

# Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

402243

**Inspection date**

14/10/2011

**Inspector**

June Oliver

**Setting address**

Lee Chapel South Community Hall, Kibcaps, The Knares,,  
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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 committee run with the supervisor managing the day-to-day running. It registered in 1964 and operates from a community hall in Kibcaps, Lee Chapel South, Basildon. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is open Monday to Friday during the school term. Sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am, and 12.45pm until 2.45pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for younger children. Most children attend full time.

A maximum of 26 children aged between two and five years may attend at any one time. Currently there are 26 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for early education places for three- and four-year-olds with 20 children currently receiving this funding. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are six members of staff, including the supervisor, who work with the children. Of these, three members of staff hold a relevant level 3 early years qualification, two others have level 2 qualifications and one has almost finished a level 2 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's learning and development are mostly supported well during their time at this pre-school and they make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are happy and settled in their environment and enjoy participating in a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities embracing all areas of learning. The staff team are led by an experienced supervisor who is responsible for day-to-day management of practice. Overall, good use is made of resources and activities provided indoors and outdoors with children having their individual needs met. Good partnerships with parents have been developed as well as satisfactory partnerships with the schools that children transfer on to. Good procedures to monitor and evaluate the setting are in place, including valued input from children, parents, staff and other committee members.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- work together with other practitioners and parents to support transition, both between settings and between settings and schools
- improve support for children learning English as an additional language, for example by using the effective practice examples in the Department for

Children, Schools and Families guidance 'Supporting children learning English as an additional language'.

- improve the use of observational assessment to plan to meet children's individual needs and to provide experiences appropriate to each child's stage of development as they progress towards the early learning goals.

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

Children's well-being is safeguarded as good procedures are in place to ensure children are cared for by staff who have completed all required suitability checks and training. A safeguarding policy is in place and staff have a good understanding of how to follow and support any concerns with regard to the children's welfare. Risk assessments are completed daily to ensure children play in a safe environment. Good staff ratios and vigilant staff ensure children are supervised well. A comprehensive set of written policies and procedures support practice.

The supervisor manages the pre-school with support from the committee members and staff. The staff team are mostly well established in their roles and efficient rotas ensure the smooth running of the setting. All staff take turns to lead the story and circle time. The setting is welcoming and has posters, displays and art work, such as a leaf display and crowns that children have made, to create a sense of belonging. Resources and equipment that are appropriate for the children attending are easily accessible, well presented and support children's learning. Children are able to self-select activities and resources, and can choose inside or outside play. Staff interact well with children ensuring good supervision and support.

Staff, parents, children and committee members contribute to the self-evaluation process and ensure that all ideas are considered. Improvements are identified to raise outcomes for children. For example, all staff have recently attended safeguarding training to ensure they would know what to do if they had a concern about a child. Practice is regularly reviewed to ensure the needs of children and families are being met, for example following comments by a parent about snacks it was decided that parents would provide these, ensuring that children's dietary needs were effectively met. Staff meet regularly to plan and review practice and activities.

Good opportunities are available for parents and carers to contribute to their child's time at the setting. For example, parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning at the initial meeting and with the sharing of learning journals and regular progress reports. This ensures their continuing involvement and support with learning and ensures parents can be kept informed about children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents' verbal references suggest they are very happy with every aspect of care and learning opportunities offered to their children. The pre-school has satisfactory relationships with the schools that children move on to. They have identified this as an area of development as children's transitions may not be effectively supported.

Staff offer sensitive support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Activities are adapted so all children can access them, and visual prompts are used to ensure understanding of routines. This ensures that individual needs are being met. Staff recognise the importance of developing this further.

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

Children enjoy their time at the setting as good relationships have been built between themselves and the staff. Well-planned activities ensure children's individual goals are provided for. Children are able to move around the setting safely because the environment is safe and children know their boundaries. For example, they can select from the selection of good quality resources and toys and know how to use them correctly. This encourages children to become independent learners.

Children's good health is effectively promoted as children choose to play outside regularly. For example, children use bikes and scooters and run around and play football. This means that children develop their physical skills and experience the effect that exercise has on their bodies. Children learn about healthy food as they bring food in from home for their snacks. They are aware of foods that are healthy and those that are not as they talk with staff at snack time. Children understand about effective care routines, such as hand washing before snack and after using the toilet, and readily perform these tasks independently.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because activities are planned around their interests and needs. Regular observations are used to identify next steps and are linked to areas of learning and used for assessment. However, assessments are not fully formalised. This means that the activities planned may not be fully effective to meet children's needs and to consistently cover all areas of learning.

Children develop their language skills as staff ask relevant questions and allow time for responses. For example, children are asked what the wet paint on their hands felt like when participating in the craft activity. Children have good opportunity to practice writing as drawing materials are available. Mathematical skills are promoted as children help to count during the story session and when painting their hands. Children learn about information and communication technology as electronic toys, a camera, typewriter, and compact disc player are available for their use. This ensures they also develop good skills for the future.

Children behave well in the setting because of the clear and consistent boundaries. This ensures children feel settled and confident to explore the setting. Children learn about their own and others' cultures and beliefs as books and puzzles showing positive images and diversity, and other resources, such as dressing-up clothes and pretend play items, are used. Festivals and birthdays are celebrated, with parents invited in to talk about their culture and to help celebrate their special days.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

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