

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY259694

Inspection date

25/01/2011

Inspector

ISP Inspection

Setting address

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Telephone number

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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 was registered in 2003. It operates from a single storey pre-fabricated building in the Denton area of Tameside. The setting predominantly serves families from the local area. The group has sole use of the building, which is a single room with toilet and kitchen facilities situated at one end of the building. A safe and secure grassed outdoor play area is also available for use to the front and side of the building.

Stepping Stones Pre-School is registered on the Early Years Register to provide care for 16 children aged two years to under five years. There are currently 20 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school operates Monday to Friday during term time only. The provision is open from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as children who speak English as an additional language. There are currently three members of staff employed who work directly with the children. Two of the staff hold a recognised Level 3 childcare qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and participate in interesting activities where they learn about themselves, discover differences and initiate their own play in familiar surroundings. There are adequate systems in place to monitor children's achievements and the setting incorporates inclusive practice sufficiently well. The sharing of the Early Years Foundation Stage with parents and other providers is satisfactory and purposeful links are being developed. The provider recognises the value of continuous improvement and is beginning to evaluate the service to enable them to promote future development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to develop the use of self-evaluation systems to build on strengths and identify areas for further improvement, including staff, parents, children and other professionals in this process
- ensure children's development files are consistent in the recording of children's starting points and the next steps in their development
- continue to develop partnerships with other settings delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and with parents, in order to further promote continuity of care and children's learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The provider has a satisfactory knowledge and understanding regarding the safeguarding of children. Arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate and there are procedures in place should there be any concerns. Acceptable vetting procedures ensure that adults who have contact with children are suitable to do so. There is a comprehensive selection of policies available and all the required permission forms are in place. The children are aware of how to keep themselves safe as all are involved in regular fire drills and discussions with staff about safety and why such rules are needed. The children are encouraged to think about safety during outdoor play and they remind and direct each other around the play area. Risk assessments are completed for the premises and areas requiring attention are acted on to ensure that the children are kept safe. There are clear systems to record any accidents involving children and for any medication administered. The staff have a sound understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and use observations and assessments of children's achievements to identify next steps in their learning and development. However, these are not consistent in all development files and, therefore, opportunities are missed to fully inform planning and be aware of children's next steps of learning.

There are positive relationships between staff, children and their parents. Daily information is shared with parents about their child's session and the activities they have taken part in. Parents are verbally informed about the group's activities. Parents praise the setting and appreciate the open, trusting and friendly relationship that has been established. The provider has successfully addressed all the previous recommendations regarding safety, documentation, health and assessment systems. The provider is developing links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, although this is still in its infancy. For example, they have devised basic overview sheets in the form of a passport for the local school. They are beginning to develop a self-evaluation process in order to monitor the service they offer.

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

Children settle quickly into the welcoming setting. They soon become familiar with daily routines, for example, as they settle for story time before outdoor play. Children who have been attending for some time are encouraged to help those who are new. They hold hands to show them how they walk together to the outdoors and where they sit at snack time. Staff acknowledge children's achievements, which helps children feel positive about themselves and what they can do. Children's growing independence is nurtured. They practise putting on their coats and begin to develop a sense of responsibility as they help their peers put on the waterproof clothing. They behave well and enjoy each other's company, learning to share and take turns as they play together. Importantly, children begin

to develop a good awareness of how to use their environment and equipment safely. They re-enact this in their imaginary play as they dress up in the fireman outfits and talk about the fire being hot and how they have to be careful for this reason. During their walks to St. Anne's School and Chester Zoo, they learn how to cross roads safely, hold hands and look and listen for oncoming traffic.

Children's health and well-being are promoted effectively. They thoroughly enjoy the time they spend outdoors. Through the provision of waterproof suits and boots, children can go out in most weathers. They have great fun on a rainy day as they weave about on their bikes, play with balls and use the range of outdoor resources. Opportunities for balancing and climbing are consistently available as well opportunities for music and movement activities. Children's health is sufficiently promoted through the provision of healthy snacks, such as, fresh fruit and raisins. Children learn about foods that are good for them and about the importance of washing their hands before they eat.

There is a happy and purposeful atmosphere in the pre-school, where children engage well with the range of activities provided for them. Staff take careful note of individual children's interests and conduct regular observations of them at play. Staff talk and listen to them during activities, which helps to support growing language skills. For example, puppet play is used to develop children's understanding of differences, such as, night, day, sunny and cloudy. Children become deeply absorbed in their imaginative play, for example, they get dressed up to go to a party, make tea and set up a table. Good use is also made of daily routines, such as, counting each other as they wait to go for snack and as part of group games, to encourage children's use of number. Some are developing early information technology skills as they follow simple programmes on the handheld programmable machine.

Their understanding of the wider world is encouraged as they learn about the environment, watch tradesman cut down a large tree and listen to visitors who come in to talk about their jobs as firemen. These experiences support children's learning and, consequently, they enjoy their experiences at the setting.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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