

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

ISP Inspection

Setting address

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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.

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Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School was originally started in 1994. It was registered in 2005 as operating from a building in the grounds of Knowle Primary School in Plymouth. The premises consist of one large room, toilet facilities for children and adults, and a secure outside area. There is access for children and adults with physical disabilities via a ramp to the main entrance. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language. There are very close links with the primary school and the pre-school uses its facilities. A maximum of 26 children aged from two to five can be registered at the pre-school. Twenty-four attend at present and some are in receipt of funding. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday from 9am to 12.00pm and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm during term time only. There are four regular staff working with the children. All hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Stepping Stones Pre-School is an outstanding setting because children make excellent progress in all areas of learning, especially in their speaking and listening skills. The very committed manager has an excellent knowledge of the families who attend the pre-school and has worked very hard to make sure that parents and carers are fully involved. They are extremely well-informed about what their children are learning. Outstanding procedures for self-evaluation enables priorities for development to be accurately identified resulting in actions that are responsive to the needs of its users. All of these elements confirm the setting's outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- reorganising children's access to drinking water so they have more opportunities to develop independence and knowledge of simple hygiene.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The safety and welfare of children are very high priorities for the staff of the Stepping Stones Pre-School. There is an excellent range of policies and procedures in place to ensure this, and the manager has very good links with the support services. Children are extremely safe and secure, and every eventuality is catered

for; for example, writing risk assessments when children use the primary school facilities or go on outings.

The pre-school is extremely well led and managed. The manager has high aspirations for her staff's professional development and has encouraged them to pursue courses for the benefit of the children, and for their own personal development. The achievement of the 'I Can' award and the successful completion of The Bristol Standard show the team's determination and commitment to keeping abreast of new ideas and driving improvement. This has an excellent effect on raising children's achievement. Staff have an excellent knowledge of what the children need to learn. High quality assessments of how well children are doing and examples of their work are collected in well-annotated books which staff use to plan for the next stage in learning. As a consequence, planning is of excellent quality and ensures that all children achieve extremely well.

The excellent partnerships with the primary school also greatly enhance children's learning and make the transition to the Reception class smooth and seamless. The pre-school engages extremely well with parents and carers. It does all it can to include them in all that it does and is held in high regard by the community. Learning journals are shared with parents and carers, and are an excellent way of informing them about their children's progress. They are highly valued by children, parents and carers, and staff alike. The inclusive nature of the setting ensures that it pays good regard to promoting equality and diversity for all children. Those children with special educational needs/and or disabilities are fully included and valued.

The accommodation is well laid out, resources are plentiful and equipment is changed regularly to give the children a very wide variety of activities. This adds much to their enjoyment of learning. Regular risk assessments are thorough and rigorous. All the recommendations raised in the previous report have been met. High quality self-evaluation means that the manager and staff have a very clear understand of the settings strengths and weaknesses. They know what needs to be done so that children have the very best possible learning experiences.

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

The provision is excellent. All groups of children make significant gains in their learning, in relation to their starting points, because they really enjoy coming to pre-school. There is a very good emphasis on developing children's communication skills. The staff are extremely well trained and equipped to teach the children because they have attended many courses which have shown them how to develop all areas of the children's learning. The children have excellent relationships with the staff and leave their parents and carers without any worries.

The children have a very wide variety of activities to choose from, and can play inside or outside according to choice. There is an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, and adults are very skilful at intervening at appropriate times to help children progress with their work. They achieve

extremely well because they really enjoy learning and feel safe and secure on the primary school site. They are able to see their older brothers and sisters and feel very much at home when they go into the primary school to use the role play areas, or to sit with an adult to learn their sounds.

The children behave very well and respond to gentle reminders from adults. They learn to share and play together at the sand, at the writing table or in the craft area. Any conflict is dealt with sensitively by adults. The children are rapidly growing in confidence and self-esteem. For example, they determinedly try to write their names and are show a great sense of pride when the marks resemble letter shapes. The children really enjoy cutting and sticking, and playing at the woodwork bench. They successfully learn to use scissors and hammers in a safe way. All of these activities add much to their personal and physical development as well as their enjoyment of learning.

Snack times are very enjoyable occasions when staff sit with the children and enjoy a chat. The children have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and understand why it is important to eat healthily and why they need to wash their hands before eating. They help cut up fruit and vegetables for the others and learn about making healthy eating choices. They have free access to water throughout the day but the children cannot help themselves to cups as staff hand these out when needed. When cups are left on the counter it is not always easy to see whether they are clean or whether they have been used, and children are not sure whether they can wash up the cups in a nearby sink. Consequently, this arrangement acts as an obstacle to children developing their independence and their knowledge of simple hygiene.

Children learn about other parts of the world by making collections for others less fortunate than themselves; for example, by collecting gift boxes for African communities in need. This has a good impact and helps children become aware of different cultures and global events. Raising awareness of world issues at this early age encourages children to make an excellent positive contribution to the wider community and prepares them extremely well for future life and learning.

Children at Stepping Stones Pre-School are willing learners and have an excellent start to their education.

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

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|--|---|
| 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

| | |
|--|---|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 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 | 1 |
| 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 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 1 |

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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| The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: | Met |
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| The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: | Met |
|--|-----|