

Stepping Stones Pre School

Ascension Church Hall, Claude Avenue, Oldfield Park, Bath, BA2 1AG

Inspection date

05/06/2014

Previous inspection date

05/07/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

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

- Children have access to a good range of resources and activities which engage their interest and support their learning.
- Positive partnerships with parents and other professionals are effectively established, to ensure that children's individual needs are quickly identified and met successfully.
- Children are happy, settled and grow in confidence as they safely explore their environment.
- Teaching is good. Staff plan a range of activities which contribute to children's good progress.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children have fewer opportunities to use everyday routines to practice simple calculations to help them develop further their interests and understanding of this mathematical concept.
- On some occasions small-group times are not organised so that children can concentrate without distraction.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities both in the main hall and the outside area.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector and manager jointly observed snack time.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation, including planning, assessment and staff suitability checks.

Inspector

Michelle Tuck

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School was registered in 1994. It is a committee run group, based in a church hall in the Oldfield Park residential area of Bath. Children have access to the main hall, a story room and a separate enclosed garden for outdoor play. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory part and voluntary part of the Childcare Register. There are currently 25 children on roll. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. It is open pre-school is open Mondays to Friday, term time only, from 9.30am until 12.30pm, with an extended session on Mondays until 2.30pm, and Thursdays until 1.30pm. The pre-school cares for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs four staff, two of which have Early Years Professional Status, one who is qualified to level 3 and another to level 2.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide more opportunities for children to use everyday routines to use the language involved in addition and subtraction
- review the organisation of small-group times so that children are always able to concentrate without distraction.

Inspection judgements

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

The dedicated staff team have a good understanding of how children learn and develop. They provide a broad range of activities and experiences that are based on children's interests and engage them effectively to make good progress in their learning. Staff observe the children as they play, using this information effectively to identify any gaps in children's learning and plan for individual next steps. They demonstrate that they value parents' contributions, as parents contribute to initial assessments and staff provide them with ideas to support children's learning at home.

Children happily engage in their chosen activities. Staff promote children's learning well and effectively use a range of good teaching skills to help them make progress. For example, outside the staff place a large sheet under different types of trees before they shake them to see what falls off. Children excitedly engage in conversation about the different bugs, sticks and leaves that fall from the tree. Staff ask open questions to extend

children's thinking and promote their language development, as the children talk about the different types of fruit that grow on trees, such as plums and blueberries. This effectively supports children's understanding of the world and encourages their inquisitiveness and curiosity. Children thoroughly enjoy small-group time where they listen to stories, sing songs and develop new skills. However, occasionally the organisation of these sessions in close proximity to one another means that children sometimes do not fully focus.

Children have different opportunities to count and use number. Staff encourage them to estimate how many spoonfuls of oats it will take to fill a small bowl. They consider if it will take more or less oats to fill a bigger bowl, which supports their understanding of volume and capacity. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting, such as when they count the number of children present at registration. Children thoroughly enjoy making potions from soil and water outside. They use their imaginations well as they mix water with oats, and talk to one another about the pies and crumbles they make. They engage in role-play scenarios, as they have a tea party for the bears and soft toy animals. Staff support children and encourage them to freely explore in their play and make choices from the good balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Children's independence and confidence is well developed, which successfully supports them to acquire the skills they will need as they move onto school or the next stage of their learning.

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

Children are very happy and settled at the pre-school. Staff interact warmly with the children to build a secure relationship which supports their physical and emotional well-being. There is an effective key person system. The key person spends time getting to know the family, finding out about children's interests and preferences. As a result children settle quickly, children form strong attachments and staff meet their needs well. Children relish the opportunity to be the special helper for the day, as they announce to the children how long they have before tidy up time and help to prepare the fruit for snack. This effectively boosts children's confidence and self-esteem.

Staff act as good role models to the children. They are calm and gentle in their approach; they praise the children for their achievements and for being kind to one another. They give gentle reminders to the children about behaviour expectations and children learn to share and take turns well. Consequently, children's behaviour is good. Staff teach the children about how to keep themselves safe through discussion. For example, children are reminded not to run inside. Staff deploy themselves well so that children are appropriately supervised and they learn how to evacuate the building quickly and safely by practising the fire drill. There are a good range of resources, many of which the children can choose from freely to further support their independence.

Children learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They benefit from plenty of exercise and fresh air, through daily active sessions in the outside environment. Children's physical development is well promoted as they use ride on toys and develop their balancing and climbing skills, using the equipment at the local park. Staff support children

to learn about a healthy diet. They are encouraged to make healthy choices at snack time, and to eat their savoury items from their lunchboxes first. This supports children's freedom of choice and their independence.

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

The pre-school staff team have a good understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager of the pre-school has completed relevant safeguarding training to help her in her designated role. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of child protection issues and are secure in the safeguarding procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child's welfare. Staff remain vigilant at all times and supervise children appropriately. Thorough risk assessments are completed and daily visual checks are carried out to further promote children's safety. There are robust recruitment procedures in place, to ensure that only people that are suitable to do so work with children. There are thorough induction processes, supervisions and annual appraisals which help to ensure continued staff suitability. The staff team have recently introduced peer-on-peer observations to help them learn from one another, share good practice and improve on teaching skills.

The pre-school staff team have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are effective procedures in place for the planning and assessing of activities and experiences. This ensures that any gaps in children's learning are quickly identified and action taken to close these. The educational programme is monitored well to ensure that all areas of learning are adequately covered. Children's interests are used effectively as a focus to meet individual needs in all areas. The staff demonstrate they have a good understanding of how children learn and the quality of teaching is good.

Positive partnerships with parents and other professionals involved with the children's care and learning effectively support children's good progress and development. Parents are extremely happy with the pre-school provision. They describe the staff as 'amazing', and attribute their children's improvement in speech to attending the pre-school. There are effective systems in place to share information with other early year's settings when children's care and education is shared. This promotes consistency.

There are effective systems in place for self-evaluation and reflection. The pre-school staff have completed 'quest' which is the Local Authority's self-evaluation system. They have just started an accredited quality improvement scheme. As a result of reflection the staff team have changed the routine of the day. For example, they have an active play session at the beginning of the morning, which they find helps children's learning as they begin the day with physical activity. They regulate the temperature of the boiler so that the children can access the bathroom area and be more independent in their self-care skills. They have introduced an area of self-selection for each area of learning; this promotes children's independence in choice and play. This demonstrates that the pre-school has a

good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

The requirements for the voluntary 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. 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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	133083
Local authority	Bath & NE Somerset
Inspection number	813792
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	25
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Pre-school (Bath) Committee
Date of previous inspection	05/07/2011
Telephone number	07811 973568

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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