

East-The-Water Stepping Stones Pre-School

Pollyfield Community Centre, Avon Road, BIDEFORD, Devon, EX39 4BL

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

12/10/2012

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

4

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 4

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 4

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Planning is not effective in matching activities to children's needs, with insufficient attention given to the differences in age groups and abilities. Observations and assessment procedures are not consistent for all children.
- Staff are not appropriately deployed to maintain conscientious supervision of children.
- A lack of structure impacts on children's ability to concentrate and complete activities and leads to boisterous behaviour.
- Self-evaluation is ineffective in identifying areas for further development and in monitoring how staff meet younger children's needs.
- Children and staff do not regularly practise the fire evacuation procedures in order to know what to do in an emergency situation.
- The key person system is not fully effective in supporting emotional attachments with younger children and meeting their personal care needs.

It has the following strengths

- Staff have positive relationships with parents and show a commitment to providing a service for the local community.
- Staff are kind to children and encourage sharing and good manners.

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 observed activities in each of the play areas and accompanied a group on a visit to the neighbouring Community Centre.
- The inspector had discussions with the manager, staff, parents and members of the committee.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager and had a mid-way meeting to discuss findings.
- The inspector scrutinised records and documentation, including a cross-section of children's development records.
- The inspector contacted a Duty Inspector and gave feedback to the manager and Chair of the committee.

Inspector

Julie Wright

Full Report

Information about the setting

East-The-Water Stepping Stones Pre-School registered at these premises in 2012. This was a re-registration of an established setting that has been operating since 1968. The setting is managed by a voluntary committee. It operates from a separate building in the grounds of the Pollyfield Community Centre in Bideford, Devon.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register, and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. They offer care to children aged from one year to 8 years. There are currently 40 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The setting is in receipt of early education funding for children aged three and four years. It operates during term time and school holidays. It is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 3.30pm. There are seven members of staff employed to work with children, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that all children engage in well-planned, purposeful play which is relevant to their emerging needs and interests, for example by reviewing the organisation of activities and the structure of the session
- ensure that staff deployment is effective enough to provide adequate supervision of children at all times
- observe all children to understand their level of achievement, interest and learning styles and use these to shape learning experiences for each child
- ensure that the key person tailors every child's learning and care to meet their individual needs

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

- practise the fire drill on a regular basis to ensure that staff and children are familiar with the evacuation procedure
- develop further systems for self-evaluation to inform the setting's priorities and set challenging targets for improvements.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have reasonable systems to observe and assess development but these are not consistently applied for all children. A revised format is in place for older children to reflect the current Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. However, procedures to identify developmental starting points are unclear and assessment of progress for children under the age of two years is not established. This means that planning for all children's individual learning needs and monitoring of individual progress is ineffective. As a result not all children make progress and learn the skills required for the next stage in their education.

There are basic routines and some organised activities, although limited consideration is given to the grouping of children. This often results in large numbers of children of various ages attempting to join in. Consequently, challenges to learning are not always age-appropriate or sufficient. Some activities occur on a daily basis, such as, phonics and singing the 'Alphabet song', which helps to reinforce learning. However, the lack of differentiation between children means that the activity is not always suitable. As an example, a large group gather for 'story time' and initially show interest. However, not all children can retain concentration, which then becomes distracting for others.

There are times when children engage well and respond eagerly, for example, a smaller group of children act out a popular story. They follow a member of staff around the room and have fun as they pretend to be different characters. Older children are ready and willing to do a large floor puzzle with a member of staff. This matching activity starts well, although it is not sustained because the adult also oversees others, which causes distractions. As a result children lose interest. Staff provide some opportunities to promote children's mathematical understanding. For example, children sing number songs and rhymes. They count up and down and consider amounts, such as, 'how many?' However, there is a lack of attention and supervision in some areas. This means that there are often missed opportunities to promote learning. Some children cope reasonably well with the lack of structure and are happy to play independently. However, the needs of children under three years and particularly the under two's are not adequately met. There are few activities targeted specifically for their age and ability and sometimes older children are too boisterous which results in younger children being hurt accidentally. The youngest children often follow the older ones and do not have sufficient individual, consistent adult attention. This means that they are not engaged in purposeful play.

Children enjoy creative activities, such as painting. Staff encourage children to remember the names of colours and to consider changes when they mix two together. Cooking activities provide opportunities for children to compare consistencies and find out about quantities. Children recognise animals in a book and mimic their sounds with enthusiasm. Most enjoy an outing to a local music and movement session, where they sing together and play games.

Staff record basic registration information when children first attend. They provide a warm welcome to parents and have regular discussions with them about children's general welfare. Parents and children enjoy taking 'book bags' home and making notes in the diary about their shared activity. At inspection, parents and committee members provide positive feedback on the pre-school setting. They value the care and say that their children love coming to the preschool.

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

There is a key person system in place but it is not fully embedded. Key persons are assigned after staff observe new children to see if they form an attachment to a particular member of staff. Whilst this may work for some children, it does not promote secure attachments for the youngest ones. All staff take part in the general care of children, for example, there is a rota for nappy changing. This limits continuity of care as children may experience a number of staff tending to their personal needs. Not all parents know who their child's key person is but comment that they can talk to any staff.

Children become familiar with the general routines. They enjoy the 'cafe style' snack time, which enables them to choose when they want to eat. Children develop independent skills as they spread butter and jam on their toast. Staff sit at the snack tables and chat with the children about what they have been doing. Children listen and interact, which helps to develop their social skills. They watch staff in the kitchen and ask relevant questions. Children wait patiently and learn to take turns. For example, they understand how many children may be at the table at a time. They follow good hygiene routines and know when to wash their hands. However, due to poor staff supervision some children play at the sinks, drenching their clothes and the floor with water. Staff aim to promote healthy eating, for instance, they suggest alternative options for packed lunches. The organisation at lunchtime is less effective than at snack time. Some children take their food boxes off the shelf earlier than others and begin to eat in the play room. Staff encourage children to eat food in the appropriate order of 'savouries first and sweets second'.

Children respond to staff and are able to follow instructions generally well. For example, they line up and walk carefully with adults around the edge of the car park, which helps them to understand about safety. Staff remind them about simple rules indoors, such as, 'being careful' and 'not running'. However, lack of staff supervision means that nobody stops children when they start to throw wooden bricks which could hurt others. Staff promote self-esteem as they praise children for their efforts and achievements. Children benefit from fresh air and exercise on a regular basis. They play in the enclosed outdoor area and have access to a reasonable range of resources. There are periods when children play relatively well together, for instance, they pretend to cook in the role play area or hide in a den. However, the lack of structure sometimes results in a disorderly environment that hinders learning and children becoming boisterous and less constructive. Occasionally this affects the younger ones, when they are at risk of being accidentally hurt.

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

Suitable policies and procedures are in place in respect of children's health, safety and welfare. Some are appropriately implemented in practice, for example, accident records are accurately maintained. Staff attend relevant training in order to support children's individual health needs. A suitable vetting and recruitment process ensures that checks are complete on adults working with children. There are appropriate systems in place to monitor staff performance. There are induction procedures in place for new staff although management do not always follow these promptly. This means that not all new staff have a secure knowledge of the setting's policies. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. They attend appropriate training in respect of child protection. Staff conduct routine risk assessments and take reasonable steps to minimise hazards. For example, safety barriers are in appropriate positions and the front door is securely closed. However, supervision of children is not effective. Staff are not always aware of the numbers of children present or their whereabouts. For example, children are often found in rooms without an adult which puts them at potential risk. This is a particular issue for the youngest children. There is a suitable fire evacuation plan, although this is not practised frequently enough for all staff and children to become familiar with the drill. Adequate arrangements are in place for children who need to rest or sleep. However, due to poor supervision staff do not conscientiously check sleeping children.

The setting is long established in the community and management have a dedicated approach. Since moving to the current premises, they have improved the outdoor play provision and have a suitable staff development plan. They benefit from local authority support visits, which helps to identify some aspects for improvement. However, the settings self-evaluation is not sufficiently adequate in monitoring effectiveness or how well the needs of children under two are met. There are significant weaknesses in the organisation of activities, staff deployment and planning for children's individual progress. Management are aware of the welfare, learning and development requirements but there are inconsistencies in meeting them. Suitable strategies are in place to promote partnerships with others, to meet specific needs. The setting has links with local schools, which contributes to smooth transitions for children.

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	EY443628
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	790620

Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	38
Number of children on roll	40
Name of provider	The Committee of East the Water Stepping Stones Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01237475562

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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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