

# Stepping Stones Community Organisation & Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY439671
<b>Inspection date</b>	18/07/2012
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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

Stepping Stones Community Organisation and Pre-school is run by a committee and was registered in 2012. The setting operates from three rooms on the first floor of a community building in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. The setting serves the local and surrounding areas. The setting is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The setting opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 9.15am until 2.30pm. Children are able to attend for full sessions. A maximum of 60 children under eight years may attend the setting at any one time, of whom, no more than 30 may be in the early years age group. There are currently 18 children attending who are within the early years age range. The setting also offers care to children aged over five years to eight years. 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 three- and four-year-olds. The group supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The setting employs seven members of childcare staff, including the manager. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 2 and above. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children make reasonable progress in their learning and development. Some aspects of safeguarding are addressed competently and children's individual needs are basically met. The self-evaluation process is developing and changes are working to support children's learning and development suitably. The manager and staff have plans for further development of the setting for the benefit of the children. Overall, the working relationship with parents contributes appropriately to addressing children's needs and the partnership with other early years providers is developing appropriately.

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

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

- review risk assessments to cover anything with which a child may come into contact, this specifically relates to the leads of computers
- review the health and safety policy to include procedures for identifying and dealing with hazards such as overhead storage
- plan activities based on first-hand experiences that encourage experimentation and problem solving; this applies specifically to consistent opportunities for children to develop skills in pouring drinks and serving themselves

- help children to understand how to behave outdoors by talking about personal safety, risks and the safety of others
- gather information from parents on children's starting points and analyse observations to help the planning for children's next steps in their learning for individuals and groups of children.

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

The staff have an adequate understanding of protecting children in their care and are aware of the procedures to be followed. The satisfactory recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and the qualification requirements are addressed appropriately. Risk assessments are completed to minimise the likelihood of accidents, although, they do not include specific steps to address the trailing leads attached to computers used by the children. Some overhead storage also poses as a potential hazard to children's well-being and this has not been fully identified or addressed. A fair range of policies and procedures are competently implemented to ensure the smooth running of the setting.

The setting is vibrant with colour and displays of children's work and age-appropriate resources create a child-friendly environment. The resources have been recently supplemented through the review carried out by the manager and staff. They have identified priorities for further development, including the outside play area to improve learning outcomes for children. As this is a first inspection since registration, there are no previous recommendations to be addressed. The manager follows guidance from external agencies and is developing systems to support children who might have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Partnership working with other early years providers is evolving, although, children do not attend other settings.

Parents receive a reasonable level of information about the setting. Daily diaries aid communication about children's experiences and information is shared about their development at parents' evenings. There is positive interaction with parents who have opportunities to talk with staff consistently and they are generally satisfied with the service, which they receive. Children receive suitable support from staff, who are primarily deployed to work with small groups and adult to child ratios are maintained.

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

Children are at ease in the setting where they develop a variety of skills, for example, exploring materials, such as pasta and foam through water play. They demonstrate a clear understanding of temperatures by explaining that the water is cold and compare the foam to snow. Staff provide a fair range of experiences as children visit allotments to grow seeds and this helps them to develop their digging and co-ordination skills. Primarily, staff link these activities to learning about the

environment and encourage children to express ideas in the creation of displays, including a life-size tree.

When children start at the setting, staff discuss mainly their care needs and preferences with parents. However, they do not consistently obtain information about children's development to identify their starting points. Subsequent observations are recorded to identify what children can do, but the next steps in learning are not routinely included and the links to their development as detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework are tenuous. Consequently, the systems to promote children's development further are not sufficiently robust to effectively assist their learning at all times. Planning covers all areas of learning and staff note what children enjoy doing to incorporate their preferences in activities. There is a reasonable balance between adult-led and child-led play. However, staff do not use routine activities sufficiently to promote learning. For example, on the walk to the park, staff stop the traffic to ensure that they can cross the road safely, but do not talk to children about road safety.

Children enjoy their play in the park where they are challenged to maintain balance on the rope bridge and patiently take turns on the swings and slides. At dinner time, children identify favourite foods, including cheese, tomatoes and cucumber. Staff encourage food tasting and this new experience contributes positively to children's understanding of the world around them. At meal times staff offer a choice of milk and water. Children's individuality is acknowledged by providing choice, but their independence is not consistently encouraged throughout activities. For example, they do not always pour drinks or serve themselves.

Children are generally well behaved and are forming relationships with peers and adults. They learn to maintain their personal hygiene largely because staff demonstrate how to wash hands correctly. Children are gaining acceptable skills for the future as they progress towards the early learning goals.

## 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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

### 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>	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: Met

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