

Stepping Stones Pre-School

C/O Epworth Primary School, Birchfield Road, Epworth, Doncaster, DN9 1DL

Inspection date

24/01/2013

Previous inspection date

28/06/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The pre-school demonstrates a strong commitment towards partnership working. This includes working with parents and extended family members, teaching colleagues and the nearby children's centre.
- Children are involved in a good variety of stimulating learning experiences. Staff regularly observe the children to find out what interests and motivates them to help them make good progress. Children benefit because staff provide outdoor activities to extend and enhance the learning that takes place inside.
- Children are well supported to settle at the pre-school quickly. Staff are flexible to meet the individual needs of children, who show signs of needing extra support. Friendly, warm and trusting relationships between children and staff help children feel safe and secure.
- Children are encouraged to develop in confidence and independence. They are well supported to learn and practise a varied range of skills that will help them be well prepared for school.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is room to extend the variety of books and other reading materials available to children, so that their enjoyment of the book corner is enhanced.
- Staff sometimes overlook opportunities to organise toys and resources in a way that fully encourages children to make their own decisions and choices.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector looked at a sample of children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners working at the setting, the provider's self-evaluation form and a range of other written records.
- The inspector observed children's play and learning activities inside and outdoors.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager of a group of children involved in a listening game led by an adult.
- The inspector spoke to children and joined a small group for lunch. The inspector took into account the views of parents, staff and the Chairperson of the committee.

Inspector

Jackie Phillips

Full Report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School first opened in 1985 but registered again on the Early Years Register in 2010 as a result of a change of premises. The setting is supported by a voluntary management committee. It operates from one room in Epworth Primary School, Epworth, North Lincolnshire. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It is adjacent to South Axholme children's centre. There is an enclosed area

available for outdoor play.

There are currently 51 children on roll attending the pre-school, who are all in the early years age group, ranging from two- to four-years-old. The pre-school supports children, who speak English as an additional language and those with special needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It is open each weekday during school time with the exception of Tuesday morning. Most sessions are from 9am to 11.30am and 12noon to 3pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. In the afternoon sessions, children stay for a packed lunch provided by their parents.

There are six permanent staff working with the children. All staff have achieved early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds Early Years Professional Status. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and has achieved their Steps to Quality accreditation at levels 1 and 2. The provision is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend opportunities for children to explore a wider range of fact and fiction books, as well as other materials that provide information and instruction, so that their enjoyment of the book corner is enhanced
- reflect on and extend the ways in which children can be more involved in making decisions about what toys and resources they use, particularly those resources that support children's mathematical development.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children. As a result, children make good progress in their learning because they are effectively involved in an interesting and challenging range of activities. This includes children, who use English as an additional language and those, who need extra support to develop their communication and language skills. The inside and outdoor learning environments are safe and welcoming. They are generally well organised, although, there is room to improve children's access to some resources, so that they can

make their own choices and decisions more easily.

Children enjoy using the book area to look at picture books and there are some containing factual information to help them explore their interests. However, there is room to extend this range to include other materials, which provide information and instruction, so that children benefit from a greater variety of written material and their desire to use the book area is enhanced. Children enjoy story times, either as a group or individually with a staff member. Staff teach children through a good balance of planned and spontaneous activities that are adult-led or initiated by children. This helps children learn in different ways. For example, children enthusiastically get involved in a picture and sound recognition game on the floor. The staff member operates the compact disc player, so that children can hear and identify different sounds and match them with corresponding objects on their picture cards. Most children accurately guess the sounds they hear; others are sensitively encouraged by the adult, who provides good verbal clues. Children help each other and are praised for 'working as a team'. This helps children understand about turn taking and co-operating with others and develops important skills for future learning, such as concentrating and listening carefully.

Children are encouraged to be active in their learning. For instance, they learn through their senses as they experience playing with natural materials, such as sand and water. Staff enhance this exploratory play by adding other textures, for example, different cereals, a mixture of cornflower and water and play dough. Some young children play with sustained interest while pouring a mixture of sand and rice from one receptacle to another. This shows that they are using their ideas, making links and doing things 'their way'. Outdoors, children investigate snow and ice on the ground. They use tools, such as, spades, rakes and buckets, to transport the ice to find out if it will slide down the pipe, they carefully place at one end of stackable crates. This shows initiative and an enthusiasm to discover and explore. The outdoor area is shared with children from the school's Early Years Foundation Stage class. Children can also wave or speak to older siblings and friends in the adjacent play area. This supports children to feel more comfortable and less vulnerable when they enter the school environment, and enabling them to be able to deal with outdoor situations in the busy playground.

Children are very well supported to develop the skills that they will need when they transfer to school. For example, they are helped to recognise their name, put on coats and shoes, use the bathroom independently and manage the content of their lunch boxes. They develop responsibility by learning to tidy away after themselves, find out where toys and resources belong, put rubbish in the bin and wash their hands before eating. This helps children be self-sufficient when they begin school. Staff work conscientiously alongside children as they play. They skilfully question children to develop language and vocabulary skills and introduce counting and number through everyday activities, songs and action rhymes. There is a varied selection of resources to support children's mathematical understanding, although, these are not always put out in a way that allows children to actively make their own choices about what they want or need to use, such as puzzles or things to help them count. This restricts their free access to resources that will help them gain greater confidence in their mathematical skills.

Settling-in sessions are arranged for children before they start at the pre-school, to help

them adjust quickly to their new surroundings. Parents are invited to share what they know about their child; helping staff form relationships with children speedily and effectively. Staff involve parents in children's learning by asking for details about their interests, new skills and family life experiences. Parents contribute to the shared learning experience by getting involved in activities at home. For example, they are focussing on helping to develop their children's speech and listening skills and on helping their learning about letters and numbers.

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

Each child is provided with access to a special adult known as their key person. This helps children form close attachments to an individual staff member promoting their welfare and well-being. However, children respond very well to all adults that make up the competent, well-established team. Children approach staff easily and warm and trusting relationships are clearly evident. Parents involved during the inspection, speak about staff being very approachable and friendly. They say that they feel well informed and are kept regularly updated. Parents are able to discuss their child's specific needs with staff and feel comfortable to raise any worries about the provision. For example, recently highlighting concerns about the low height of a boundary fence, which the staff and committee quickly resolved. This demonstrates effective partnership working to benefit children's safety. The staff team are committed to supporting children and parents to overcome any difficulties affecting their well-being. For instance, children, who are anxious at separating from parents. Ideas are discussed and implemented to overcome any barriers, resulting in settled children and happy parents and, on occasions, grandparents.

Children play and learn in a safe and comfortable environment. Good attention is given to ensure that it is hazard free. Daily visual checks are carried out indoors and outside to help children keep safe. Regular head counts take place to check numbers of children and doors and gates are conscientiously made secure to protect them. The evacuation procedure is practised in conjunction with the school, so that all children know what to do in an emergency. The outdoor play area is frequently used to help children learn and develop a range of skills to promote their health and well-being. For example, they benefit from regular access to fresh air and physical exercise. They plant and harvest vegetables and herbs and then taste their produce, helping them learn about the food chain. Snacks, include healthy options and at lunch time, children and staff eat together promoting social skills and lively conversation.

Children behave very well and show kindness, such as helping each other during play or sharing pictures, which they have drawn at home. They learn about the wider community through visits to places of interest and activities based on the celebration of different festivals. For example, they learn about Chinese New Year, Diwali, Australia day and Halloween. They use puppets that show the characteristics of different cultures and see pictures that relate to disability. There are simple words displayed around the setting in different languages. This means that children are taught in meaningful ways about the diverse society in which they live. The good attention given to helping children learn a range of skills, develop in confidence and independence and be increasingly aware of the

wider society, helps them be prepared for change, including the move to other settings or school.

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

Staff receive training in paediatric first aid and safeguarding, so know how to protect children and deal with accidents and injuries. Records of incidents and accidents are regularly analysed to help staff monitor and keep the environment safe. Staff know the appropriate action to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare or well-being, and all adults are checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. There is a varied range of clear policies and procedures established that relate to the operation and management of the pre-school. These are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain effective and meet current requirements. The manager regularly refers to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that she is meeting all legal safeguarding and welfare requirements. She is competently supported by the Chairperson of the pre-schools voluntary committee, enabling her to utilise her skills and experience to monitor the quality of the provision. Staff receive good support to develop their professional practice through training, supervisions, appraisals and weekly meetings. This enables them to evaluate their performance, discuss areas for improvement and maintain high standards of care and education for children.

Partnership working is given high priority. Parents are kept updated and informed in a variety of ways. This includes face to face conversations, access to written records, invitation to meetings, termly reports of their child's progress and displayed notices. A link book is used to transfer information between home and pre-school and other settings that children attend. Children's personal records of their progress and development can be taken home to share with other family members. This ensures that everyone is kept well informed. Good links are made with the adjacent children's centre and with teachers within the school. This effective partnership working supports families to ensure children's needs are met and that they achieve and make good progress.

Staff are confident in the delivery of the educational programme. They clearly understand how children learn through play and exposure to a variety of different learning experiences and challenging activities. They regularly observe children to assess their progress, interests and identify future learning needs. These are then used to help to shape and guide the planning of children's activities. Staff, parents and children regularly contribute their ideas towards improvement. The pre-school team have a clear vision for the future. They have high aspirations, which demonstrates commitment towards making the pre-school an exceptional setting for children.

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	EY413970
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	851470
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5

Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	51
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	28/06/2011
Telephone number	07708 580816

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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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