

Stepping Stones Nursery

Axminster Community Primary School, Stoney Lane, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5BU

Inspection date

14/10/2013

Previous inspection date

06/11/2009

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

- Relationships between staff and children are close, supportive and encourage children to develop into confident young people.
- Staff use praise and encouragement to positively support learning and development.
- Children engage fully in activities that interest them and meet their needs and abilities. As a result, they make good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. They feel involved in their children's learning and speak very highly of the setting.

It is not yet outstanding because

- At times children that are upset or frustrated struggle to communicate their feelings to staff, which has an impact on other children.
- Small group times are not always organised so that all children are able to fully participate.

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 undertook observations of children and staff interactions with them, inside and outdoors.
- The inspector spoke to staff and held discussions with the nursery lead and head teacher.
- The inspector spoke to some parents to gain their views on the setting.
- The inspector reviewed a sample of relevant paperwork including children's learning records, planning documents and staff qualifications.

Inspector

Katherine Lamb

Full Report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Nursery registered in 1995 and is based at Axminster Primary School in East Devon. The nursery is located in a classroom in the early years section of the school, next to the reception class. There is ramped disability access to the setting. There is an enclosed outside play, activity and teaching area, shared with the reception class children. The school grounds, including wildlife area, playground, school hall and school field are available to the nursery to use. There are currently 26 children on roll in the early years age range. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. Sessions are daily during term time from 1pm until 3.30pm, with some children collected from local pre-schools and supervised over the lunch period from 12.00pm. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs three staff to work with the children, who all hold appropriate childcare qualifications. There is also an administration manager and additional lunch time staff. The nursery staff work closely with school staff and the head teacher is also a member of the nursery committee.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen strategies to support younger children to communicate their feelings when they become frustrated or upset
- review the organisation of small group times to minimise disruption and enable all children to participate fully.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff take time to get to know children and their families very well. They tailor activities to children's interests and understand how they like to learn. This means children are enthused and motivated to learn new skills and are making good individual progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Staff have a good understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and complete regular observations and assessments on children's development. Staff plan children's individual next steps and include activities and learning opportunities for all children to support them to reach their potential. Staff gather information from parents regarding children's

interests and learning at home, and share what children enjoy in the nursery. This two-way flow of information means parents are fully involved in their child's development. Ongoing assessment of children's progress helps the staff to identify any gaps in achievement. Regular review meetings and discussions with the children's key person provide good opportunities for parents to take an active role in their child's learning.

Children know the routine well, which leads to an atmosphere of calm. The nursery is very well resourced with designated areas to support different parts of children's learning and development. Staff label areas with photographs so that children can distinguish between them. Staff provide children with good access to computers to extend their information communication technology knowledge, which children thoroughly enjoy. As a result of this good access children are confident in using them without support from staff. However, staff are on hand to help support if needed. Children are given free choice of a range of activities set out that they can choose from and consequently children settle quickly and play with their friends.

Staff allow children to try things for themselves before stepping in. For example, when younger children are unsure of how to dress the baby doll staff explain how to do it rather than completing the task for the child. This means that children are able to practise skills that they need when dressing themselves. Children appreciate being able to choose songs to sing and dance to and quickly form a group so they can all dance together. They laugh as they follow the song's lyrics to move certain parts of their body only, which teaches them about the body and how it can move.

Staff are very good at joining in with children's play to support them. For example supporting children to understand rules in games. Children in the garden use different coloured bean bag shapes and throw them at a target. Children ask for staff support to take turns but are able to play the game independently, recording which shapes hit the target. Staff encourage children to think about the language they use while they play and link numbers with objects. For example, children are keen to count to find out which shapes are winning the game. This helps develop their language and counting skills. Staff sit with children and talk to them about what they are doing. Children draw fruit that is on the table and then cut them out, which supports their developing physical skills. Staff talk to them about the differences in the fruit and how the children have drawn these to challenge their thinking.

Children are very confident communicators; they constantly talk to their friends and engage in regular conversations with adults. Parents comment that their children enthusiastically talk about the activities they have taken part in during the day and are excited about returning to play with their friends and staff. Staff aim to promote children's communication and language skills well. For example, regular group times allow children the opportunity to communicate their thoughts and feelings with others. However, at times these can be dominated by more confident children with others losing interest and not being able to participate fully in the discussions.

Children are keen to arrive and use an effective self-registration system. They settle well and play in small groups with their friends, talking as they play. Children also show security and confidence by being happy to play on their own. Relationships between children and staff are very positive. The staff team have worked hard to ensure all children settle quickly into the nursery. They clearly prioritise the well-being of children, praising them for their achievements and good behaviour. There is an effective key person system in place and children build secure bonds with the staff, which effectively supports their personal and social development. Parents feel staff are attentive to their children's needs. The nursery is well resourced both indoors and outside and the children benefit from the free-flow provision which is used well to give children independent choice with what they play with.

The nursery's special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) supports children well. Children who learn English as an additional language and those with additional needs are supported well as staff develop good partnership working with external agencies to promote continuity in care practices. The continual sharing of information between home and the nursery means children's welfare needs are well met.

Children are learning how to adopt healthy lifestyles. Drinking water is available for children to access during the day, which helps the children to be independent in meeting their own needs. Children wash their hands before they have a snack and know they have to do this because they might be dirty. They are developing their personal independence skills as they help themselves to a snack of fruit and a drink of water. Staff make mealtimes sociable and children talk to each other about what they have done while encouraging them to use good table manners.

Children are mostly well behaved. However, some children struggle to communicate their frustration to staff or other children which can have an impact on others' play. Staff are working with these children to help them learn to explain their emotions but this is not fully embedded in practice. Children have a good level of achievement and self-confidence and are prepared well for future moves to school. In addition, there are strong links in place with the on-site primary school and reception teachers have been invited into the nursery to meet the children, to support these moves.

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

The nursery lead member of staff 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. Effective arrangements are in place to monitor the quality of educational programmes. The nursery lead carries out checks once a term to assess what stage the children are at, writing action plans if needed to support each child to make progress. Children's targets are shared with the other settings that they attend to fully support their learning and development.

An appraisal system is in place to identify and address any training needs for the staff to support their professional development and drive improvement in the quality of the provision. Accurate self-evaluation, along with support from local authority advisors, helps to effectively identify strengths and prioritise areas for improvement. The staff team uses committee meetings as a time to review their practice and comment on strengths and areas for improvement. Staff and parents are keen and willing participants in this process, which benefits the outcomes for children. Staff access external agencies when children require additional support in their learning and development to promote their inclusion and meet their specific needs.

The nursery makes good use of risk assessment to identify and reduce hazards within the provision. This means that children are protected and can play in a safe environment. Staff know and understand the nursery's clear policies and procedures and embed them well into practice. Staff supervise children well. They record child accidents and any treatment given and share these with parents to keep them informed about their child's welfare. The staff help children to learn about their own safety by carrying out fire drills with them frequently. Children evacuate quickly and calmly and know what to do when they hear the whistle. The nursery's policies and procedures have recently been reviewed, which show that staff have a high regard for children's safeguarding and health and safety. Children are well safeguarded in the nursery because staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Staff have received safeguarding training and know the course of action to take if they have a concern about a child's welfare. There are comprehensive systems in place to ensure all staff who are employed are suitable to work with children. All staff are checked with regards to experience, qualifications and suitability.

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

Unique reference number	106045
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	816890
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	3 - 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	26
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Committee
Date of previous inspection	06/11/2009
Telephone number	01297 33005

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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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