

Stepping Stones Community Organisation & Pre-school

75-77 Raymond Street, HANLEY, Stoke-On-Trent, ST1 4DP

Inspection date	20/01/2014
Previous inspection date	18/07/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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

- The management and staff fail to undertake effective risk assessments in the indoor and outdoor areas, thereby putting children at risk.
- The provider has failed to ensure the named deputy is capable and qualified to take charge during the absence of the manager.
- Teaching is inadequate because there are inconsistencies among the staff in supporting children's learning and development, and weaknesses in relation to some aspects of the environment and resources. As a result, children's progress is not adequately supported towards the early learning goals.
- There are inconsistencies in relation to the effectiveness of the key person system and how staff support children's attachments and manage their behaviour.
- Supervision, coaching and support is not provided to ensure the staff are able to effectively support the children they care for.

It has the following strengths

- There are positive relationships between staff and parents and other settings including schools. Children enjoy outings to place of interest in the local community.

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 scrutinised a range of documents; attendance registers for children and staff, risk assessment, self-evaluation records, staff suitability documents, fire officers reports and a range of policies and procedures which supports the service provided.
- The inspector observed activities in the outdoor play area and all indoor play areas used by the children at various times throughout the day.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager, held meetings with the manager and held discussions with various staff caring for children.
- The inspector took account of the views of children and parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Mary Henderson

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Community Organisation and Pre-school is run and managed by a committee. It was registered in 2012 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated on the first floor of a community building in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two hold Qualified Teacher Status. The pre-school opens Monday to Thursday term-time only from 9.15am until 2.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 14 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure risk assessments cover specific issues and inform staff how children will be kept safe by managing these risks. This is in relation to the cleanliness of the floors and children's furniture, the temperature of radiators and children's access to broken toys and fallen leaves in the outdoor areas
- ensure there is a named deputy who is capable and qualified to take charge in the manager's absence
- ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for regular appraisals and supervision of staff, including support and coaching, to increase staffs' knowledge and skills and identify any concerns and underperformance
- ensure the key person system is effective so that all children are supported to form secure attachments by; developing practitioners knowledge of secure attachment theory and how this has an impact on children's emotional well-being, and by reflecting on the role of the key person in relation to offering a settled, close relationship for all children
- support children's management of their own feelings and behaviour through positive role modelling by staff and through discussions about why some behaviour is unacceptable and why, so that this builds on children's confidence and self-assurance
- ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn through improved teaching strategies, such as encouraging children to have their own ideas, make links between their ideas and develop strategies for doing things for themselves
- improve the educational programme for physical development by providing a sufficient and broad range of outdoor resources and equipment to fully support children in practising how to move their bodies in different ways.

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching within the pre-school is not effective. This is because staff are inconsistent in enhancing various aspects of the learning and development environment and in engaging with children. As a result, children's progress towards the early learning

goals is not adequately supported. Although the staff are well-qualified and undertake further training, practice is variable and support for children's learning and development is insufficient. This shows a lack of clear understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The staff do not show they have high expectations of themselves or the children they care for. As a result, children are not helped to make as much progress as they can, given their starting points and capabilities. The teaching strategies used by some staff do not fully enhance all children's physical and communication skills or their personal, social and emotional development. For example, some of the staff have not developed close bonds and attachments with some of the children. This impacts on some children's ability to settle, become confident and self-aware.

Some staff support individual children by providing activities based around their current interests and use open questioning to support children's communication and language. However, this practice is not consistent across the whole staffing team. In addition, there are inconsistencies in how well children's creative and critical thinking is supported because some staff do not support children to develop their own ideas, make links between these, learn to solve problems and do things for themselves. For example, weaker staff are observed painting windows for children on their own three-dimensional artwork, asking them to fill these in rather than allowing children the freedom to decide this for themselves. Although some staff support children's independence by encouraging them to have a go at putting their own coats and shoes on ready for outdoor play, others quickly do this for the children. This hampers children's ability to develop the skills needed to be ready for their next stage in learning and eventually school. During child-initiated play, children enjoy helping themselves to the range of resources around them. However, there is little staff interaction or involvement in this to help support and extend children's learning.

Children do enjoy a range of outings to places of interest. This includes, visits to the local Mosque where they talk about their findings and discuss this in more detail back at the pre-school. They also like to visit the post office and send a letter home to their family. Children are beginning to share and take turns and like to sit with their friends as they build using construction resources. They are supported by some staff with their early literacy skills as they enjoy drawing and making marks at the well-resourced writing table. During this type of activity some of the staff talk to the children about their work and use praise to support children's feelings of self-worth. However, during group discussion times, they soon become distracted because staff do not effectively engage their interest. For example, children talk about a recent fire evacuation drill, soon become restless, unable to sit still or follow instructions and move away from the activity. Children have regular access to books, and enjoy looking through them in the book corner with their peers. However, some of the staff miss opportunities to engage and support children's literacy skills during these times.

Children are provided with opportunities to be out of doors each day. Here they run around chasing one another and socialising with their peers. During such times, however, staff do not always engage children through positive interaction and discussions about what they are doing. The outdoor area also lacks a broad range of equipment to support children's physical development. For example, the staff do not always ensure there is

sufficient tricycles so they can all exercise their skills and there is a lack of ball play and the playhouse does not provide resources to enhance their imaginary play. This impacts on children's physical development and their imaginary play. Children count as they play with their peers and spend time acting out familiar situations in the home corner. Here, they hand out and count the cups and forks and they say "10 please" as they give dry pasta to a staff member during their imaginary play about a restaurant. Children's awareness of diversity is supported through their exploration of various festivals around the calendar year. They play with a broad range of positive images including small world people, dolls and dressing-up resources to further extend their understanding. This supports children's learning about the world around them. Children's artwork is displayed for them so they and their parents can enjoy and feel proud of the children's achievements. Older children's exploration of technology is enhanced as they freely access the computers during their child-initiated play times. Here they use computers to explore a variety of computer programmes. This also supports their learning and understanding of the world around them.

Staff have a clear understanding of the need to observe and assess children as they play in order to identify the next steps in their learning. However, while assessment arrangements are suitable, inconsistencies in teaching impacts on the effectiveness of this. There are sound strategies in place to engage parents in their child's learning and development at home. For instance, the staff encourage parents to take home books to read with their children. Staff also talk to the parents about how they can further support their child's learning at home, such as encouraging them to be involved in domestic tasks and how this supports their child's development. There are open sessions for parents to come in and talk to their child's key person about their child's ongoing progression. Parents and the key person talk about the child's development and look through the child's learning journal documents. Parents keep the key person up-to-date with how the child is developing at home and their child's changing interests. This information and observations of the child is used in the planning of children's activities. Children with identified needs are supported through intervention and discussing with parents how best to support the child. Staff caring for toddlers within the pre-school discuss with parents the most suitable time to provide a comprehensive summary of their child's learning and development in time for their health visitor check at age two. During settling-in sessions, parents and their child's key person discuss routines and the child's previous learning so that this and initial observations by the key person ensures securely identified starting points are gathered on which to build children's learning and development.

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

The pre-school is bright and there are some interesting displays of children's own work. Children's emotional well-being, however, is not fostered by all the staff. For example, children are not always supported to behave well, sit and listen and take turns in talking during adult planned activities. For example, during mealtimes children do not always follow instructions well and get up and run around. Some of the staff are inconsistent in managing children's behaviour during such times, and do not support children in

managing their own feelings and behaviour. Some staff do not help children to understand what good behaviour looks like or explain why some behaviour is unacceptable. Some staff offer children meaningful praise when they act positively, while others provide reward stickers for all the children with no explanation of why they are receiving this. Consequently, children receive mixed messages that lead to confusion and children not clearly understanding rules and boundaries. As a result, some children become unsettled and do not listen to what the staff say.

Some aspects of children's well-being are sound. As children become ready to move onto school the staff support them through stories and activities that help them to become to be aware of what will happen during this important transition phase of their life. The communication between the pre-school and local school is positive. The staff liaise with the schools children will shortly be attending, hold discussions with reception staff and with parents' permission share the children's learning journal documents and assessments to ensure support is there for the children when they move up to school.

Children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle is developing well. Staff talk to the children about the benefits of a healthy diet and about the need to ensure they wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet. There are regular visits from a parent, who is a nurse, to further support children in developing a positive and healthy life-style. Visits to the local allotment are also arranged so that children can see vegetables growing, and a balance of fruit and vegetables provided at meal and snack times further supports children's awareness of a healthy and balanced diet. The staff support children's awareness of being safe through regular fire evacuation and reminders to be careful of one another as they move around outdoors. The staff talk to the children about the work of fire officers and how they help people to be safe. As a result, children's understanding of personal safety is suitably fostered.

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

The inspection was brought forward following concerns being raised about the provider's ability to safeguard and protect children's safety and welfare within the pre-school and in relation to general suitability matters and staff training, support and skills. Other concerns raised related to ratios and child supervision. The inspection found that the pre-school does meet adult to ratios and children are appropriately supervised by the staff. However, risk assessments are not effectively undertaken and this impacts on children's overall safety and welfare. For instance, areas used by children are not kept to a high enough standard, particularly in relation to the cleanliness of the floors in the children's play areas. In addition, the radiator in the children's play area is too hot. The outdoor areas are not checked for safety and suitability each day before the children go out to play and, as a result, broken toys and fallen and collected leaves are not removed and pose a risk to children. In addition, the deputy manager does not have all the necessary skills and knowledge to take charge effectively in the manager's absence. These significant weaknesses in practice are breaches in the safeguarding requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and are also breaches of the

requirements of the Childcare Register.

The staff monitor access to the provision to ensure the security of the children attending. Staff have attended child protection training and are able to identify possible signs of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have a concern. The safeguarding policy outlines what will happen in the event of an allegation against of a member of staff and how staff, parents and visitors must ensure they do not use cameras or mobile phones on the premises. There is also a whistle blowing policy in place for the staff to follow should there be any concerns in relation to anyone working at or visiting the nursery. The staff have attended fire safety training with the local fire officers. This supports their awareness of how to respond quickly in the event of an evacuation and concerns relating to the use of fire prevention equipment have been addressed by the provider. The recruitment procedures for the pre-school are robust and include ongoing systems in place to ensure staff working with children are suitably checked.

The monitoring of the teaching and learning programmes within the pre-school fail to support children's learning and development sufficiently because weaknesses in staff practice have not been identified by the provider. Staff are suitably qualified, however, staff practice regarding teaching and supporting learning is inconsistent and the supervision arrangements are not effective enough to monitor, identify or ensure that any underperformance is swiftly tackled . As a result, children's learning is not fully supported through warm, consistent interaction and positive engagement from all staff. The self-evaluation processes in place include gathering the views of management, staff, parents and their children. Some areas for continuous improvement to benefit the children's learning and development are identified. For example, there are targets in place for increasing staff training on quality practice and for the further development of the outdoor learning areas. However, the provider's reflective practice has failed to identify the weaknesses raised as actions for improvement during this inspection.

Partnerships with parents and other providers and professionals are positive. Children with identified needs are supported through intervention and discussing with parents how best to support the family and child. There is a range of information provided to parents to keep them informed about the pre-school and their child's progress. These include, displays, newsletters and access to all the policies and procedures detailing how the pre-school operates. Parents comment on the good feedback they receive from the staff about their child's day. They also comment about the friendships children are building with other children and how their child enjoys painting and outdoor play activities.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

Not Met

**(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- undertake a risk assessment of the premises and equipment; at least once a year, and immediately, where the need for an assessment arises (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner. (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- undertake a risk assessment of the premises and equipment; at least once a year, and immediately, where the need for an assessment arises (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner. (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY439671
Local authority	Stoke on Trent
Inspection number	950730
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	14
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Community Organisation Committee
Date of previous inspection	18/07/2012
Telephone number	01782499949

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

