

Stepping Stones Pre-School



William Barnes Primary School, Bridge Street, STURMINSTER NEWTON, Dorset, DT10 1BZ

Inspection date	25 March 2015
Previous inspection date	25 September 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Children are happy and settled in a welcoming and stimulating environment where they learn through play and exploration. Staff enable them to choose to be inside or outside according to their preferences and learning styles.
- Staff know children very well as individuals. This enables them to plan effectively for their good progress.
- Staff use a clear assessment system successfully to monitor children's learning. This means that they identify and address any gaps in their learning quickly.
- Excellent partnerships with parents, other early years professionals and outside agencies enable staff to meet children's individual needs effectively. Children with specific needs receive very good support. All children are well prepared for starting school.
- Staff make children's safety and welfare a high priority. They have an excellent understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow to help protect children from harm.
- Effective self-evaluation methods include ideas from staff, parents and children. This helps management continue to improve the provision for children and their families.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff miss opportunities to promote children's independence and practical skills in choosing and preparing their food at snack time.
- Some staff occasionally use familiar terms, such as 'doggie' or 'pussycat'. when talking with the children. Therefore, children do not always hear the correct words to copy.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend children's independence by helping them to develop more practical skills at meal times
- develop consistency in modelling language when talking to children so that they always hear the correct words to copy.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's activities inside and outside.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documentation, which included children's progress records and policies.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Brenda Flewitt

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Staff have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements. They plan a broad range of interesting learning experiences that challenge children and help them make good progress. Children develop a good understanding of mathematics. They sing number songs using props, empty and fill containers with water, construct models and sort objects into groups. Overall, staff promote children's language skills well as they name objects, actions and concepts, encouraging children to think and solve problems. Staff use effective strategies to help younger or less confident children with their speech and listening skills. Children are learning to recognise their written name and regularly make meaningful marks as they practise early writing. For example, children spontaneously drew pictures and made reward stickers for adults and one another.

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

Children build good relationships with staff and one another. Staff help them understand their emotions and develop social skills in order to be part of a harmonious group. Children receive regular praise and encouragement, which helps boost their self-esteem and confidence. Staff include children in carrying out risk assessments. This helps them to develop an excellent understanding of identifying hazards and keeping themselves and others safe. Children develop increasing independence in self-care routines and have a good understanding about reducing the risk of spreading germs. Children enjoy developing physical skills and coordination as they follow instructions in specially designed movement sessions. There is a good range of play equipment and resources, which children access easily to extend their own play and learning.

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

The experienced and qualified staff work very well together as a team. Effective communication means that children are safe and well supported in their learning. There are clear recruitment and induction procedures to check staff's suitability. Staff supervision is successful in helping to identify areas for development. Staff attend training and share their knowledge to improve outcomes for children. For example, staff are using various ways to develop children's early reading skills since learning more about phonics. Parents say that staff are very approachable and supportive, sharing ideas for children's learning at home. They report that their children are making good progress with social skills and communication. Strong links with the school enable the older children to develop confidence and important skills for the next stage in their learning. Staff provide activities within the school during the summer term to help prepare children well for their new experience.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY395220
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	830638
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	47
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2009
Telephone number	07778336928

Stepping Stones Pre-School registered in 1993 and at the current premises in 2009. The pre-school operates from William Barnes Primary School in Sturminster Newton, North Dorset. There are strong links with the school. The pre-school is open five days a week during term time only, from 8.45am to 3.15pm, except Tuesdays when they close at 12.15pm. Between March and July, there is a session for children due to start school, which runs from 11.45am to 3.15pm. A team of seven members of staff work with the children. The manager has an early years degree and the others are all qualified at level 3. The pre-school receive funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

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