

# Stepping Stones

Foxes Piece School, Newfield Road, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 1JW

<b>Inspection date</b>	09/09/2013
Previous inspection date	22/01/2009

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	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 enjoy their time in pre-school as they independently use an interesting range of learning opportunities which promote their progress across all areas of learning.
- Children are safe and secure in the staff team's care. They are welcomed warmly by staff, so they feel valued and part of the pre-school.
- Staff keep parents informed about all aspects of their children's care and learning. This communication builds trusting relationships and provides continuity in children's care, so their welfare needs are met.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not make the most of opportunities to encourage older children's independence during everyday routines, such as taking responsibility for small tasks whenever possible.
- Children have fewer opportunities to use their imaginations in the programme for the expressive arts and design, for example in regard to creating stories.

## 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.

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 spent time observing in the main rooms and outside.
- The inspector checked staff appointment procedures.
- The inspector examined children's records, planning documentation and a selection of policies.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.

## Inspector

Anneliese Fox-Jones

## Full Report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones registered in 2005 with the present owner. It operates from three rooms in a separate unit within the school grounds of Foxes Piece School, in Marlow, Buckinghamshire. It is open every weekday during term time only. It operates Monday to Thursday from 9am until 3pm and from 9am until 2pm on Fridays. There are two outside play areas for the children to use. They may also use the school's playing fields. There are currently 40 children on roll, of whom 30 are in the early years age group. The pre-school is funded to provide free early education to children aged three and four years.

The pre-school serves children mainly from the local community and surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school owner employs eight staff. Of these, four hold a recognised early years qualification at level 3 including the manager/owner, and two staff hold relevant qualifications at level 2. Two staff are currently working towards gaining a qualification. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and 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:

- extend the programme for children's personal, social and emotional development to make the most of daily opportunities for older children to develop their independence and have more responsibilities during day-to-day routines and activities
  
- extend the programme for the expressive arts and design to increase opportunities to encourage children's make believe play through more use of their imaginations, such as in regard to storytelling.

### Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress in this pre-school, in which staff welcome all children regardless of their backgrounds.. They arrive to find an interesting range of activities to choose from. Staff follow children's interests and develop their ideas through the implementation of mini-topics. For example, focusing on 'All about me' activities to encourage children's friendships and social skills in the first term. Staff have a good

understanding of the starting points of each child on entry. They make effective observations, which are used to monitor the progress children make. Staff use a variety of methods to ensure that any assessments are used to plan the next steps in children's learning.

Staff interact frequently with children as they play, which enhances their learning, experiences and understanding. Staff support children's individual choices well. These include pouring the sand into funnels, using shape cutters and scissors, and using paint brushes. All such activities underpin the development of children's hand control and help to develop their early writing skills in preparation for school.

There are various opportunities for children to be creative. They express their own ideas in painting, investigate natural materials and various media. Children are physically active, developing their coordination and learning to control muscles and movement. They have fun outside, following the chalk 'road' in their cars and pushing dolls' prams around.

Young children develop good communication and language skills. Staff create an environment rich in language. Children enjoy singing songs and listening to stories. However, staff do not provide a wide range of resources, such as props linked to children's favourite stories and to both extend imaginative play experiences. Nonetheless, children use their imaginations as they delight in acting out familiar experiences in the home corner.

Staff provide torches, tills and telephones, so children use technology. Children develop understanding of early mathematical ideas through a varied range of activities. Staff encourage them to understand basic shapes, numbers, patterns and take part in solving problems. For example, children compare different shapes and count together how many shapes they have made from play dough. They count within daily routines, for example, the number of children and plates needed at the snack table. They see many number symbols on the walls, in games and puzzles to reinforce their early understanding of number.

Children recognise their personal needs and help themselves to drinks when thirsty, which promotes their growing independence. At times, however, staff do not make the most of chances to encourage children to undertake small tasks, particularly at mealtimes to develop this independence further in readiness for school. Through their play, children learn that families differ. Staff are effective in making sure that children are prepared well for their future learning needs.

Parents and carers are provided with good information about the pre-school. For example entrance hall notice boards provide useful information. Parents receive frequent newsletters and summary reports about their children's progress. Parents are kept well informed about their children's welfare and attainments through daily chats with staff. They have opportunities to attend formal parent sessions to discuss their children's developmental progress throughout the year.

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

Staff provide good levels of support to children. Staff are deployed effectively throughout the pre-school. The 'key worker system', in which staff take responsibility for a particular children, works well in supporting children to feel secure within the pre-school. Children develop close relationships with staff, whose interaction is enthusiastic and positive. Despite the children's age, they gain much self-confidence as they move around freely, choosing from a good range of resources and activities, which are invitingly organised. The secure relationship with staff promotes children's self-esteem and ability to learn. Consequently, children have their emotional needs met in a calm and child-friendly environment.

Children's behaviour is good because of the positive ethos that exists where all children are valued and managed well by the staff. In addition, children are helped to share resources, space and to include each other. Praise and encouragement are regularly used to promote children's self-esteem and to develop their senses of achievement. Children are encouraged and helped to think about their personal safety. For example, they learn how to keep themselves safe around the pre-school and in the event of an emergency.

Staff follow effective procedures to promote the good health and well-being of children. For example, a high number of staff hold an appropriate first aid qualification. The pre-school management takes necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection and implements appropriate action if children are ill. Effective procedures are implemented for sharing information with parents with regards to illnesses in the pre-school. Children are becoming more aware of how to stay healthy and about good personal care routines. Children are helped in learning the importance of healthy eating. Staff provide healthy and nutritious snacks. Children play outside and enjoy using a variety of resources that support all areas of learning as well as developing their physical skills.

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

Children are cared for by a stable staff team. All staff have relevant experience, suitable qualifications and the necessary skills to do their jobs. There are effective systems in place to enable staff to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through regular training. Written policies and procedures underpin the staff's effective practice and are made available to all parents. This helps the pre-school to be managed efficiently and in the best interests of the children. Staff take necessary steps to ensure they safeguard children effectively. For example, staff have a clear understanding of what to look for and how to proceed if they are worried about a child's welfare. They have clear policies and procedures for reference when needed, helping ensure children's safety, welfare and care are promoted. All adults are vetted for their suitability to work with children; visitors are monitored and levels of child supervision are good. Staff are caring and attentive. The owner/manager checks staff suitability through appropriate employment procedures and the supervision of staff is effectively monitored. All records relating to children's individual health and safety are well maintained. Staff regularly complete risk assessments to ensure

that any potential hazards are minimised. This thoroughness allows children to play safely both inside and outdoors.

The pre-school team understand the need to evaluate their practice. The owner/manager is committed to raising standards in the pre-school and is receptive to making future improvements. Staff contribute their ideas towards their quality improvement plan through regular staff meetings. The management has made improvements with regards to the recommendations made at the last inspection. For example, the owner/manager has introduced a wide range of simple technology and equipment for children's use to improve their understanding of the world. Staff have redesigned the pre-school environments to allow children to choose where to play and provide areas dedicated to particular aspects of learning across the three classrooms. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how to deliver a stimulating and effective programme which takes account of children's individual needs and interests. Assessment records are monitored and show how children are making good progress.

The pre-school staff value working in partnership with parents and provides them with relevant information about the early years provision. Parents report that they are happy with the care their children receive. Parents' comments include 'Staff are approachable and engaging with the children' and 'They provide a good range of activities for the children'. Staff develop effective links with local schools and other professionals involved in children's care. This liaison supports a consistent approach to children's learning and prepares them for 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
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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 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>	EY316669
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	927294
<b>Type of provision</b>	Sessional provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	40
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	40
<b>Name of provider</b>	Lisa Carlton
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22/01/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 472982

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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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