

# Stepping Stones Pre-school

Melton Community Centre, Cross Street, KETTERING, Northamptonshire, NN16 9DH

## Inspection date

11/11/2014

Previous inspection date

15/09/2009

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

1

Previous inspection:

1

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 1

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 1

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 1

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of how children learn and develop. This results in all children making good progress and in some cases, better than good progress.
- Children are settled, happy and enjoy consistent warm and caring relationships with all staff. Consequently, children are confident and demonstrate that they feel safe.
- Safeguarding arrangements are extremely strong. Staff have a firm understanding of their role in protecting children from harm. Consequently, children are cared for in a safe and secure environment.
- Children's behaviour is extremely well managed. Staff are excellent role models. As a result, children are confident and well prepared for the move to school.
- The environment is welcoming, friendly and stimulating. Resources are child-accessible and staff are creative in how they promote learning both in and outdoors.
- Partnerships with parents and other professionals are extremely well established. Consequently, children benefit from a joined up approach, which supports their learning well in the pre-school and at home.

## 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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the pre-school and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and spoke to staff and children throughout the inspection when appropriate.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the provider's evidence of self-evaluation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

## Inspector

Gail Warnes

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-school opened in 1996 and re-registered in 2009 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It operates from two rooms within the Melton Community Centre in Kettering, Northamptonshire. It is open from 9am to 3pm, each weekday, during term time only. There are currently 67 children on roll in the early years age group, some of whom are in part time places. The pre-school currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are currently 13 members of staff; eight members hold appropriate early years qualifications, three are in the process of completing level 3 qualifications and one holds the Early Years Teacher Status. The pre-school provides funded early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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

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

- enhance further the already good use of peer-on-peer observations, to encompass teaching, in order to continue to share and develop outstanding practice.

## Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is consistently excellent at this pre-school. Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn and develop. They are very reflective on their practice and adapt activities to ensure all children's individual needs are met. For example, staff understand the benefits of fresh air and learning opportunities outside, which are restricted at the pre-school because it has limited outdoor space. In order to promote this style of learning, regular trips out are organised to develop outdoor experiences, such as a trip to the supermarket. Children learn about road safety and keeping each other safe. Opportunities to develop literacy are included as staff encourage children to write their shopping list. Staff support children to learn about exchanging money for goods. Each child is provided with some money and conduct the transaction at the shop. Healthy food is discussed as the children buy fruit and vegetables, which are then served by the cook for their lunch. This demonstrates how effective staff are to provide activities that cover the breadth of the learning and development requirements. Children are extremely well supported to make best progress given their capabilities and starting points. Children show high levels of engagement and enjoyment. For example, a member of staff reads a story about a hunt for a bear. Children are encouraged to join in with the actions and repeat some of the phrases, such as 'swishy, swashy'. The children are captivated as the member of staff builds anticipation for what may happen next and develops excitement as the children join in the imaginary run for home and away from the bear. At the end of the story, the member of staff skilfully develops reflection with the children, by asking them

how they think the bear is feeling. Consequently, children begin to develop literacy skills and a love of books, and they begin to explore and understand emotions.

There is a clear system to evidence, monitor and track children's learning through effective and accurate observations and assessments. Staff are establishing ways for children to become involved in the recording of the observations. This means that children begin to understand and take ownership of their learning. Observations and assessments are shared with all staff. This means that key persons have a clear knowledge and understanding of children's individual learning needs, which is shared by all staff. Consequently planning for children's next steps is highly effective, as all staff understand individual children's learning needs. This results in highly effective activities, which challenge and stimulate all children. Consequently, children demonstrate the characteristics of effective learners and make consistently rapid progress. Children are ready for school when the time comes because they have a wide range of skills, to support their future education, as well as a positive attitude towards learning.

Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is consistently highly effective. The pre-school's special educational needs coordinator is highly knowledgeable and experienced. She is passionate about her role and committed to enable every child to access every aspect of the pre-school, and to support parents to understand children's specific needs. Excellent partnerships are established with other professionals. This means that, where it is beneficial to children, the pre-school is able to support parents to seek interventions, which support children's additional learning and development needs. This contributes to the rapid progress children make, given their varying starting points. Teaching strategies are effectively utilised to meet children's individual needs and promote their all round development. These include visual aids, such as pictures, which highlight routines for snack time and the use of Makaton sign language. A number of children also attend who speak English as an additional language. There is excellent support for these children, who are encouraged to use their home language in the pre-school. Staff understand how children acquire additional languages and how to support them. The pictorial signage in the pre-school supports children's independence in accessing resources. Children also benefit from group sessions with their peers and make good progress in communication and language development. Parents are also supported well as the pre-school sources information regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage in their home language to ensure they are equally well informed about what is provided and expected.

Parents are highly involved in their children's learning. Parents spoken to at the inspection feel very well informed about their children's progress. Children's next steps in learning are shared, so that parents can effectively support learning at home. Parents are welcomed into the pre-school at any time and typically comment how approachable all staff are. More formal opportunities are regularly provided where parents can discuss their children's progress with their key person, when they wish. Parents' contributions are highly valued and play an important part in helping staff to gain the most accurate picture of children's all round development. Staff are passionate about supporting parents, as well as children. Parents are encouraged to visit the pre-school where children show them what they learn there and teach their parents. Resources are freely available for children to borrow and take home. For example, a favourite story or game may be borrowed to

share with parents and maths and literacy resources are available to support learning at home.

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

The key-person system is strong and well established. This ensures parents and children develop extremely positive relationships with key staff. The pre-school is organised in such a way that all staff know all children. This ensures continuity for children and parents, should their main key person be absent for any reason. Children are very well settled and are happy on arrival at the pre-school. They separate easily from their parents and carers, who comment how friendly and caring staff are. Staff recognise the unique needs of each child and ensure settling in sessions are flexible, so that each child is fully supported. This is because staff fully understand the importance of children feeling safe, secure and confident before they show an eagerness and readiness to learn. Staff continue to nurture these growing relationships with children and their families. This is extremely effective in supporting children's emotional wellbeing and provides the smoothest of starts for them.

The environment is well resourced, friendly and stimulating. The pre-school has very little outdoor provision, so staff have developed highly creative ways indoors to promote physical activity and development. For instance, staff have adapted the pre-school rules to allow children to enjoy running and active play with a specific area indoors, cordoned off for safety. This recognises children's need to be vigorously active. This is further supplemented with regular trips out of the pre-school, such as going shopping for fruit and vegetables, and trips to the park and local farm. Resources are easily accessible by all children who attend and support each of the areas of learning and development very well. This means children's choice and independence in play is well supported. Children's behaviour is extremely well managed. Staff get down to children's levels and calmly set out their expectations. The focus is on a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Children's efforts and achievements are praised and recognised through an effective star award system. Parents and staff record significant effort and achievements on a star, which children are invited to stick on a poster, which is displayed in a prominent child-accessible position in the entrance. Each day, during circle time, staff read out the comments on the stars to share effort and achievement with all children. This supports children's growing self-esteem and sense of belonging in the pre-school. Children are very well prepared for times of change, such as starting school. Teachers from the local primary schools are invited in during the summer term, to meet children who will move up to school the following September. Consequently, children become familiar with the adults at school and begin to establish relationships with them.

Staff seize every opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles with children. Mobile hand washing facilities are used to ensure children are supported to develop good hygiene routines after messy play activities or before snack and mealtimes. Children display great understanding of the routine for snack time. They independently take their name card and place it in a basket which signifies who has had snack and queue patiently, taking turns to wash their hands before sitting at the table to eat snack. Children display polite manners and enjoy serving their own drink from suitably sized jugs. This effectively supports their

independence and physical development. Lunch is prepared on site by a cook who sources food locally. Menus are inviting and children enjoy the food on offer, such as pasta bake, with fresh vegetables and fruit. There is little waste and some children enjoy second and even third helpings, as they learn about regulating portion sizes. Staff eat lunch with children, which promotes the social aspect of eating and children chat easily with staff about their day and other experiences.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are exceedingly strong. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their role in protecting children from harm and of what to do should they have a concern about children's welfare. Recruitment and induction procedures are robust and ensure that all those working with children are suitable to do so. Risk assessments are thorough and staff are especially vigilant to potential dangers, which means children are cared for in a safe environment. Sampled documentation and records are well maintained; giving a firm indication that all required documentation is in place and firmly underpins children's safety and welfare.

The provider and her deputies provide strong, passionate leadership. They are committed to driving excellence in all aspects of pre-school life. The quality of teaching and the delivery of educational programmes are monitored effectively and inform a targeted plan for professional development. This means staff are equipped with the skills and training to meet children's specific and individual needs. The use of peer-on-peer observations is strengthening staff's practice further by increasing mutual trust and respect. The provider is seeking to enhance these observations to encompass teaching practice and is confident that this will further embed the sharing of outstanding practice. This will also help strengthen the quality of teaching even further, so that children are able to consistently achieve the highest levels in all aspects of their learning. Assessments of children's progress are rigorously moderated by the manager and her deputies. As a result, any gaps in children's learning are identified swiftly. Consequently, staff are able to develop appropriate interventions with other relevant professionals, where required, to support children to make good progress. The provider has successfully created an atmosphere of openness and equality, which means staff and parents are fully involved in the day-to-day running of the pre-school. Staff are committed to their own professional development, with a number of staff extending their professional qualifications. Training undertaken by staff since the last inspection has had a very positive impact on children. For example, staff have reviewed how the environment supports communication and language development. Subtle changes have been introduced and new ideas implemented. The result is that many children are making good progress, and in some instances rapid progress, in their communication and language development.

Self-evaluation is extremely thorough and accurate. The provider is clear about plans for the pre-school's future, which are focused on raising children's levels of achievement and pursuing every opportunity to develop outdoor provision within the limited space available. Staff are very reflective and continually evaluate activities they provide. For example, a

painting activity offered in the morning, using brushes and sponges, was further developed in the afternoon, to promote a more sensory experience with hands. This decision was based on how children interacted with the morning session. This demonstrates how staff are adaptable to the changing needs and interests of children they care for. Partnerships with parents and other professionals are extremely well established and contribute significantly to the good progress children make. This results in a successful collaborative approach from all those involved in children's lives, which provides continuity and opportunities for them to reach their full potential. Feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive. Parents typically comment on how pleased they are with how quickly their children settle, the progress they make and how happy they are. This is a friendly pre-school, where children enjoy an outstanding early years experience, which provides a firm foundation upon which to support their future learning.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory 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	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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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>	EY390463
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	849833
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	40
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	67
<b>Name of provider</b>	Jacqueline Ann Black
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15/09/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	07523974286

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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

