

New Stepping Stones Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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).

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

New Stepping Stones Playgroup opened in 1995. It is located in the Sea Scout Hall in Mortlake. It operates from a main hall and a small room, with an enclosed outdoor play area. It is open every weekday during school term time, from 9.15am to 12.30pm. A parent committee manages the playgroup. Children attend from the local community. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 30 children aged over two years may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 38 children on roll. The playgroup receives funding to provide free early education to children aged three and four years. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language. A team of ten full-time and part-time staff work with the children. All staff have relevant early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is a very welcoming playgroup, where all children make good progress. Overall, effective systems are in place to support learning, and all children benefit from thoughtful and reflective comments by adults. Children develop excellent relationships with adults and their friends, and the playgroup meets their individual needs well. Parent partnership is highly effective, and parents and carers receive excellent information about the work of the playgroup. Generally, there are secure management systems in place. Self-evaluation procedures are effective and the playgroup is successful in maintaining continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- encourage children to make connections between the things they have learnt in small group activities and in their wider independent play.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Overall, staff safeguard children's welfare to a good standard. They know how to protect children and have easy access to robust policies and procedures. They carefully manage the room space and the outside area to keep children safe. When children go on outings, staff assess any possible risks carefully. There are effective recruitment systems in place, and the playgroup checks the suitability of all staff carefully. The manager keeps some personnel information at home. As a result,

not all documentation is readily available and accessible for inspection. However, this has no direct impact on children.

The manager is effective in identifying areas for improvement through careful self-evaluation. She highly values the staff, and fosters their development successfully. Her well-chosen actions are effective. Staff respond enthusiastically to the needs of the children and their families. They are effectively meeting recommendations from the last inspection, which has a positive impact on children. The parent committee is actively involved in beginning to secure future developments for the building.

The playgroup is very active in promoting the needs of all children. Staff carefully support children with special educational needs and/disabilities through effective strategies and highly developed systems of parent partnership. Staff know their key children and families very well, and this further supports children's learning. Children are developing a good understanding of cultural diversity through celebrating festivals, such as Chinese New Year.

Partnership work with parents and carers is exceptional. Parents comment very positively on the success of the playgroup. The parent committee is heavily involved and highly successful in supporting the playgroup's management. The playgroup has worked extremely hard to develop excellent communication systems, which support good outcomes for children's learning. The manager is very successful in promoting a rich programme of parent involvement through workshops, and in developing positive relationships between children, families and their key persons.

Staff work well together to develop a vibrant, motivating environment inside and outside. They select resources carefully to support children's good progress. The staff team is a strength for the playgroup and supports children through well-planned activities and spontaneous positive interactions.

The playgroup works effectively in partnership with other professionals to support children's learning. Links with other agencies, particularly those that support children's speaking and listening skills, are well established. These systems further support the good progress that all children make. When children are ready to go to school, staff work effectively with their new teachers to promote consistency.

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

The strong staff team effectively develops children's learning by carefully planning a wide range of stimulating activities. For example, children use their senses to explore how ice changes into water by scooping water onto the ice. Children move freely and happily across a good range of learning experiences. Staff engage children in thoughtful discussions. They ask challenging questions, and know when to step away from the activity. They play with children well and carefully observe their learning. As a result, children are active learners and make good progress in their learning and development.

Adults are responsive to children's needs. They encourage children to make decisions about their learning. Sometimes children play imaginatively together in small groups, using dressing up clothes effectively. Younger children play alongside others, yet also have the caring attention of their key person nearby. Outside, children enjoy a good range of activities to develop their skills independently, in groups, and with adult support. They know where to find resources and are confident to replace their own lost resources. Children use imaginatively placed resources, such as cars and guttering, and this supports their social play effectively.

Staff plan carefully for the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills. Children have special time with their key person to develop this learning. This quiet time balances effectively with their independent learning. However, staff do not always encourage children to make connections between what they have learnt in their small groups and their wider independent play. Children successfully play and work alongside their peers. They are inquisitive and active learners because of the effective, well-organised play provision. They talk animatedly together and with adults. Some children are able to independently access and learn from computer programmes. These activities successfully promote children's skills for the future.

The highly effective system for developing relationships between the playgroup, children and their families promotes an extremely strong sense of belonging and security. Staff work exceptionally well together to value all children through fully embedded systems of support. These processes enable children to accept one another's differences fully.

Children show they are happy and very secure in the playgroup. They safely move from focused activity to independent play inside and outside. Some choose to play with their friends, and others play alongside their friends. Adults watch carefully to know when to intervene and support, and therefore help children to play safely. Children are able to talk about healthy foods with confidence. Staff plan activities carefully to enable children to make choices about what they eat and to support effective learning. Children get plenty of exercise during the session, particularly outdoors.

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	1

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	1
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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