

Stepping Stones Playgroup

10 Station Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN40 1RE

Inspection date

19/09/2012

Previous inspection date

20/01/2009

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

- The staff work incredibly hard to set up the extremely welcoming, interesting and stimulating learning environment every day.
- Children's start at the group is sensitively managed and the key person sheets are very beneficial for supporting children before they start at the group.
- The staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development effectively. Children quickly settle, gaining exceptional levels of self-esteem and confidence as they interact positively with staff and each other.
- The systems in place ably support children's communication and language development. Children become keen to talk and discuss their ideas and thoughts.
- Parents receive very good information about the Early Years Foundation Stage, with particular detail about the progress their child is making, particular achievements and the next steps in their learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Not all parents are successfully engaged in fully supporting their child's learning in the group and at home .
- At times, staff miss opportunities to improve and extend children's skills in counting in different situations.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children engaged in activities in rooms used and the outside area.
- The inspector had discussions with the nominated person, manager of the nursery and some staff members.
- The inspector looked at tracked children's records, including their assessment Learning Journeys.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection.
- The inspector checked evidence of safeguarding practices, staff recruitment, ongoing professional development and self-evaluation processes.

Inspector

Sue Taylor

Full Report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Playgroup is committee run and registered in 1987. It operates from rooms in the Bexhill Youth and Community Centre, which is close to the town centre and Bexhill railway station. Children have access to a small enclosed outdoor play area. It is open each weekday from 9.15am to 1pm, school term only. There are a few steps down to the sports hall. The group is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently

33 children aged from two years on roll, some in part-time places.

The group supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are five members of staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification at level 3. The group provides funded free early education for three- and four-year-olds.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- improve the engagement of all parents in supporting their child's learning in the group and at home
- strengthen the educational programme for mathematics by providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, such as using number language and counting in a variety of situations.

Inspection judgements

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

The staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to interest and motivate children. Children make good progress from their starting points, across all areas of learning, particularly in the prime areas. The staff plan a broad range of activities that support adult-led learning and provide resources for child-led play. The use of the large sports hall encourages children to engage in energetic play, developing their physical skills. For example, they chase after balls and cars rolling down large tubes. Activities such as manipulating dough or using scissors help prepare children for the skills they need for future writing.

The group are particularly good at supporting children's communication and language skills. The staff promote letter sounds well as children play. Stories are read enthusiastically and clearly by staff, engaging children and some signing is used that children begin to copy. Children are very keen to communicate with the staff or each other, eagerly talking about their own ideas. Children are very settled and happy. They gain skills in the specific areas of learning that enable them to be ready for school. However, at times staff do not always use varying situations to extend children's counting skills.

There are clear systems in place showing that the staff regularly assess children's ongoing

development. This enables the effective identification of each child's next steps in their learning. These monitoring processes enable the group to identify and narrow any achievement gaps for individuals or groups of children. Assessment summaries are in place for all children at regular intervals during their time at the group, such as the two-year-old progress check.

Parents receive very good detail about the Early Years Foundation Stage and the staff regularly inform them about the progress their child is making and their next steps. However they are not all actively engaged in supporting their child's learning at home, enabling them to make effective contributions to the assessment processes.

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

The staff are very effective in settling children so they feel secure and valued. Each new child and parent receives information before their child starts, explaining the key person system. This includes photos of the key person and of the group. As a result, areas such as the playroom and the toilets are familiar to a child before they arrive. Secure relationships are in place which encourages children to try new experiences and make choices. This supports children's growing independence and confidence that gives them the self-assurance they need for when they go to school. Children's behaviour is excellent.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through consistent messages from the staff, such as holding on to the stair rail if they are not competent in walking up the steps. There are highly positive relationships between staff and children. The staff regularly talk about feelings, using photos featuring the children expressing different emotions. As a result, children feel able to say how they are feeling and this helps staff promote their well-being.

The group shares helpful advice with parents about the provision of nutritious and balanced packed lunches. Children ably help themselves to drinking water throughout the day and enjoy healthy snacks. The recent addition of the outdoor area is working well. Although small, it offers good learning experiences to children. For example, chalkboards encourage early writing skills for those children who may not like to use pencils and paper. The children have planted flowers and vegetables, such as growing and caring for potatoes that they then cook and taste.

The environment is very welcoming with an excellent and exciting range of resources and activities put out daily by the staff, that promotes children's learning well. Children have resources for imaginative and creative play, such as role play areas, materials they use as they wish and painting. Writing materials are available at all times and in the role play area.

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

The provider and manager have a clear understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. All documentation is in place and reflects the recent changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, parents receive accurate and helpful information. All staff undertake regular safeguarding training and effective processes are in place to help ensure concerns about children's welfare are suitably followed up. Thorough recruitment processes such as checks on health and from the Criminal Records Bureau help ensure staff suitability. Regular supervision and annual appraisals enable ongoing professional development for all staff, with attendance at different training courses encouraged. This is then cascaded to others, so all benefit.

The manager oversees practices at the group and follows up any issues as they arise. The group's self-evaluation is continually changing and demonstrates a clear awareness of the strengths and areas to develop. The group have met the recommendations made at the last inspection, improving outcomes for children. For example, with the outside area that enables daily use and some free flow access for children. The manager carefully monitors children's assessment records to ensure they continue to make good progress across all areas.

Partnerships with others are well established and make a strong contribution to children's achievements and well-being. Communication with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage for particular children takes place regularly. This helps ensure that shared information enables the continuity of children's learning and care. The use of daily communication books between the group and parents or others is very beneficial.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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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	511221
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	814353
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	33
Name of provider	BEXHILL YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
Date of previous inspection	20/01/2009
Telephone number	01424 215455

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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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