

# Stepping Stones Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

106331

**Inspection date**

01/02/2012

**Inspector**

Julie Neal

**Setting address**

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**Type of setting**

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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).

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## Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Playgroup opened in 1997. It is run by a voluntary management committee. The setting operates from its own building within the grounds of Georgeham Primary School, in Georgeham, North Devon. The setting has sole use of the premises, which include a playroom with kitchen area, and toilets. A fully enclosed area is suitable for outdoor play.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 20 children aged from three years of age to the end of the early years age group may attend at any one time. There are currently 15 children attending at different times. The setting operates during term times only, opening from 9am to 3.15pm on Mondays, and from 9am to 12 noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The setting is in receipt of funding for early education for three- and four-year-old children. There are four members of staff working with children, all of which have appropriate early years qualifications.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Overall, children's individual needs are met. However, the setting is in breach of two specific legal requirements. These relate to informing Ofsted of changes, and to promoting good health. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. This is because staff make use their good observations to plan for each child's progress and development. Systems of self-evaluation are appropriate and are used generally effectively in making action plans for future development. However, these systems overlook some key areas of weaknesses. The setting demonstrates the capacity to make ongoing improvements to achieve and sustain good quality outcomes for children.

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

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

- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 24/02/2012

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

- develop further systems for monitoring and evaluating practice to identify strengths and priorities for development that will improve outcomes for all children.

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

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding issues and the appropriate actions to take to protect children where there are concerns. All staff complete safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date. A member of the management committee has also completed safeguarding training in order to be able to support staff where there are concerns about children's welfare. Recruitment procedures are appropriately robust and include checks to assess staff's suitability to work with children. However, the provider failed to notify Ofsted of a change to the committee that manages the early years provision. It is a legal requirement to do so. On this occasion Ofsted does not intend to take further action. Children's safety and welfare is not compromised because committee members do not work in the setting and so do not have contact with children. Policies and procedures that safeguard children and support their welfare have been reviewed, updated and shared with parents. However, staff do not request written consent to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice and treatment from parents, that may be needed for their child. This is a breach of a specific legal requirement. Staff have good daily routines in place to keep children safe and secure at all times. Risk assessments are thorough. For instance, outings into the local community have detailed risk assessments that identify potential hazards and how these will be addressed in order to keep children safe.

The setting develops good relationships with parents, and information about children's individual needs is shared very well. Parents regularly review children's progress with staff and are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning records. Parents are welcome to spend time in the setting, and many volunteer to help in sessions. As a result, parents have a good understanding of the types of activities that promote their children's learning and development. Some children also attend other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage, such as, nurseries or childminders. Staff make links with these providers in order to share information, which is used to promote children's individual achievements and wellbeing. Extremely good relationships with the village school enables staff to support children very well as they move on. For example, children who are due to attend school in the next term have regular visits to get to know their teachers and their surroundings. The good partnership working with parents and with others involved in supporting individual children results in an inclusive environment where each child is valued.

Overall, systems of self-evaluation are suitable. Good communication between staff results in regular reviews of how effective activities are and how children use space and resources. For example, staff consider how the very good variety of toys and equipment can be used to link the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Parents are actively encouraged to contribute to the self-evaluation process and their suggestions have influenced change. For example, they have made changes to opening times following feedback from parents. However, there are some weaknesses in evaluation systems, which result in the breaches of requirements being overlooked. For example, the management committee is aware that they

need to inform Ofsted of changes, but do not know they need to inform them within fourteen days.

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

Children's welfare, learning and development is promoted well overall. Children demonstrate that they are developing a secure understanding of how to conduct themselves safely and about the importance of good personal hygiene routines. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals, relative to their starting points. This is because staff use their very good knowledge of individual children most effectively in supporting and extending their learning and development. Staff make good observations of children. They analyse these well to identify where they can challenge children further in order to make progress. Children's learning journals are generally well maintained and include good evidence of how children are making progress over time. There are minor weaknesses in some children's learning records, such as, clearly recording when individual objectives have been achieved and updated. However, children's learning experiences are not affected. This is because staff communicate very well, sharing their observations and reviewing individual learning plans at the beginning and end of each day.

Children are eager and enthusiastic learners. They are keen to explore the good range of resources available and confidently make their own choices as they play. Children enjoy a child centred environment. Staff respond very positively to children's ideas and enthusiasms, and planned activities are quickly changed to reflect children's interests. For example, during very cold weather, some children excitedly bring lumps of ice into the setting. They take pictures as they watch the ice melt and measure it as it gets smaller. Children talk about ice on car windows and make pictures of ice patterns. Staff encourage children to think about how they keep warm when it is very cold. Children demonstrate that they are developing an awareness of how their bodies work when they talk about wearing hats and gloves when outside, and that keeping moving 'stops you shivering'. A simple game about the weather encourages children to think about which type of clouds are the same as those that are accompanying the icy conditions outside. Children are confident communicators. They benefit from the staff team's good use of questions and discussions that encourage them to explore and express their thoughts and ideas. For example, children who are completing a puzzle with a space rocket theme enjoy an animated discussion with staff. They talk about what it might be like to fly in a space rocket and land on the moon. They talk about stars, planets and why astronauts need space helmets to breathe. When children come together for a short group time, they count how many are present. Staff ask children why it is important to know this. Children confidently make suggestions such as, 'so we know how much fruit we need for our snack' and 'enough bikes so we all have one'. When a child suggests they need to know how many people are present in case of a fire, staff make good use of the opening to encourage the group to see what they remember from their last fire drill. Children quickly demonstrate that they have a firm understanding of what they must do if they

hear the fire bell. Children are well behaved and respond enthusiastically to being given responsibility. For example, when it is time to tidy up at the end of the day, each child is given a specific task and encouraged to take the time they need to complete it to their satisfaction. Children eagerly volunteer to be helpful. For example, the setting needs fresh play dough, and children willingly help to make this. They practice using a range of skills as they weigh, measure and mix ingredients to the desired colour and consistency.

## 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	2
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	2
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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