

Stepping Stones Nursery School

Shardeloes Cricket Pavillion, Shardeloes, Missenden Road, Amersham, HP7 0RL

Inspection date

03/10/2012

Previous inspection date

04/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Well qualified staff work together well to provide a variety of activities that support children's development in all required areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Children make particularly good progress in their mathematical development.
- Children make good progress from their individual starting points. Children's starting points are accurately determined because staff gather lots of information from parents when their children enter the nursery school. Staff begin assessment during children's first weeks at the nursery school and continuously develop plans for children's next steps in learning.
- Staff have high expectations of children. Throughout the session they are encouraged to be polite and courteous to each other. Staff model good use of language, questioning and listening. This helps children to build their vocabulary and interact well together.
- Staff plan activities that help to build upon children's interests and encourage concentration and listening skills through board games. This supports children to acquire the important skills they need to be successful in their future learning.
- Children behave well because staff explain expectations for behaviour and encourage children to share and take turns, developing important social skills.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff conduct assessments of safety issues and put measures in place within the nursery school. However, these are not always fully effective as children become curious of their environment and are able to unhook safety catches on doors.
- When engaging in creative activities staff do not always encourage children's independent use of tools that will further development their engagement and enjoyment.
- Opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills are not always fully promoted as staff do not provide chance for children to write their own names on their art work.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector sought the opinion of and had discussion with parents.
- The inspector carried out observations of children and staff in all three rooms of the nursery and the outdoor area.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager whilst the children ate their snack.
- The inspector had a meeting with the manager of the setting regarding their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the early Years Foundation Stage.
- The inspector sought the opinions of, and had discussion with, children.

Inspector

Hayley Marshall

Full Report**Information about the setting**

Stepping Stones Nursery School operates from three rooms and an extensive outdoor area in the Shardeloes Cricket Pavilion on the outskirts of Amersham, Buckinghamshire. The nursery school registered in 2008. The nursery school opens each weekday morning from 9.15am until 12.15pm. Afternoon sessions run on Monday and Wednesday from 12.15pm until 3.15pm and for younger children on Tuesday and Thursday from 1.15pm until 3.15pm. The nursery school opens during school term time only. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time. Currently, there are 36 children on roll aged between two and four years of age. Children aged three and four years are funded for free early education. The nursery school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs/or disabilities. There are eight staff who work directly with children. The manager holds Early Years Professional Status and along with a second member of staff, also has Qualified Teacher Status. Two staff have a level 3 qualification and one member of staff has a level 2 qualification. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare register.

What the setting needs to do to improve further**To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:**

- Review existing methods of securing doors that allow children to freely access the outdoor area, ensuring that the risk of children removing the safety hooks that prevent the doors from slamming is eliminated
- Increase children's ability to build upon their early writing skills by providing greater opportunity for them to practise writing their names on their work
- Support children's independent use of tools in order to further develop their creative skills.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children enjoy a welcoming environment that helps to support their development in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff are well qualified and use their good knowledge of children's development to provide varied and interesting activities that engage children. Children make particularly good progress in their mathematical development because staff support them to count and recognise numbers in everyday activities, such as when completing puzzles.

Development of early writing is less well supported because staff miss opportunities to encourage children to build upon their newly learnt skills through writing their own name on the work they have created.

Children learn about how to behave well because staff set out clear expectations. Staff promote social skills through turn-taking and sharing, supporting children to play and learn together harmoniously. Children are polite and courteous to each other demonstrating their understanding of others feelings.

Children develop a wide vocabulary because staff model good language, carefully repeating where children mispronounce words and asking open ended questions that encourages children's independent thinking. Parents report that their children's speech rapidly progresses when attending the nursery school because staff listen attentively to what children have to say, demonstrating that it is of value.

Generally, children select resources and make choices about what they play with. Although at times, children are not encouraged to use tools such as scissors and staplers, that might further develop their interest and ability to creative.

Staff assess children's unique starting points effectively because they gather a wide range of information from parents. Along with initial assessments and consistent monitoring, the nursery school is able to accurately track children's progress and identify when they might need additional support.

When children's development gives cause for concern, staff are proactive in accessing support from additional agencies and working with others who provide care for them, ensuring that all children make good progress. Consequently, children are well equipped with the skills they need to be successful in their future learning.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The key-person system is well embedded and effective in supporting children. Staff know their individual children well and as a result they are able to closely monitor their learning and development. Younger children are given close attention as they settle into the nursery school, and as a result, all children appear calm and settled. They are confident to try new things and question the adults that attend their nursery school in order to find out more.

Children take great pleasure in moving between rooms and the indoor and outdoor environment as their play develops.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles because staff provide differing opportunities for them to gain an awareness of healthy diets. Children play board games that show what a balanced diet consists of. They have fruit and vegetables at snack time and go on trips to a local farm to collect the food they will eat at the nursery school. Parents are kept aware of the foods their children eat because a menu is on display.

Children develop a range of physical skills such as balancing and co-ordination as well as throwing and kicking balls. They have use of an extensive outdoor area where they play on climbing equipment and with footballs and bikes. This helps them to maintain good health through regular exercise.

Staff encourage children to manage their own personal needs such as toileting and hand washing. Where children are developing independence, staff support them sensitively and provide opportunity for them to complete small tasks such as drying their hands. When children play outside they find their wellington boots and attempt to put them on by themselves, helping them to gain a sense of achievement when they do so successfully.

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

The nursery school manager has a thorough understanding of the importance of safe recruitment. There is a robust induction procedure that helps staff to be fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Staff know how to access further support if they have a concern and are familiar with policies and procedures that support safe working. All required checks and references help to make sure that all those who work with children are suitable to do so.

The staff are generally vigilant in maintaining a safe environment for children. Children and staff routinely practise evacuation of the nursery school in order to be fully aware of what to do in an emergency. Staff conduct assessments each morning to check that the nursery school is safe for children. Although these checks confirm that systems are in place, occasionally they are not fully effective. This is because children are able to go behind the door and lift the safety hooks that prevent the door from closing on children's fingers or swinging in the wind.

Regular staff appraisals help to identify training needs that will bring about positive improvement for the nursery school. Regular training sessions and meetings help the staff team to share good practice and newly acquired knowledge.

Self-evaluation takes into account the views of staff, children and parents. The nursery manager is committed to improving the quality of the nursery school and uses Local Authority quality assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses. The staff use this information to set action plans to overcome areas of weakness. Recommendations raised at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and the nursery school shows a strong capacity to further improve the quality of care and learning for children.

The nursery school forms good links with agencies that provide additional care for children, such as Speech and Language Therapists. This helps to ensure that children receive the support they need to make good progress. When children attend other care settings, the nursery school freely exchanges information to help to provide continuity in children's care and learning.

The nursery school establishes positive relationships with parents and families. Regular exchanges of information about how and what, children are learning helps parents to feel included in their children's care. Parents are confident in the standard of care that their children receive because they are well informed and can see their children's progress. They feel staff are warm and friendly and as a result, children settled well at the nursery school.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for

	registration.
Not Met	The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY376771
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	815703
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	36
Name of provider	Leaping Lizards Day Nursery Ltd
Date of previous inspection	04/03/2009
Telephone number	0149 443 3020

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years

Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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