

# Stepping Stones Playgroup

Georgeham Village School, Putsborough Road, GEORGEHAM, Devon, EX33 1JT

## Inspection date

22/03/2013

Previous inspection date

01/02/2012

## 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

- Children are happy and keen to learn. This success derives from the effective key person system and the excellent relationships children have with staff.
- The staff provide a welcoming, secure and inviting pre-school in which children engage fully in activities that are of interest to them and which meet their needs and abilities.
- The leadership and management have good systems that establish positive relationships with parents, which support children's learning and development well.
- The manager and committee are passionate about improving the quality of the provision to support children's learning.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities for children to play and extend their learning in the outside space are not fully embraced.
- Systems to monitor children's development records are not consistent.

## 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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to staff and held discussions with the manager and members of the committee.
- The inspector undertook observations of children and staff interactions with them, inside and outside.
- The inspector spoke to some parents to gain their views on the pre-school.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector reviewed some relevant paperwork including children's learning records, planning documents and staff qualifications.

## Inspector

Katherine Lamb

## Full Report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Playgroup opened in 1997. It is run by a voluntary management committee. The setting operates from its own building within the grounds of Georgeham Primary School, in Georgeham, North Devon. The setting has sole use of the premises, which include a playroom with kitchen area, and toilets. A fully enclosed area is suitable for outdoor play and has access to the fully enclosed school playground. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 20 children aged from three years to the end of the early years age group may attend at any one time. There are currently 18 children attending at different times. The setting operates during term times only, opening from 9am to 3.15pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. The setting is in receipt of funding for early education for three- and four-year-old children. There are six members of staff working with children, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the use of the outdoor area to encourage children to explore, build and role play, for example by providing: 'tool boxes' containing things that make marks; large and small blocks and boxes for construction, and chimes, streamers, windmills and bubbles to investigate the natural world.
- strengthen the monitoring of children's development records to ensure a consistent approach throughout the pre-school

## Inspection judgements

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

The pre-school meets the needs of all children very well. Children are keen to arrive and settle quickly. The atmosphere is calm and organised with children and staff understanding how sessions run. Staff share close, warm relationships with children and they know the children well. There are good teaching techniques used by staff. This effective guidance has a positive impact on children's learning and development meaning that children make good progress from their starting points on entry to the pre-school. Children are clearly enjoying their play and are keen to show their friends and staff what they can do, showing a positive attitude to learning. Staff are attentive and supportive to children's learning. They talk to children clearly, getting down to their level and using good

eye contact. They question children about what they are doing and leave time for them to answer, showing that they have an interest in what children have to say. Staff are teaching children about speaking and listening using picture cards to reinforce learning and to remind them to use 'good looking and listening' when their friends are talking.

The pre-school is very well resourced with designated areas to support different parts of children's learning and development. Staff label areas with photos so that children can distinguish between them. This also helps to promote their independence when it is time to tidy up. Children are given specific tasks to complete and so learn how to work in a team and that you can achieve goals quicker when using team work. Children are learning to recognise their own names on laminated cards, and to copy them. They look to staff for reassurance and support if needed. Staff offer praise and encouragement and talk to the children about the shape of the letters that they are making and different ways to form the letters and shapes.

The role play area has a fully stocked first aid kit. Children practice using bandages and talk about why they might need to use them. Staff move the conversation forward by talking about their muscles and how we use them. The children enjoy pretending to listen to their hearts with a stethoscope and talk about what they think their heart sounds like. Children really enjoying picking songs to sing and acting them out as a group. They take it in turns to wear a frog hat and act out being the frogs in the song. These props help to reinforce learning and involve the children in the song. Children are keen to use the outside area and show independence with getting ready to go outside by putting on boots and coats. Children splash in puddles and staff are quick to extend learning by initiating an investigation to discover how to make bigger splashes. Not all staff fully engage with children's learning outside. Resources outside support children's physical development well, but staff provide few other resources to extend other areas of learning.

Parents speak highly of the 'key person' system, in which their children are cared for by a particular member of staff, reporting that children have strong bonds with these staff. Staff encourage parents to share useful information about their child when they start at the pre-school. They have ready access to records detailing children's 'learning journeys', which they can view at any time to keep up to date on their children's progress. The pre-school has an excellent relationship with the local school and plans visits for the children before they are due to move so they are ready for the transition.

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

Children show loving relationships with their friends and play in harmony together. They share their toys and are excellent communicators. They are confident learners and either ask for support when needed or play happily independently. Children show that they feel safe and secure through their behaviour. 'Key persons' are allocated depending on who children bond with, and these staff work well to form strong and trusting relationships with the children and their families. Staff respond well to the needs of individual children. Staff interactions with children are thoughtful and supportive; children are happy and confident and appreciate talking to staff.

Children's emotional development benefits from these secure attachments. Staff get down to children's level to play with them. They listen to what children have to say and are clearly interested in their thoughts, showing that they value these, which helps boost confidence. For example, the car mat is set out especially as children left a drawing for the staff asking that they can play with it today. Staff organise themselves very effectively so someone is always available to give children support should it be required.

Staff use mealtimes to promote healthy eating and table manners with the children. Children take it in turns to be helpers and hand out plates and cups to their friends. Children's independence is promoted well as they pour their own drinks and choose their own snack, which teaches them skills that they will need as they move to school. Younger children are reminded to hold their cup with one hand and hold the jug with the other when pouring drinks. Staff are available for support but foster a culture of trying first before stepping in. Meal times are a social occasion that have a very calm atmosphere and children demonstrate excellent table manners. Their dietary and health needs are met well as details of any allergies children have are known and considered by staff.

The room is set up, ready and thoroughly checked before children arrive. A comprehensive risk assessment details required daily checks, which are recorded and referred to, to ensure that the playroom and activities are safe for the children. Practitioners encourage good behaviour from children; they model good behaviour themselves and use praise to encourage children. They also give children explanations as to why they cannot do certain things. Daily routines help children to understand about safety and careful use of resources. Children make friends, are interested in activities, enjoy their time and look after each other. These are all things that help them prepare for the eventual move to school.

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

The manager has a good understanding of her responsibility in meeting all the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. As a result, all children are well cared for and make good progress in their learning and development. There are comprehensive policies in place including safeguarding. Staff understand and implement these policies daily. All staff have undergone suitability checks, which are carefully recorded. Staff check the premises daily before the children arrive and after they leave. This shows that staff understand the need to provide a safe and secure environment for children and they do this effectively.

Staff have annual appraisals and supervision meetings once a term, although the supervision system is informal and in the process of being formalised with support from the new manager. They also have staff meetings and planning meetings to support them in their role.

The manager and committee are extremely passionate about working together to improve

the pre-school and have action plans in place. The new manager has a very clear vision about where she wants to take the pre-school and has already started to make changes that have a positive impact on children's learning. For example, using picture cards at group time to reinforce learning and making the book corner a quieter area. The manager, along with the committee, have realistic ideas about strengths and areas for development for the setting and have a plan in place to improve the pre-school. They have recently focused on turning the setting from a 'playgroup' into a pre-school, focusing on supporting children's learning and development. As part of this the children's learning journeys contain information about what the children have learnt. However, the information recorded in these is inconsistent between children and this had not been picked up in the changeover between managers.

Parents are grateful for what the staff do and find everyone friendly, approachable and professional. Before starting, families are offered 'taster' visits and state they find these invaluable. Parents are kept well informed through newsletters and informal chats.

## 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 action. 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106331
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	813284
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	3 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	20
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	18
<b>Name of provider</b>	Stepping Stones Playgroup
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	01/02/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 890899

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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