

# Stepping Stones Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	254293
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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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## Description of the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-school opened in its present premises in 1996. It operates from a demountable classroom within the grounds of Aldborough Primary School in the village of Alby, Norfolk. The group is open each weekday from 09.15 until 15.30 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 36 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 27 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and surrounding area. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language although currently there are none on roll.

The pre-school employs six childcare staff. Five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications the sixth is currently training for NVQ Level 3 in Child Care. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Overall, the quality of the provision is judged to be satisfactory. The manager, leaders and staff are well trained to meet the needs and welfare of the children in their care. Children benefit from a warm and relaxed environment, which is organised to promote their choice. Parents are made to feel welcome in the setting and they are encouraged to contribute and be involved to ensure individual care needs are met. The management has a very clear vision of how to develop the setting and a realistic view of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. A firm commitment to developing the service, which is shared by the manager, leaders and staff, means the setting is well placed to continue to improve.

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

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

- ensure a single central record is kept of all records of staff suitability
- ensure more opportunities are planned to allow children to develop their independence and self-help skills
- analyse observations more consistently to help plan the next steps in each child's development across all the areas of learning
- develop further the outside learning environment to incorporate all areas of learning.

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

The manager, leaders and staff are well qualified and dedicated to their role, and effective communication of their enthusiasm, ideas and priorities for the setting ensures everyone is clear of the way forward. The recommendations from the last inspection have been implemented although the provision of new toys and equipment has been difficult to fund and these are at present only adequate to support children's learning. There are high expectations for when the pre-school moves into the new school building next year for further funding. Safeguarding is satisfactory and policies and procedures are in line with requirements and are reviewed regularly. Effective systems are in place to ensure that all staff are suitably qualified and appropriately vetted, although at present this documentation is not confined to a single central record but kept in different files. Risk assessments are undertaken throughout the day especially when using the outside play equipment which could get slippery in damp/wet weather. The pre-school senior staff are constantly re-evaluating practices to guarantee the best practice they possibly can for the children in their care however, formal self-evaluation is in its infancy. Carefully thought out provision for training programmes ensures the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the setting are addressed therefore providing capacity for continuous improvement. Three staff currently hold paediatric first-aid certificates and two are about to train. The management are keen for all staff to hold this qualification to ensure the welfare needs of the children are met at all times

Parents are greeted warmly and encouraged to talk to an adult before leaving at the beginning and end of the session, and this positive approach to both children and adults ensures children are happy and settled. Key workers know their children well; they liaise with parents and outside health and other organisations when necessary. They keep photographic observations, assessments and achievements in 'Learning Story' folders, which are annotated. However, these could be further improved to show 'next steps' to enhance children's learning and development especially if these next steps are fully reflected in the planning. The 'Learning Story' books go home to parents periodically, which helps to promote a good partnership. Newsletters and notices are currently used to help keep parents informed, and the use of e-mail is also being investigated. Workshops take place for parents successfully so that they understand more fully how to support their child. Prior to a child starting at the setting parents are offered an induction session to help them understand how the activities offered relate to the early years foundation stage framework and child development. Two key workers are allocated to each child as some staff work part-time. This ensures parents and children are familiar with someone who knows their child well at all times. Many current parents and also ex-parents are on the committee showing real commitment to the setting. Opportunities are arranged for older children from the school, known as 'partners', to visit the setting during the school break-time to play and develop social skills with the young ones. Appropriate provision has in the past been made for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. Although at present there are no children with such needs in the setting, training has taken place for staff to keep them

informed of current practice. Stories are used well to develop the children's understanding of equality and diversity and children have a good understanding of right and wrong.

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

Children are making satisfactory progress in their learning and development as they are supported and encouraged by staff. The pre-school is effectively resourced with many items easily accessible to the children. A small selection of toys and activities are left out and children, showing their growing confidence and independence, select the vast majority for themselves. Outside, the secure learning environment has a strong climbing frame and slide, tyres and other apparatus to develop gross motor skills and problem solving. However, some areas of learning are underdeveloped or 'on hold' at the moment. For example, areas for growing and planting and for large and small mark-making equipment are currently missing. The children are aware of some of the dangers within the setting and were quick to point out that one had to be careful when going outside because the step was high. Staff reinforce safe ways to behave with prompts and sound explanations as to why this is important.

Children enjoy their time in the setting and play happily together and with the adults around them, who provide additional learning opportunities with good questioning skills and by modelling good listening skills. Behaviour is excellent; children are encouraged to share and be kind to each other showing good dispositions and attitudes. For example, a child who had slipped and slightly grazed his back was spontaneously given a 'get well note' from another child.

Children wash their hands before eating and are also reminded to do so after visiting the toilet. Although some children were keen to help lay the table for snacks and lunch, opportunities were missed to further develop self-help skills by pouring their own drink from small jugs and stacking their dirty plates and beakers themselves after eating. Healthy snacks are provided and children are effectively encouraged to have a balanced healthy diet. Drinking water is available at all times both inside and outside.

Well-known nursery rhymes and songs are enjoyed, encouraging the development and understanding of the English language. The vast majority of children enjoy books and quickly offer a favourite to an adult for reading. Stories are also chosen to encourage empathy and understanding, for developing an understanding of different backgrounds and for discrimination and fairness. Puppets too are a popular way in which the children show they are developing both their speech, their creativity and their social skills by sharing with their peers. Opportunities are provided for cooking, painting and other mark-making activities in the indoor classroom. Planning shows that over the week all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework are covered and daily planning shows focus areas for development but it is unclear where the needs of individual children are incorporated into the planning. However, children make sound progress in this

warm, secure setting which enables them to develop the necessary skills to readily embark on the next stage of their education.

## 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>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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