

Stepping Stones Playgroup

Stokesley Primary School, 5 Springfield, Stokesley, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS9 5LW

Inspection date	06/01/2015
Previous inspection date	09/07/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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 very settled, happy and confident. This is because staff are warm, welcoming and make children feel at ease. As a result, children enjoy their time in the setting and are keen to play and learn.
- All children make good progress in their learning and development because staff know children's interests and their capabilities. In addition, staff work closely with parents to share children's achievements and support their learning at home.
- Staff are deployed well and encourage children to be active participants in their learning. Consequently, children show high levels of concentration and a very good attitude towards learning new skills.
- Children are safeguarded well because staff understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to protect children from harm.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities to further develop children's already good literacy skills are sometimes missed.
- On occasion, staff are not always fully informed of the precise targets for improvement the management team are focusing on, in order to enhance the setting even further.

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 observed children in the classroom and in the outdoor area.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager of the setting.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff, parents and children.
- A range of documents was inspected including observations, planning and tracking of children's progress.
- The inspector checked evidence of staff suitability, training certificates, policies, procedures and the setting's self-evaluation documents.

Inspector

Laura Hoyland

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Playgroup was established in 1992 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a stand-alone classroom in the grounds of Stokesley Primary School in Stokesley, North Yorkshire. The setting serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is an area available for outdoor play. The setting employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 11.30am and children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 12 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance children's already good literacy skills further, for example, by encouraging them to write their name on their artwork
- refine the way targets for improvement are shared with staff, in order for all staff to have precise knowledge of how to drive the already high quality setting towards outstanding.

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Staff know children well and plan activities to motivate and engage children in their learning. For example, all children thoroughly enjoy making play dough with staff. They weigh and measure the ingredients, take turns to stir the mixture and engage in a wide variety of conversations while they play and learn. Staff listen with genuine interest to children's stories, ask open-ended questions and allow children plenty of time to think and formulate their answers. This means children fully engage in learning and hold long conversations, developing good communication skills in the process. In addition, children freely choose activities they wish to explore. They sit in the quiet area and read books, listen to stories read by staff and use their expressive skills to make collages. However, at times opportunities are missed to further develop children's already good literacy skills. For instance, staff write children's names on their artwork rather than encouraging them to try and write their names for themselves.

All children are making good progress from their starting points because staff plan a wide

range of interesting and exciting learning opportunities for them. Staff monitor their progress and each child's individual next steps for learning are incorporated in the planning each week. Children who speak English as an additional language are also supported very well and make good progress in their learning. Staff work closely with their parents to learn key words in their home language and use some basic signs to communicate with children. Staff understand the importance of supporting all children to be ready for their move to school. They encourage children to be independent and ask questions, raising their curiosity and developing their attitude to keep trying. Children demonstrate very good listening and attention skills, they concentrate for long periods of time, are polite and considerate to others. All these skills are vital for successful future learning.

Parents are encouraged to share children's experiences at home with staff, and staff liaise with parents regarding children's learning in the setting. Formal meetings are regularly planned where staff talk to parents in-depth about their child's learning and progress. Ideas to further enhance children's learning at home are suggested by staff, and as a result, children are supported well between home and the setting. Furthermore, parents regularly take children's development files home to share with the family and contribute to their files with comments and photographs. This demonstrates effective sharing of information with parents.

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

Children are extremely well settled and confident in the setting. They arrive happily, immediately engage in the daily routine and demonstrate they feel safe and secure. This is because staff are warm, welcoming and carefully manage the settling-in procedure to ensure all children feel safe and secure before they are left in the setting without their parents. Staff spend time getting to know children and parents well. As a result, strong attachments are made between children, staff and parents. Staff work with parents to learn about children's welfare needs and routines. They complete a detailed form with parents to give them information about each child's individual needs before they start in the setting. Consequently, children's needs are managed effectively and children's well-being is promoted very well. Furthermore, after obtaining parents' permission, this information is shared with school when children leave, in order to support children to have a smooth transition to their next place of learning.

Children are developing a positive approach to healthy living. They exercise daily and know the correct clothing to wear for the type of weather outdoors. They discuss the need to wear boots, hats and scarves because the weather is wet and windy, while still enjoying themselves in the inclement weather. The outdoor area is spacious and children run and negotiate space well. Small wooden beams allow children to develop their coordination and balancing skills, while taking small calculated risks in their play. Staff closely supervise children to ensure they are always safe, while allowing them to learn the limitations of their bodies.

Children behave exceptionally well. They cooperate with their friends and play well together, sharing and turn taking. Children discuss different emotions with staff, who help

them to understand their feelings and those of others. Children sit together at snack time and take turns to use tongs to serve their fruit. They enjoy a variety of nutritious snack options and all children understand the need to wash their hands prior to eating. This means children are learning how to lead a healthy lifestyle while becoming independent.

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

Children are safeguarded very well because staff thoroughly understand their roles and responsibilities to protect children from harm. They have a clear understanding of the different types of abuse and their signs and symptoms. In addition, staff know who to contact if they are concerned about a child's welfare. Comprehensive policies and procedures underpin staff's very good knowledge and are regularly updated and reviewed. In addition, staff are recruited safely. The manager has completed safer recruitment training and robust procedures are in place to check the suitability of staff. This includes obtaining a Disclosure and Barring Service check. The setting is safe and secure. Staff answer the door to parents and visitors. Visitors' identity is checked and all children, staff and visitors are accounted for on the daily registers. These established practices ensure everyone in the setting is kept safe and secure.

The small staff team work incredibly well together. They support each other's practice and teach each other different ways to present and carry out activities with children. This means their teaching practice is constantly evolving as they demonstrate consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching. In addition, the manager observes each member of staff and praises their work, as well as offering constructive criticism to support staff to reflect and improve their practice further. All staff plan activities together and the manager oversees the implementation of activities and learning opportunities. She is based in the room with staff and children during the setting's opening hours. This means she knows children well and monitors their progress with each key person. As each child is closely monitored, any areas of concern are quickly identified and focused upon to ensure gaps are closed and children make good progress from their starting points. Although there are currently no children on roll with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the manager is fully aware of which professionals to contact for advice and support. She also works closely with local primary schools, and professional relationships with teachers ensure children are very well supported in their move on to their next stage of learning.

Staff have regular supervision meetings with the manager and their training needs are identified and discussed. The manager sources training courses to support staff to continuously develop their knowledge and practice. As a result, the staff team are passionate about creating the best start in life for all children. Staff cascade their learning from training courses at staff meetings, where they also discuss any improvements they would like to make to daily practice. All staff have contributed to the self-evaluation of the setting and clearly understand the strengths and areas for development. However, on occasion, the management team do not always share the precise targets they are working on with staff, in order to drive the setting towards outstanding. The recommendations raised at the last inspection has been promptly addressed and parents were fully involved in the process as staff requested their views for improvement via questionnaires. Parent

questionnaires are regularly sent out and the wealth of replies show that parents are extremely happy with the care and learning their children receive.

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

Unique reference number	400332
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	868857
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	14
Number of children on roll	12
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	09/07/2009
Telephone number	079505 02647

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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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