

# Stepping Stones Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

133083

**Inspection date**

05/07/2011

**Inspector**

Bridget Copson

**Setting address**

Ascension Church Hall, Claude Avenue, Oldfield Park, Bath,  
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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 1994. It is a committee run group, based in a church hall in the Oldfield Park residential area of Bath. Children have access to the main hall, a story room and a separate enclosed garden for outdoor play.

A maximum of 24 children aged from two years to under eight years may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The pre-school is open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, term time only, from 09.30am until 12.30pm, with an extended session on Mondays until 2.30pm. There are currently 28 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school cares for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs five staff, most of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are met appropriately through successful links with parents and other professionals. They are cared for equally and included appropriately, although not all children's identity is well reflected within the setting to promote their sense of self. Children's learning is planned and promoted appropriately, although not always on an individual basis to ensure they are encouraged to develop to their full potential. As a result, children are making appropriate progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting has made some improvements to the quality of provision since the last inspection to further promote the Every Child Matters outcomes for children. However, systems for evaluating the provision are not fully successful in ensuring all requirements are met and to assure good staff deployment throughout the session.

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

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

- conduct a risk assessment at least once a year, clearly stating when it was carried out and by whom (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) (also applies to the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register).

07/08/2011

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

- provide a positive reflection of every child as an individual within the setting to further promote their sense of self
- improve staff deployment to ensure children benefit fully from the resources and learning experiences
- develop the system for planning children's development to ensure experiences support their individual prioritised next steps of learning.

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

Children's welfare is protected appropriately by staff who have suitable systems in place to secure their safety and well-being, for example, risk assessments, fire practices, staff supervision and safety measures. In addition, employment and vetting procedures are carried out to ensure staff working with children are suitable to do so. However, not all risk assessments are updated at least annually to show when they were carried out, by whom or the date of review. This is a breach of a requirement. However, staff are clear of potential risks and take steps to eliminate these to protect children. Overall, staff have a suitable knowledge and understanding of their child protection responsibilities, and the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns to safeguard children.

The setting has suitable systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and to promote continuous improvement. These include a newly implemented self-evaluation system, action plans and regular meetings with the local authority. Staff are generally organised and deployed appropriately to keep children safe and to meet their needs. They prepare a warm and welcoming environment and supervise their designated activities to keep children focused and included. However, some continuous provision is left disorganised by children who are not supported as well in their free-play, and thus not benefitting well from all the experiences.

Staff promote positive attitudes and behaviour through offering calm and generally consistent messages. Children are learning about the needs and feelings of others. For example, to share, take turns, help and play with kindness. Children with additional needs are supported by the special educational needs coordinator who liaises with parents, staff and any outside agencies to ensure that all children are included and involved. Children are supported appropriately in learning about their own lives as well as the lives and beliefs of others. However, the environment does not provide a positive reflection of every child as an individual to further promote their sense of self.

Staff have established good partnerships with parents and others involved in children's care and learning. Comprehensive information is provided to parents to support them in making an informed choice. Parents provide staff with information regarding their child's needs and to promote consistency. Parents are kept well-informed through notice boards, daily communication with staff and a newly

established website with up to date information. Parents are actively encouraged to get involved through helping on the rota, joining the committee and attending consultation sessions to discuss their child's progress. Successful links are established with the other settings children attend to ensure activities are complementary to promote continuity and progression within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Children's learning is planned and promoted appropriately through a balance of supervised adult-led activities and free play with the continuous provision. These experiences are linked to changing themes to support children in making connections in their learning. However, these activities are not always linked to children's individual developmental needs and prioritised next steps of learning. Children's progress is monitored by key persons who record observations of children's achievements and emerging interests, illustrated with photographs and examples of their work. Next steps in their learning are identified, but not updated frequently or in line with their individual rate of progress. Staff interact with interest and enthusiasm, offering some additional challenge to stretch children.

Children arrive happy and excited. They seek out friends to play with, staff to share news with and settle quickly into play. Children's communication, language and literacy are developing well. They mark make purposefully in many activities. For example, drawing, naming their work, marking road safety pictures, making tracks in sand and some children write key letters correctly. They communicate their needs and feelings through sharing their knowledge, talking about what they are doing in play and through their shared laughter. Children enjoy books, especially when read by staff.

Children are developing a suitable understanding of number, shape and size through staff guidance, such as naming the shapes of their biscuits and counting the spots on butterfly pictures. They have access to puzzles, sorters and resources to promote problem solving skills. However, these are not always presented or supported well to encourage children to use them. Children use their imaginations well. They play with role play resources in the home corner, and with small world activities. They are encouraged to move toys and props around the room to extend their play. Children explore different media and materials, and create freely. For example, they make cars, puppets and robots from junk, which some children then use in their imaginative play, or return to add more things to the model.

Children feel safe and secure within the setting. They learn about keeping safe through their road safety topic, meeting the community police officer and practising fire evacuation procedures. Children are learning about healthy lifestyles. They benefit from a healthy cafe style snack time with fresh fruits and salad vegetables, sweet and savoury biscuits and drinks of water or milk. They also learn good personal hygiene practices. Children enjoy physical activities every day. They either walk to the garden where they can run freely and use the physical play

equipment, or play group games and activities in the hall, such as with the parachute.

## 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>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

### 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>	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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### 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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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:

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the Early Years register (Suitability and Safety of Premises and Equipment). 07/08/2011

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the Early Years register (Suitability and Safety of Premises and Equipment). 07/08/2011