

# Stepping Stone Pre-school

The Sporting Pavillion, Knebworth Recreation Ground, Off Watton Road, Knebworth, SG3 6AH

## Inspection date

Previous inspection date

25/10/2012

Not Applicable

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This inspection:

1

### Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	1

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is outstanding

- There are extremely rich, varied and imaginative experiences for children delivered by enthusiastic practitioners, who have expert knowledge of the areas of learning, and a clear understanding of how children learn through play.
- The excellent educational programmes have depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning. Assessment is precise, sharply focused and includes all those involved in the child's learning and development.
- There are highly stimulating environments with child-accessible resources that promote effective learning and challenge for all children both in and outside. Children's welfare is top priority and their care needs are prioritised and supported exceptionally well.
- Extremely effective relationships between staff, management committee, parents and others means that the setting runs very smoothly, all parties are fully involved and children benefit exceedingly well.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main play areas inside and outside and at the local park. The inspector also had an opportunity to talk with children.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager, key persons working with the children and the chairperson of the management committee.  
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation,
- evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting and a range of other relevant documentation.
- The inspector also took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and from letters sent recently to the pre-school from parents.

## Inspector

Lynn Clements

## Full Report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-school was re-registered in 2012 but has been established since 1992. The setting is registered to provide care to children on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It operates from the community hall and public areas of the Knebworth Sports Pavilion, Knebworth, Hertfordshire. The setting is

managed by a parent committee. The setting serves the local area and is accessible to all children. The setting employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, four are qualified to level 3 and two at level 5.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday 8.30am until 3.30pm during school term times. The pre-school offer holiday clubs at Christmas, Easter and during the summer. In partnership with the local children's centre and primary school the pre-school staff run a Saturday dad's group free of charge. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 54 children attending who are within the early years age group. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. During this inspection 19 children attended the morning session and 17 children attended the afternoon pre-school session.

### **What the setting needs to do to improve further**

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

- develop further the very good opportunities for children who speak English as an additional language to secure strong foundations in their home language in order to then support their development of English; for example enabling them to use their home language more frequently.

### **Inspection judgements**

#### **How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

Assessment at all ages is precise, sharply focussed and includes all those involved in the child's learning. It is regularly monitored by the key person and overseen by managers. Outcomes of assessment for learning are used to secure timely interventions and target support based on a comprehensive knowledge of the child and their family. Staff are enthusiastic and dedicated to providing exciting and innovative learning opportunities for the different ages of children attending the pre-school. Planning is tailored to meet the children's individual learning needs and styles. Children are extremely well motivated and very eager to join in. They consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. For example, they use their senses to explore the world around them, showing high levels of fascination and finding ways to solve problems. All children make swift improvement in their learning based on their initial starting points, with any gaps closing promptly. This is because of the extremely clear focus on helping them to acquire communication and language skills, and on supporting their physical, personal social and emotional development.

Staff have an exceptional knowledge of each child's backgrounds and needs. Excellent partnership working takes place to ensure every child receives high levels of support at an early stage. This means that those children with additional needs are fully included in the pre-school. Where appropriate, resources or funding are sought along with support from other professionals. This early intervention enables children and their family's access to tailored guidance in the best interests of the child. Those children who speak English as an additional language are wholly included. There are very good systems to support children for whom English is an additional language. However, there is still scope to develop this support further, for instance enabling them to use their home language more frequently. Also, when these children first join the pre-school, they do not have access to tape recorders or resources which enable them to hear familiar phrases and words of comfort in their mother tongue.

Staff implement a range of highly successful strategies which engage all parents and carers in their children's learning in the setting and at home. For example, parents and carers participate in parent week when they enjoy working in the setting and watching learning in action. They are fully involved in their children's learning journeys, adding contributions about learning and achievements which happens at home. They are also wholly included in assessments. For instance, the progress check at age two include the key person and parents or carers working together to plot progress. Parents and carers also access the pre-school library, accessing initial reading books to support their children in 'getting ready for school', and in helping them to develop a love of reading. This all helps to secure firm foundations for later learning.

Children access a wealth of educational learning opportunities. Staff pay attention to making sure that resources and the environments are aesthetically pleasing and exciting and challenging. This engages the children's interest and participation and their very positive dispositions and attitudes to learning are plainly demonstrated. Children enjoy communicating with each other and adults. They demonstrate competence in speaking and listening as they share their ideas and ask open questions. They are keen to join in with group activities and also play extremely well independently, concentrating for extended periods of time, for example, to solve puzzles or during role and small world play. Children display their growing physical skills as they balance building block or create using three dimensional click together bricks. Older children recognise their name in print and enjoy exploring phonics. For example during a group activity children listen intently for the 'p' sound in names and words. Staff make the most of all learning opportunities, for example, during the phonics game, staff also encourage children's simple addition as they sort and count up how many words they have found with the 'p' sound in them. Children move freely making their own decisions about the activities they wish to explore. This helps them build confidence and independence. They enjoy singing spontaneously or joining in with other children singing simple songs from memory and having immense fun dancing along and matching actions to the songs or rhyme.

The rich, varied and imaginative experiences for children are delivered by practitioners who have very high expectations of themselves and the children. They have expert knowledge of the areas of learning, and a clear understanding of how children learn and develop best.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children**

All children show that they are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They demonstrate, through discussion and action, an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines. They show an excellent understanding of healthy eating and make healthy choices at snack and meal times. Children have innovative opportunities to engage in a wide range of physical activities, both indoors and out and gain a secure understanding about the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and high levels of self-control. Children from different ethnic backgrounds play and learn in harmony together. Attachments between children and staff are warm and caring. Children seek out staff to share in their achievements and join in their games.

Furniture, equipment and resources are of high quality and suitable for the ages of children to support their learning and development. Outcomes are clearly attributed to excellent use of resources, including highly effective deployment of staff. Children clearly benefit and thrive as a result of the setting they are in. The provider is taking well-considered steps to ensure resources and the environment are fully sustainable.

The pre-school effectively and actively promotes equality and diversity and tackles unfair discrimination. Adults are highly effective in ensuring that all children are well integrated. Partnerships with other early years settings the children attend are extremely good. Those with the feeder primary are excellent in making sure that the children enjoy a seamless transition into main stream school. Teachers from the primary visit the children in their pre-school and the children then enjoy making trips to see their new school with their key person. Community cohesion overall is exemplary. The pre-school are proactive in engaging in community life. They work closely with the local children's centre. They provide weekend groups for dads, entertain families, grandparents and local elderly residents with Christmas performances and take part in local sponsored event to raise money for others.

Children safely use a range of tools and equipment within the setting and know how to handle these in order to keep safe. Their understanding of safety issues and how they demonstrate this is exceptional. Children are extremely confident and competent in communicating their thoughts and show a mature response to taking responsibility about their own and others' safety.

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

Safeguarding children is given top priority in this setting. The setting's collaborative working with other key agencies is exemplary. Children are safeguarded by extensive recruitment and vetting procedures, including the successful induction of new staff. Clear procedures are in place which are fully understood by all members of staff and the management committee. Robust risk assessments and policies and procedures are in place

to support the safe, secure and smooth running of the setting. Confidentiality is respected at all times and the setting adheres to data protection requirements. The management committee and all members of staff clearly understand about their responsibility with regard to meeting and implementing the learning and development, safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Clear monitoring systems are in place. These include all areas of the pre-school from checking how often accidents or incidents occur and establishing triggers to ongoing appraisals and the continuing professional development of staff. Excellent tracker systems are in place with regard to monitoring the progress children make within the Early Years Foundation Stage. This attention to detail makes sure that the provision and the children continue to make exceptionally good progress.

Partnership with parents is excellent. There are a range of purposeful channels for communication. The highly effective partnerships between providers, parents and other agencies ensure individual children's needs are met and their protection assured. Parents and carers are very well-informed about all aspects of their own children's achievement, well-being and development. The setting provides tailored guidance and information about precise ways parents and carers can support their children's learning across different areas. The highly inclusive systems of communication ensure that there are consistent and productive partnerships with parents and carers, resulting in strong levels of engagement with the settings work.

Parents report that they find staff exceptionally welcoming and easy to talk to. They enjoy the organised social events and the wide range of opportunities their children enjoy. They feel safe and confident when leaving their children in the pre-school. They enjoy being involved in their children's learning and development. Parents say they were very impressed recently at how they were kept so well-informed about the move of the pre-school to new premises. Including detailed information packs from staff at the pre-school put through their doors. Staff at the pre-school work closely with staff from other settings locally. This includes local childminders who take children to the pre-school. This partnership working ensures excellent continuity of care for those children who move between different early years settings.

Children and their parents or carers are fully involved in the pre-schools self-evaluation by contributing their views and suggestions about the provision, which they do with confidence. These are actively taken on board by the setting and developed to enhance the provision and improve outcomes for children. Leaders and managers communicate ambition and drive and secure improvement well. Self-evaluation at all levels reflects rigorous monitoring and searching analysis. They are confident about what the setting needs to do to improve further and have been successful in making and sustaining improvement.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Met**

## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

## Inspection

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.

## Setting details

**Unique reference number**

EY452006

**Local authority**

Hertfordshire

<b>Inspection number</b>	887634
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	54
<b>Name of provider</b>	The Committee of Stepping Stone Pre-School
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 813070

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### **Type of provision**

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.



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