

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY416200

Inspection date

30/04/2012

Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School is run by a committee. It opened in 1992 and operates from Parwich Village Hall, Parwich, Derbyshire. The pre-school is open on Monday from 9am to 3pm and on Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 12pm during term time. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 12 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 11 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age range. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are three members of staff, two hold an appropriate National Vocational Qualification to Level 3 and one holds an appropriate National Vocational Qualification to Level 2. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are well cared for in this friendly and inclusive setting. Staff are fully aware of children's interests and capabilities and have a good knowledge of how to support their learning and development. Overall, planning, observation and assessment systems support children's good progress. A stimulating and challenging environment is created through a range of activities and experiences that cater for the vast majority of the early learning goals. Strong working relationships exist between parents, staff and other settings to ensure children receive a high level of support. The setting has a good capacity to improve because staff reflect on their practice and have a clear understanding of areas they wish to develop.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop further observation and assessment systems, this specifically relates to children's starting points and ensuring clear consistent links to planning
- make use of the outdoor area to give further opportunities for investigations of the natural world, in particular growing and observing plants to find out more about them.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and staff work well together to provide a warm and welcoming service for children and parents. Appropriate vetting and induction systems are in place to ensure all staff who work with children are suitable to do so. Staff's

individual skills and strengths are recognised and utilised well through the delegation of roles and responsibilities. Their knowledge of safeguarding procedures is sound and they have a clear understanding of how to report any child protection concern. This helps to protect children from harm and neglect. Comprehensive and detailed risk assessments are completed for all areas of the premises, activities and outings. Routines and procedures are in place to ensure rooms and equipment are kept clean in order to minimise cross-infection. As a result, children's health is well supported and they play in a safe and secure environment. The premises are spacious and welcoming, play areas are organised to create a homely atmosphere and a range of exciting activities are offered to encourage children's interest and curiosity. A free flow system operates between indoors and outdoors and this freedom to explore has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps with all aspects of their development. Policies and procedures are implemented well to ensure the setting runs smoothly. These are revised and updated by committee members to ensure they reflect current practice.

An inclusive environment is provided for children who attend the setting. Positive relationships are established with parents to ensure each child's needs are identified and met. A key worker system is in place and used effectively to liaise with parents and carers. Information is obtained at the beginning about children's background and interests. Consequently, staff are able to identify and meet a range of diverse needs. Good quality information continues to be shared during the child's time at the setting through discussion, documentation and displays. Effective systems are in place to ensure parents are included in their child's learning and development and their views are reflected in records. Each child has a developmental profile and these are shared with parents, 1-1 sessions are arranged where they can discuss their child's learning in depth and they are welcome to take profiles home to look through at their leisure. Parent's feedback shows how pleased they are with their child's progress and the level of support and quality of information they receive. Positive links have been established with other settings, such as, the local primary school. Effective arrangements are in place to prepare children for transition from pre-school to school. They visit the school one session a week where they become familiar with the environment, teaching staff and pupils. This support is highly beneficial as it helps to reduce any anxieties they might have. The staff team meet regularly to discuss and reflect on their practice and self-evaluation systems and audits are used to help identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development, these are well considered and appropriately targeted. As a result, the setting has a good capacity to improve. All of the actions and recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children enjoy their time at the setting and develop a strong sense of belonging. Staff plan and provide a range of varied and imaginative experiences and as a result children have opportunities to make good progress. Quality observation and analysis is used to determine each individual's level of ability and this is taken into

account when planning, although links are not fully effective and consistent. Children receive a high level of support as the group is small in numbers and familiar, this helps them form strong relationships with staff and each other. Staff interact positively and show enthusiasm and interest in what children say and do, consequently children develop good communication and personal and social skills. They move around safely and with confidence and approach staff with ease to share their ideas.

Children develop firm foundations for literacy and numeracy. They have good opportunities to practise early writing skills, as they freely access a range of mark making materials. These can also be found in role play areas, for example, playing outside with bikes and scooters they carry out 'repairs' with tools and complete a vehicle checklist with clip board and pencils. The environment is rich in print, with posters, labels and name cards. During circle time staff write on a white board as children discuss different topics. This shows children that what they say can be written and read. Children enjoy story time, where favourite stories are read to them; they listen intently and scream with excitement as the story unfolds. A range of activities are used to help children match, count and recognise numbers and number order. They work together well to complete a large floor number puzzle, working out and placing the correct number in the puzzle piece and then positioning the pieces in the correct number order. Children are encouraged to explore real-life problems, for instance, the amount of chairs they need at snack time, by counting the number of children present.

Children can express their creative skills; they explore colour and texture as they glue different materials and paint a face mask. They use their imagination to take the activity into a different direction and paint their hands. They enjoy the feel of the paint as they squeeze it between their fingers and make hand prints on paper. Children enjoy using junk materials, glues and paints to make models, such as, castles, these are then used to play in imaginatively. They begin to handle tools, objects and construction materials safely and with increasing control. Children learn about changes in properties. They make bread and as they do so they observe how the ingredients change when water is added to flour and what happens when heat is added. This helps them to think about cause and effect.

Children begin to understand the importance of good personal hygiene, eating healthy foods and taking exercise. They enjoy fresh fruit at snack time, such as, kiwi, raspberries and oranges. Their independence skills are well promoted as they help to fetch the snack trolley and set the table. Children are encouraged to help themselves to foods and the routine is organised so they are not rushed and can take as much time as they need. They have good opportunities to engage in physical activity, they can choose when to play outside. Here children enjoy energetic play running around, kicking balls or riding bikes. Consequently children grow stronger physically and become more balanced and coordinated. The outdoor environment is used well for further learning, such as, imaginative play, puzzle solving and writing. Children show great excitement when discovering a ladybird outside. Staff help them understand how to handle the creature carefully and they use a magnifying glass to look at the colour and spots in closer detail. These experiences enable children to find out about some aspects of the natural world, however staff have identified that children have less opportunity to encounter and

investigate plants to see how they grow and change over time. Children get along well together and are polite because staff are good role models and manage their behaviour well. Clear boundaries are set and good explanation is given. As a result, children develop a firm understanding of what is right and wrong.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

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|--|---|
| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 2 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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|--|---|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 2 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 2 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 2 |

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met