

Stepping Stones Play and Learn Group



Wilson Marriage Centre, Barrack Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 2LR

Inspection date

27 September 2016

Previous inspection date

4 November 2015

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Requires improvement	3
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is inadequate

- Procedures are not followed to inform Ofsted of members of the committee, or a change of the nominated person. Therefore suitability checks have not been undertaken on committee members as legally required.

It has the following strengths

- Children make excellent progress from their starting points. Staff are highly skilled in both teaching, and meeting the specific complex needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The staff know all children very well and they develop exceptionally strong and positive relationships with them.
- Staff have very high expectations for all children and children are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Staff have very close working relationships with all feeder schools and these help to develop effective transitions into school.
- Parents have exceptionally high praise for the setting and the commitment of the staff team. Parents are welcome to attend at any time and staff accompany parents to community appointments and meetings when parents request this. Parents value how much support they receive.
- Leaders have high expectations of their staff. Leaders are ambitious and focussed on improving outcomes for the children. Rigorous systems are in place to coach, monitor and support staff development and performance.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

Due Date

- implement effective systems to ensure that all members of the committee are suitable to work with children. 30/11/2016

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

Due Date

- ensure correct procedures are followed to notify Ofsted of any changes to the Nominated Person and members of the committee. 04/11/2016

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during indoor and outdoor play and assessed the difference that this made to children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at planning, assessment and evaluation documents, including children's learning journals, to assess how children's progress is monitored and supported.
- The inspector spoke with the manager and staff and looked at relevant paperwork including staff files, safeguarding documents and the settings self-evaluation form.
- The inspector spoke to a small number of parents and took account of their views.

Inspector

Sharon Conaty

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is inadequate

Leadership and management are inadequate because safeguarding arrangements are ineffective. Ofsted has not been correctly notified of changes of the nominated person or of committee members. Consequently the required suitability checks have not been completed for these individuals. This is a legal requirement and was raised at the last inspection. All other aspects of leadership and management are effective. Recruitment procedures are rigorous for all staff members and all relevant documentation is in place. Induction arrangements for new staff are comprehensive as is ongoing support and development. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and know the procedures to follow should they be concerned for a child's welfare. The management team work well together and are focussed on delivering high quality education and care to the children. As such, gaps in children's learning and development are closely monitored and are closing. Leaders work inclusively with staff, parents and a range of professionals to ensure a high quality individual programme of learning and welfare is provided to every child.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Staff are highly skilled and teaching is of a consistently high quality. Children are supported exceptionally well prior to starting at the setting and are already very motivated and eager to join in when they begin. Parents, and a range of other professionals work together to develop strategies to support children's learning focused on their individual needs and interests. For example, during the inspection, children enjoyed participating in a highly-interactive story of the 'three little pigs' which followed one child bringing in their toy pigs from home. The range of resources is exceptional and, if necessary, adapted to ensure children of all abilities can access equipment both indoors and outside. Precise assessment and creative planning means activities are provided based on each child's needs, interest and ability. Staff are highly motivated and creative in developing challenging environments. For example, a construction site has been created in the garden with bricks, ladders and tools as a resource to support mathematics and physical development. Staff run sessions specifically aimed at developing children's ability to take risks safely in their physical play.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Children's safety is compromised because members of the committee have not been vetted by Ofsted. Staff support children's health and welfare to a very high standard. Children are curious and staff are attentive to the things children notice. For example, staff allowed children time and space to enjoy the moment as they watched with wonder the spider's webs in the garden. All areas of the setting, and the many resources, are available to all children through careful and considered planning, and by the use of slopes or ramps. This enhances children's confidence and independence as they explore the whole environment with enthusiasm and increasing skill.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

All children make excellent progress including those whose starting points are below expected levels. Children are supported exceptionally well by a highly skilled and familiar staff team. This means children settle quickly, develop confidence to explore and try new things and learn to socialise with others. This helps all children to develop skills in readiness for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	650140
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	1074045
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	34 - 10
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	44
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Play & Learn Group (Colchester) Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP527783
Date of previous inspection	4 November 2015
Telephone number	01206 860467

Stepping Stones Play and Learn Group was registered in 1991. The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two members of staff with Early Years Professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 9.30am until 3pm. An after school club runs between 3.30pm until 6 pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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.

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