

Stepping Stones Pre-School (Sundridge)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127657
Inspection date	11/07/2011
Inspector	Sharona Semlali
Setting address	Sundridge Primary School, Church Road, Sundridge, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN14 6EA
Telephone number	01959 562694
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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).

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

Stepping Stones Pre-school (Sundridge) is a committee-run pre-school. It re-opened in September 2008 having originally opened in 1981 and operates from a self-contained classroom in the grounds of Sundridge and Brasted Primary School. It is situated in the village of Sundridge, in Kent. The pre-school serves the local area. A maximum of 12 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am to 3pm; children can attend the morning or afternoon sessions as well as the lunch club from 12.15pm until 12.45pm. The pre-school opens for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play space and they have access to the school's playground and play area. There are currently 16 children from two to five years on roll. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-olds. It is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children come from a local catchment area. The pre-school welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language, although none currently attend. The pre-school employs two staff. The manager holds a foundation degree in early years and is currently working towards degree level and the deputy holds a level 3 in early years.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Stepping Stones Pre-School is a warm, welcoming and inclusive place that is effective in meeting the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, more challenge is needed for the more able children and more parental involvement in the self-evaluation process. Good and established partnerships with the feeder school help to provide an enabling environment that supports the children's learning and development and their contribution to the wider community. Strong and clear leadership provided by the manager helps to produce a motivated staff team that are enthusiastic, dedicated and determined to make improvements to the provision. This enables all children to make good progress in relation to their starting points demonstrating good capacity for continuous improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop adults' knowledge and understanding of how to identify and use next steps in children's learning to inform planning so that the more able children are given sufficient challenge
- involve parents and carers in the self-evaluation procedures

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding policies and procedures are robust, regularly reviewed and carefully managed. Staff show their ongoing commitment by constantly updating their training in this area. Rigorous daily risk assessments are undertaken by staff to minimise any potential harm to children.

Partnership with the local feeder school ensures that transition processes for the older children are smooth and enjoyable. All children benefit from the school's larger playground space and use of the multi-gym equipment in the play area which contributes to their physical, personal and social development. Staff have developed highly positive relationships with parents. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress. The setting has good partnerships with 'Spring House' which offers a family support service for the children's parents and carers. Parents are invited to attend regular coffee mornings at the setting where they can access this service.

Detailed and frequent self-evaluation is undertaken by all staff and committee members. Parents have very little involvement in the process but staff attempt to seek their views by providing a suggestion and a complaints box for them. Actions taken by the setting are well chosen and carefully planned. This includes a reorganisation of the layout of the indoor area so that there is more space available for children to play. Also a new format of how to use an overview sheet for improving the use of observations and planning the next steps of learning for the children is now in place, but this is in its infancy stage of development.

Strong leadership by the manager has been instrumental in securing recent improvements. Leaders and managers now have a clear grasp of the strengths and improvement points needed for the setting. The manager's high expectations, strong determination to achieve those ambitious targets and actively seeking support from the early years adviser ensures that staff effectively assess and improve their practice.

The majority of the children make good progress in understanding about the wider and diverse world around. This is due to the adults' full commitment to promoting equality and diversity and tackling unfair discrimination. Resources and displays reflect the different backgrounds of the children who attend the setting and of the wider world around them. Some of the labels are in different languages, helping to develop children's awareness and knowledge about the various types of letterings used in other cultures. Parents and carers are encouraged to read the setting's policy and procedures and sign them once they have read and understood them. All resources are well matched to children's interests and needs. The deployment of staff is good as children receive personalised support when needed throughout the day.

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

All of the children thoroughly enjoy and look forward to attending the pre-school. Parents say, 'My child loves it here. He constantly talks about it at home all the time.' Children make good progress in relationship to their capabilities, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and with their communication and language skills. This is because staff actively promote children's love and interest in a variety of books and encourage them to develop their talking skills. Staff use a range of inclusive strategies to involve those children who are shy, reserved and have a limited vocabulary.

Children's confidence in using the information, communication and technology equipment is developing well. They independently play with the music equipment, switching it on, selecting and listening to their favourite nursery rhymes which are carefully set up and planned by staff. This is an example of how staff are supporting them to become independent decision makers.

Children demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and are very secure in the setting as they have plenty of reassurance from staff when needed. This helps to build their self-confidence and trust with others. Children know the procedures that need to be adhered to in the event of a fire. Children say, 'We go to the big playground and call the fire brigade.'

Staff plan and make good use of the outside space available in the school's playground, allowing the children to choose the resources that stimulate their interests and imagination. Children get the opportunity to play with the wheeled resources and release their energy by chasing each other and running after the hoops and small balls. Adults support children to participate in team games such as 'Duck, duck, goose' and 'Farmer may we cross the river', helping them to develop their cooperation and team skills in the larger space available to them. Recently, staff successfully made a bid and received funding and the children now benefit from a canopy that covers the small gated courtyard just outside the self-contained classroom. Children now have the option of free-flow play between the indoor and outdoor in any types of weather conditions.

The inside environment is stimulating and reflects the interests of the children. Staff value children's work by displaying it, helping to develop their self-esteem. Each child is assigned to a named member of staff who acts as the main point of contact with parents and is called the key worker. Each key worker will plan activities for the children based on accurate observations of their interests and consultations with each child. However, the use of observations to inform their next steps in planning is in its infancy stage, therefore some of the more able children are not always suitably challenged by the learning experiences provided. That said, children with limited skills and vocabulary in English are developed well. Girls and boys equally make good progress as staff carefully monitor and evaluate this.

Children show good awareness about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. This is

based on the good opportunities that are available in helping them to make healthy choices. Children know the importance of washing their hands before they eat and after visiting the toilet as children say, 'we need to get the germs off?' On the day of inspection it was very warm but all children were well protected from the sun as all of them wore hats that covered their heads and necks. They wore them without any fuss as they knew the importance of wearing them which is underpinned by the staff's high expectations of them.

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	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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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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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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