

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Aldborough CP School, Alby Hill, Alby, Norwich, Norfolk, NR11 7PH

Inspection date	08/07/2014
Previous inspection date	27/11/2009

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

- Teaching is effective, captures children's interest and makes good use of the child-centred environment and stimulating resources. Staff skilfully promote and guide all children's play and activities, to move them to their next learning goal. Consequently, children make good progress in their learning and development.
- Children are very confident and self-assured as they form secure attachments with friendly staff. They learn to be independent, sociable and communicate well in readiness for future learning.
- Management and staff understand their roles and responsibilities to ensure that children are safeguarded and are committed to continually developing the provision for the benefit of the children.
- Parental involvement in children's learning is highly valued and well promoted. Partnerships with other professionals and the school are good. This means that there is a coordinated approach to meeting individual learning and care needs.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not encourage the use of mathematical language sufficiently during their interactions with the children to help them develop more their understanding of space, shape and measurement.
- There is scope to provide further opportunities for children to explore technology during their everyday experiences.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the playroom, the school hall and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager of the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke with the manager of the provision, committee members, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a selection of children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff working with children and viewed the provider's improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and information included in the setting's own parent survey.

Inspector

Lindsey Cullum

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School is situated within the grounds of Aldborough Primary School in the village of Alby, Norfolk. The premises are accessible to all children and there is enclosed space, separate to the school facilities, for outdoor play. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9.15am until 3.30pm during term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 41 children on roll in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above and two hold early years qualifications at 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 further opportunities for children to talk about how heavy objects are, their position or size, in order to develop further their understanding of shape, space and measure, for example, by encouraging the use of more mathematical language in their play and learning
- provide more frequent opportunities for children to explore technology during their everyday play and learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress in the pre-school as staff have a thorough understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching is good and this means that children effectively develop the skills they need in readiness for starting school. There are good arrangements in place to assess and monitor each child's achievements to ensure that they progress well. This helps to highlight any gaps in the development of individuals or groups of children. Each child has a well-presented learning story book with comments about their achievements. This is illustrated with photographs demonstrating that the children take part in a wide range of interesting and imaginative activities that build on their early learning skills. Staff use information gathered through their observations of the children during play, to successfully plan for children's next steps in learning, ensuring they set out a wide variety of interesting and challenging activities each day, that engage children so they actively learn through their play. Focused adult-led activities are designed to build on the evaluation of children's previous interests and activities. For example, children's interest in pirates leads to the

adapting of part of the outdoor area into a pirate ship and planned creative activities, such as, making flags and treasure maps add to the imaginative play outdoors. Consequently, children learn to use their imagination and creativity well to enhance their play. Furthermore, staff support children very well to think critically and develop their own ideas. They continually ask children open-ended questions, which support children to generate new ideas and help them to make choices and decisions about how to approach tasks. For example, children work together to competently build a roofed house using metal supports, planks and wooden boxes. As a result, children are inventive, confident in their own abilities and learn to work cooperatively with their friends.

Partnerships with parents are a key strength of the pre-school and, as a result, parents comment that they feel well informed, supported and involved in their children's learning. They regularly view and contribute to children's assessment records and individual plans for learning. Furthermore, they are invited to meet with the key person regularly to share and discuss their children's progress. This coordinated approach means that staff plan interesting and worthwhile activities that promote children's progress and positive development and that parents can actively support children learning at home. The completion of regular summative assessments, effectively highlight any gaps in children's learning and enable the key person to plan early intervention through support from other professionals, in consultation with parents. This effective way of working together means that, when necessary, children's learning and development is actively supported through targeted strategies, ensuring that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting point.

Children learn well in the enabling and well-resourced playroom and in the stimulating outdoor areas. They choose when they would like to play outdoors, with some children choosing to spend most of their day outside. This is of particular benefit to those children who learn best outdoors. Children play imaginatively in the mud kitchen, making cakes and pies by carefully pouring water from differing sized containers into buckets of soil and stirring these with kitchen utensils. They pretend to cook their creations, mimicking adults cooking meals. Indoors, children use chocolate scented and coloured play dough to make pretend ice-creams, moulding with their hands and using small tools with increasing dexterity. They pretend that the small beans are chocolate chips or sweets on the top of their ice-creams and use descriptive language well while showing their completed creations to the staff. Role play is a daily feature of the pre-school provision and children are always offered writing materials to support their literacy development in these areas. For example, children have a blackboard or paper to record the menu in the ice cream shop. Staff further encourage children's early literacy skills by helping them to recognise their name as part of the self-registration system when they arrive, or the label on their individual tray. Older children learn phonics and letters during group times. Staff have a toy robot which they use to introduce children to the idea of segmenting simple words into sounds and some of the older children preparing for the move to school are able to break down words into phonic sounds independently. Furthermore, older children are able to sound out their names and make a very good attempt at writing them on their artwork. Children enjoy a daily story time, when they listen avidly as the staff read and they join in with some words during familiar stories. A well-stocked book area, which is cosy and frequently used by the children, supports children in learning that print carries meaning. Furthermore, children's enjoyment of books is promoted as the mobile library regularly

visits the pre-school so children can choose a book to take home to share with their parents. Children's communication and language development is promoted well and older children chatter confidently to staff and each other during activities. Staff model clear language during activities without discouraging children's efforts as they copy new words, such as 'obstacle', when referring to the course set up outside. This enables all children to use their growing skills and become confident communicators. Good opportunities are offered to promote children's small physical skills through art and craft activities using a variety of tools, such as, scissors, glue sticks, chinks and pencils. Children recognise shape, colour and pattern as they confidently put together jigsaw puzzles or when staff talk about circles as they draw shapes in rice and glitter tray. Children compare big and small items and are learning to sequence numbers through activities, such as, making a number line with the numbered wooden blocks. However, staff miss some opportunities to introduce some mathematical concepts, such as, weight, capacity and positional language during activities. This means that children do not always build on their knowledge and skills regarding space, shape and measurement. The staff help children to learn about a number of festivals and help children learn about difference using food, stories and creative work. Visitors to the pre-school from the local community run music sessions or read stories to the children. This teaches children to appreciate the diversity of the wider community and to meet people within their local community. Children have some opportunities to learn about technology using play equipment in role-play activities or using a laptop to research insects they find in the garden. However, examples of modern-day technology are not always available. Children enjoy learning about and extending their understanding of the natural world. For example, they plant and tend vegetables, observe wildlife, such as the tadpoles in the small pond, and find caterpillars or bees. Children eagerly help to empty their snack waste into the compost bin and learn about the changes to the food as this decomposes. Staff have high expectations for all children. They use their knowledge and teaching skills to help children to develop their ideas and play cooperatively, take turns and share. Staff praise children's efforts constantly, promoting their self-esteem and helping them make progress in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning, such as moving on to school.

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

The manager and staff provide a welcoming environment for all children, which enables them to settle well. Staff are kind, attentive and form very good relationships with children and their families. This results in children forming strong bonds and secure attachments with their key person and others caring for them. Parents speak very highly of the warm and friendly environment and are confident their children are happy and settled. When children start the pre-school, the key person spends a great deal of time sensitively talking to parents, inviting them to share what they know about their children. This ensures that children's routines and individual needs are clearly known and can be met from the outset. Where children are less confident, their key person supports them in separating from parents, but maintains close contact with parents regarding children's emotions. Therefore, parents manage their children's settling-in alongside the staff. Parents work with the key person to develop a starting point for children's learning and development, that helps them to track children's progress over time. Daily discussion as children arrive

and leave, ensure that vital information is exchanged to support children's ongoing progress and well-being. Children behave very well because they are busy and engaged. They are kind, offering to share and take turns with resources with little or no prompting, demonstrating their understanding of the clear boundaries and high expectations of the staff. Staff act as very positive role models, speaking kindly to children and gently reminding them to say 'please' and 'thank you' when appropriate. Frequent praise and encouragement from staff helps to develop children's self-esteem and sense of achievement. Older children establish clear friendships and enjoy playing together. They are willing to take on responsibility, for example, helping to tidy away resources or find a toy for another child. There are clear rules in place and children demonstrate that they understand these. Consequently, children are learning right from wrong and developing good social skills under the skilful guidance of the staff.

The outdoor environment is very well used to promote children's learning and well-being. This has been developed to provide rich learning opportunities and an exciting place for children to play, discover, explore and have fun. Children enjoy energetic and active play and spend a great deal of time outdoors, benefiting from the fresh air and exercise. Children's large muscles develop as they climb, balance, run, crawl and jump with increasing control and coordination. Regular, planned sessions in the school hall encourage children to be active and increase their spatial awareness and physical skills. Staff talk with the children about why their heart is beating faster after exercise and children know that they need to drink water after running about, as part of keeping themselves healthy. Drinking water is always available and children readily help themselves to drinks throughout the day.

Children's well-being is well promoted and there are clear and consistently applied systems in place to protect them from infection. Children learn to wash their hands independently before eating in order to remove germ and dirt. Daily routines within the pre-school enable children to develop their personal independence. For example, children serve themselves during snack time and clean and wash up after themselves. They learn how to apply suncream before going outside in warm weather. Staff encourage children to develop a good understanding of healthy eating by offering a selection of healthy and nutritious foods at snack time. Mealtimes are valued as social occasions where children sit in small groups and engage in conversations with their friends and staff. Children seek out comfortable cushions in quiet space when they need a rest. They are supported well in using equipment safely, such as scissors during their craft activities. Staff enable children to take managed risks during their play, for example, as they climb and balance. Gentle reminders from staff, such as not running indoors and keeping space near to fire exits clear of toys, help children to become aware of their own safety and that of others in the pre-school.

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

The manager and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff have completed the appropriate training to ensure that children are safeguarded. They are familiar with the

procedures to be followed if they have concerns relating to child protection. Robust recruitment and suitability procedures help to check that all employees are suitable to work with children. Staff are well deployed to ensure that children are effectively supervised and ratios of adults to children are met at all times. Risk assessments are carried out every day on the premises and equipment, both indoors and outside. Therefore, hazards are identified and action taken to minimise the risk for children, so they play in a safe and secure environment. Security is given high priority and all visitors are escorted and supervised. The manager ensures that staff complete all regulatory paperwork, such as attendance registers, medication and accident records appropriately. This shows that the pre-school staff give high priority to the safeguarding and welfare of children.

The management committee are effectively involved in the running of the pre-school and, along with the manager, monitor staff performance through regular supervision meetings and annual appraisals. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their own practice and identify areas for improvement. All the staff are well qualified and experienced practitioners, therefore, the quality of the teaching provided in the pre-school is high. All children make good progress in their learning, taking into account their starting points. Training plans are in place and staff actively seek additional training as part of their ongoing professional development. The quality of the educational programmes is carefully monitored so staff quickly recognise when there are emerging gaps in children's learning. The management team take swift action to intervene and support children so they quickly catch up. Self-evaluation is a continual process that is engaged in by all involved in the pre-school, including staff, parents, children and the management committee. Together they are effective in identifying the strengths and areas for development for the pre-school. This ensures that improvements are well targeted and are focussed on aspects that will bring about the most improvement for children. In addition, advice is sought from other professionals and their recommendations are acted upon, which leads to further improvements in practice and provision. For example, the outdoor areas have been developed so these provide a varied range of activities to complement those indoors and suggestions to improve the process of assessing children's learning are now embedding into practice. Actions raised during the last inspection have been addressed.

Staff build excellent partnerships with parents, carers and professionals associated with the children. There is a trusting partnership between parents and staff, which means that children are nurtured and are able to flourish. Parents are kept well informed of children's progress and achievements through daily verbal discussion and regular meetings with their children's key person. Children work with their key person to put together their learning story and parents regularly access this so they are able to share in their children's experiences. Furthermore, stay-and-play sessions or events organised by the pre-school, invite parents to come in to the setting and enjoy activities with their children. Parents provide very positive comments about the pre-school, staff and their children's progress while attending. Partnership working with professionals is developed to secure support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, when the need arises. Staff are instrumental in settling children at new schools because they facilitate visits from teachers and work with the local schools to prepare children. If children are moving on to the adjoining school an older child already in the school is allocated as their buddy. This child visits their pre-school buddy during school breaks to play with the child, which helps

younger children to forge a link with someone already in the school, so they have a friend who will support them in school. Consequently, the very effective partnership working overall makes a strong contribution towards meeting children's needs and preparing them well for future learning.

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	254293
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	818468
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	41
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Pre-School (Aldborough) Committee
Date of previous inspection	27/11/2009
Telephone number	01263 768 766

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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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