

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Meadway School, Dunsfold Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4NP

Inspection date	12/01/2015
Previous inspection date	11/09/2014

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		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 develop a strong sense of belonging and build positive relationships with staff and other children. As a result, children are settled, secure and motivated to explore and learn through play.
- Children engage in good range of play opportunities because staff provide a purposeful range of activities and resources. This helps children make good progress.
- Children receive healthy snacks and good opportunities to play outside to help promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Staff develop successful partnerships with parents. They exchange information on a daily basis to enable staff to be fully aware of the children's individual needs, which are consistently met.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children's mathematical development sometimes lacks challenge because staff do not consistently use language to support their developing understanding of numbers.

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 the play environments, the children at play and the staff's interaction with them.
- The inspector spoke with staff working in the pre-school and recorded observations of their interactions with children.
- The inspector looked at policies, procedures, progress records and planning documents and discussed these with staff.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the chairperson of the committee.

Inspector

Tracy Bartholomew

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School is run by a voluntary committee and first opened in 1972. It registered with Ofsted in 2001. It operates from premises next to the Meadway School in Tilehurst, Reading. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the needs of families in the surrounding area. It operates Mondays to Fridays from 9am until 12 noon, with a lunch club on Tuesday and Thursday until 1.30pm. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 20 children on roll. The pre-school committee employs five staff including the supervisor and manager. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- introduce more mathematical language and counting during everyday play and planned activities.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy playing and exploring with a good range of activities that help them make secure progress in their learning and development. These include activities to develop their small physical skills and understanding of the world. For example, children enjoy using technology toys and laptops to create sounds, pictures and letter work, which in turn promotes their listening skills. Children's communication and language skills are very well supported through the consistent interaction and support from the staff. They talk to children constantly, discussing what they are doing using clear speech. This helps children to use and hear words correctly. Children's attention skills are well supported as staff engage children with books and stories, which they read with enthusiasm. In addition, good use of open questions during and after the story encourages children to think for themselves and develop their own ideas.

Staff provide a range of activities to build upon children physical skills. For example, children have access to toys and equipment, such as bikes and climbing frames inside and out of the pre-school. This helps them to develop good coordination. Children enjoy exploring textures and developing their creativity as they play with the water and ice. This successfully promotes the children's understanding of the world as they learn how ice is made and why it melts. Children have good opportunities to practice early writing skills because paints, pens and crayons are readily available.

Children have opportunities to discuss colours, patterns and shapes throughout daily

activities. For example, as they exploring with dough and clay they make patterns with their fingers and tools. In addition, staff teach children about weights and measures as they make pizzas. However, staff do not always encourage children to count and use numbers routinely in everyday activities. Despite this, children hear numbers in context when they have one-to-one activities with their key person.

Staff undertake good observations of the children's progress to help them to identify the next steps of each child's learning. This helps them to gain a clear picture of what children are learning and where they may need additional support. Staff have a good understanding of completing the progress check for two-year-old children. They gather information and complete a report, which is shared with the child's parents. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning and benefit from the face-to-face conversations and planned meetings, which helps them to be involved in their child's development. The pre-school has developed strong links with other professionals involved in children's care. This promotes a consistent approach to meeting children's care and learning needs.

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

Children are happy and build good relationships with their friends and staff at the pre-school. Good procedures are in place to settle children and the majority of them arrive with confidence, even on their first day. Children's develop a sense of belonging as the pre-school use their photographs and art work to create a welcoming environment. Staff understand the key-person role well and they work well with their key children's parents. Good information is obtained before children start at the pre-school, which helps staff meet the children's individual needs on a daily basis. Children feel secure and safe with the staff and respond positively to them, giggling as they play games. This shows that the children personal, social and emotional development is securely promoted.

Children behave well. Staff are kind, caring and considerate, which has a positive impact on children's social skills and behaviour. Children are developing good sharing techniques as staff talk to them about the importance of take turns as they play. Children are beginning to develop a strong understanding of healthy lifestyles. Staff use everyday hygiene routines to develop their understanding of why they need to wash their hand before snack and after visiting the toilet. Children enjoy snacks at the pre-school and sit at the table to eat with their friends and staff. This enables staff to supervise children and promote their social skills. Children are independent and often pour their own drinks and collect their fruit from the serving table. Children enjoy daily opportunities to be physically active outside, playing games together and using the large play equipment.

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

The pre-school has gone through a significant amount of change since the last inspection. The committee and staff have changed and roles and responsibilities have been re-organised. Staff have undertaken a significant amount of in-house training and been very

well supported by the committee. This has resulted in staff extending their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They work well as a team and successfully they have significantly improved the pre-school to provide good quality of care and education for the children.

The management team and staff have a good understanding of how to meet and maintain the safeguarding and welfare requirements. They implement detailed safeguarding policy and procedures and all staff understand what to do in the event of a child protection concern. Children play in a safe and secure environment, where all hazards are minimized. Staff undertake regular risk assessments on the premises and equipment, which effectively promotes children's welfare. There are effective procedures in place for recording accidents and the administration of medication to maintain children's safety.

The management team implements a robust recruitment and vetting procedure to ensure that all persons working with children are suitable to do so. New staff undertake an induction programme, so they are aware of the pre-school's policies and procedures. Arrangements to regularly supervise, coach and monitor staff performance and improve their personal effectiveness is good. Appraisals take place annually and supervision meetings are undertaken weekly. This helps to promote staff's ongoing professional development. The management team has a clear improvement plan and has made significant improvements to the range resources and staff's professional development. This shows that the self-evaluation procedures have a positive impact for the outcomes for children.

Parents benefit from the good communication and information available. For example, parents receive ongoing feedback about their children's progress through meetings and regular personalised emails. Parents spoken to at the inspection spoke highly about the pre-school and staff, and value the good quality care and valuable service they provide.

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	EY275967
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	994624
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	20
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	11/09/2014
Telephone number	07561506002

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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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