

# Tring Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	129403
<b>Inspection date</b>	22/03/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Sheila Harrison

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<b>Type of setting</b>	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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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

Tring Stepping Stones Pre-School was formed in 1963 and is a charity run by a committee consisting of parents. The pre-school is situated in the centre of a small town on the north-western edge of Hertfordshire. The premises available to the pre-school consists of a hall, kitchen, toilets and lobby. There is a paved outdoor area that children use for outdoor play. The group serves the local community.

The setting opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 18 children attending who are within the early years age range. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. The group supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs five members of childcare staff. Of these three hold an appropriate early years qualification at Level 2, two members of staff hold a Level 3 and one staff member is working towards a Level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children clearly benefit and thrive as a result of the setting they are in. The setting is well organised and staff provide effective support for individual children's welfare and development. Children's health and protection is assured. Children make excellent progress with their learning. There are outstanding partnerships with parents and others which provide admirable support for the children. Staff work together as a strong team and continually strive to improve the provision through careful reflection on their practice. As a result, the setting is well-placed to maintain continuous improvement.

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

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

- promote further positive attitudes to diversity and difference within all children
- plan an environment that recognise the mathematical potential of the outdoor environment and ensure it is rich in signs, symbols, notices numbers and words.

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

Children are safeguarded effectively because the staff team has a good understanding of child protection procedures and know how to implement them to protect the children in their care. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that everyone working with the children is suitable to do so. Staff use professional development to assess and improve the systems of recording staff suitability. The ongoing suitability of all staff is monitored through regular meetings, training opportunities and appraisals. The setting has recently set up a thorough induction programme ensuring everyone is fully aware of how the setting works. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place including rigorous risk assessments. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and include the activities and the health needs of the children. Consistent staff vigilance ensures children are sufficiently safe and secure at all times.

The manager communicates high expectations to staff about securing improvement. She stimulates the enthusiasm of staff and channels their efforts to good effect. Morale is high and belief in the setting's success runs through all levels of staff. They demonstrate this commitment with a well-planned programme of improvement. They have embraced the Early Years Foundation Stage, checking that they meet all the requirements and guidance laid out in the Statutory Framework for the Foundation Stage. The setting is researching the ownership of some adjoining land to allow them to increase the learning opportunities outside. Children benefit greatly from access to a highly stimulating and well-prepared indoor play environment. The accommodation is well-suited to its purpose and conducive to learning. There is a knowledgeable and highly enthusiastic staff team that work with a generous staff child ratio. This ensures they are very effectively deployed to challenge and support children's welfare and learning. Staff have recently initiated changes to the planning system to ensure the children's interests are used to plan for the children's next steps in their development. The provision of the toys available for children to choose from is organised by staff from their observations of the children's interests, although, whilst children are outside, counting and numerical labels and reading and writing for a purpose is less well developed.

The setting actively promotes equality and diversity. Staff are highly successful in taking steps to close identified gaps in children's achievements as they have an effective knowledge of each child's backgrounds and needs. They ensure children are well-integrated. Children celebrate their festivals and those of their friends and parents are invited to the setting to share their home festivals with the whole group. Staff are beginning to help children acknowledge the festivals of other and discuss the similarities and differences between them in a diverse society. Staff promptly identify a child's need for additional support sharing information and records with colleagues, parents and where appropriate, with interagency teams to ensure that each child gets the help he or she needs. Partnerships are well-established and make a strong contribution to children's achievement and well-being. Communication takes place between the setting and partners supporting individual children on a regular basis to ensure information is regularly shared. The

setting has effective relationships with the local schools. Teachers see each child's learning journey and this ensures that children are secure and the transition onto the next setting is sensitively handled. Some children are attending two settings and the setting works in close partnership with the other providers. They share plans, information on the child's care and development and the learning journeys giving a consistent and secure service to children and parents.

Partnerships with parents are outstanding. The setting is run by the parents through the highly efficient management committee. The committee and staff actively engages with all parents. They are asked for their views on the setting and are welcome to accompany the setting on outings. Parents are very well-informed about the work of the setting and with the progress their children make. The setting provides tailored guidance and information about precise ways parents and carers can support their children's learning across different areas. Parents regularly take home their child's learning journey and contribute to the assessments with their observations. Policies and procedures are available in the setting and also on the informative website. Newsletters and new policies are given to parents by e-mail and if required, a paper copy. A comment from a parent in the comments book states that the manager has taken on the role with 'passion and creativity'. Parents are very pleased with their child's development and during the inspection commented on how their children love to come to and enjoy their time at pre-school.

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

Children are eager to attend, happy, involved and make very good progress in their learning and development. Staff plan children's development using the steps detailed in 'development matters' and this is linked to the children's interest. An activity to encourage them to use paint uses the children's interest in dinosaurs. Children are motivated and interested in a wide range of activities indoors and outside. During circle time, discussions on spring allowed children to smell various herbs and match the smell with herbal tea bags. Children remembered with great enjoyment their statements from yesterday. They observe the growing tadpoles and staff use non fiction books and puzzles to secure children's understanding. Children discuss the links to the sounds and shapes of letters when they give out the badge for the 'helper of the day'. They competently use the digital camera taking photographs of themselves and their friends. Children are developing positive attitudes to learning as they use a favourite film to undertake exciting craft activities and link this to the toys and games from home. They enjoy using the book and props in the story sack to retell a story about a friendly monster.

Staff promote creative play outside as children build tall towers of plastic blocks and they use sand to 'cement' the bricks together. Children add their names to the chalk board as part of the system to share and take turns. Children are moving with control and expression inside as they move to music pretending to be various animals. Children are learning about the wider world as they visit the local natural history museum and they look for wild life in the nearby pond.

Children have many valuable opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are encouraged to take responsibility for their play and learning environment by helping to tidy up. Staff prepare the children for the emergency evacuation drill as the newly fitted system emits a very loud noise and flashing lights. Children are now confident when the alarm goes off. Children enjoyed a recent visit to the fire station. They look at the photographs and remember working the fire hoses and the safety clothing. Staff give valuable support to children to understand being healthy. Children see the cucumber and cheese being cut up. They encourage children to try new tastes by providing different types of fruit and this gives the children the opportunity to discuss their likes and dislikes. Staff implement secure hygiene procedures throughout the setting to prevent the possible spread of infection.

## 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>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</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	1

### 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>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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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