understood.

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

Children's welfare, learning and development are supported well. Children benefit from safe and secure premises, and good systems of daily checks ensure that all areas and equipment remain suitable for their use as they play. Staff ensure that children learn to conduct themselves safely. For example, regular practices of the emergency evacuation procedures enable children to learn what to do if there is a fire. Children learn to use the learning environment safely and appropriately. For example, children gain immense enjoyment from the use of the well equipped adventure playground, which provides them with exciting opportunities to develop their physical confidence. They understand that there are consequences to not using this apparatus safely, and learn to make their own risk assessments as they play. For instance, children consider the space they need while swinging and scrambling on ropes, and take care to ensure the child in front is out of range

before taking their turn. They assess whether they are likely to be able to jump between stepping stones and feel secure in asking for staff to help them if they are uncertain.

Children are protected from the risk of illness and cross infection by the staff team's good implementation of policies and procedures. Parents are given clear information about procedures if a child should become unwell, and how long they should remain absent from the setting if infectious. Children who have specific medical conditions are supported, and if special medicines or treatments are required, staff undertake appropriate training to administer these. Children benefit from clean and hygienic premises, and staff ensure that children are well equipped as they learn to manage their own personal needs independently. For example, regular checks of soap and towel dispensers ensure children have the materials they need to wash and dry their hands; ensuring that boxes of tissues and waste bins are located in several areas so children can blow their noses as needed and dispose of used tissues hygienically. Children bring packed lunches. Staff recognise that storage conditions are not ideal, however they have effective systems in place to ensure children's food remains palatable. For example, checking whether parents have included cold packs in the lunch box, and if necessary moving perishable items, such as dairy produce, to the fridge. Children enjoy the healthy snacks provided that offer them a variety of different tastes and textures to experience. For example, they try a range of breads and crackers, along with a selection of dried and fresh fruits, and vegetables such as sweetcorn and salad. Discussions at mealtimes and during cooking activities raise children's awareness of foods that are good for them, and those that should be regarded as treats. Children are developing an understanding of how their bodies work, and that they need to refuel and refresh themselves. For example, at lunchtime, children talk about their food 'giving them energy' to play in the afternoon. Children enjoy energetic activities that encourage them to run, jump and balance as they gain physical confidence and co-ordination; and enthusiastically join in musical activities that involve lively movements and actions as they keep in time to different rhythms and speeds. They talk about how their bodies react when they are active, identifying that they get hot and they help themselves to drinks of water because they understand this will help them cool down.

Children make very good progress towards the early learning and development goals, relative to their individual starting points. This is because staff are confident and enthusiastic practitioners who have an excellent understanding of how children learn through play. They use their good observations effectively in establishing children's current stages of development, and to identify how resources and activities can be used to promote individual progress. Staff have simple yet effective systems in place to record each child's progress towards the early learning and development goals. Recent review of record keeping has led to improvements in maintaining these, for example, working towards greater consistency in making evaluative links between what children do and how this demonstrates their progress in learning; and involving parents in monitoring their children's development. Planning is extremely effective in ensuring that children have a very good balance of adult led and child initiated learning opportunities that support their progress in all areas. Planning to support children who have specific learning and development needs is extremely effective in ensuring they make

progress, and reflects the strong professional relationships staff have with other agencies involved in individual children's care.

Children are happy and eager learners who are keen to explore resources and who quickly become absorbed in chosen activities. They concentrate well and are keen to communicate their thoughts and ideas. Staff are extremely effective in using discussion to develop and extend children's problem solving and critical thinking skills, and to encourage them to relate things they have learned to current activities. For example, children are using a variety of recycled materials to build rocket ships. They discuss the shape and size they want to achieve, they identify the materials they want to use and discuss the best way of sticking parts together. They watch and listen as staff show them how to cut the end of a tube to make it stick more securely, and carefully copy this. They talk about flying the rocket to the moon and what they might see on the way, such as stars or other planets. Some children know the names of other planets such as Mars and Jupiter. Children decide it is probably dark on the moon and consider whether there might be bats and owls there, because they understand these 'come out at night'. Children are interested in the natural world and show good levels of awareness of animals and insects and their habitats. For example, children are very quiet as they watch butterflies landing on the 'butterfly bush'; they explain they are trying to count them before they fly away. They explain that the butterflies 'drink' from the purple flowers and compare this to how bees 'drink flowers to make honey'.

Children are confident and show high levels of self esteem as they interact with each other and with staff. They feel secure in communicating their needs to adults in the setting because staff are responsive and show respect and interest for children's ideas. Children are extremely well behaved. For example, when they come together as a large group such as at register time, they are all eager to join in discussions but understand that they must take their turn and not interrupt each other; children listen well to their friends then confidently state their own ideas. Children are learning extremely well about difference and diversity within their community. They thoroughly enjoy learning songs and simple phrases such as 'good morning' in their friends home languages. The good range of books in both English and other languages are used well and children recognise that there are different types of scripts that convey meaning. Children are learning simple sign language and are beginning to show awareness that speech is not the only form of communication.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	3
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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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