

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Daven Primary School, New Street, CONGLETON, Cheshire, CW12 3AH

Inspection date	11/07/2014
Previous inspection date	15/01/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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		1
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 good and at times outstanding. Staff are skilful as they provide challenging and imaginative activities that capture children's interest well. Therefore, children make very good progress towards the early learning goals.
- The promotion of children's well-being is excellent. Children have superb bonds and attachments with staff. They enjoy their time at the setting, and develop superb social skills, which support their transition to school.
- Staff have a robust knowledge of how to protect children from possible harm or abuse. They are vigilant in their everyday practice and follow detailed procedures in order to safeguard children. Consequently, children are kept safe and secure.
- Partnership working is purposeful and targeted. Staff work effectively with a range of partners to provide additional support for children and prepare children for school. Therefore, outcomes for children are improving.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to further improve the monitoring of staff's teaching so that exceptionally high quality teaching is identified and promoted throughout the pre-school.

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 spoke with children and observed activities in the older and younger children's areas and outdoors.
The inspector viewed all relevant documentation including: learning journals,
- children's assessments, self-evaluation, children's records and a range of policies and procedures.
The inspector spoke with the manager and staff throughout the day. The inspector
- met with the Reception year teacher from the on-site school and the family support manager from the adjacent children's centre.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with parents during departure time to seek their views.
The inspector spoke with staff to check their safeguarding knowledge, viewed
- safeguarding documentation and checked all staff have been suitably checked to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

Inspector

Scott Oliver Thomas

Full report

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School opened in 1993 and moved into the shared premises of Daven Primary School and Congleton Children's Centre in 2009. It is run by a committee. It is situated in Congleton, Cheshire. The premises comprises of two activity rooms, kitchen, toilet area, and outdoor play area. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children attend from the local area and beyond. The pre-school employs eight members of staff who work with the children. All hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens term time only, Monday from 12.30pm until 3.30pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8.45am to 3.30pm and Friday from 9am until 3pm. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently a total of 58 children on roll. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop the monitoring of staff's teaching through more regular observations of staff practice and enhancing the evaluation of staff teaching so that exceptionally high quality teaching is identified and promoted throughout the pre-school.

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is good and at times some teaching is outstanding. Staff provide vibrant and dynamic activities that encapsulate children's interests. For example, when children make pizzas staff ensure learning is rich and well matched to their individual needs and interests. This means the educational programmes have depth and breadth across all areas of learning. As a result, children's active learning is promoted well. All children make good progress towards the early learning goals. For example, they are able to write their names and give meanings to marks. This is because staff provide a range of early writing resources. This means children are developing the skills they need for school. Teaching is effective in supporting the oldest children to develop the vital skills they need for the next stage in their learning. For example, they are supported to manage their disputes through turn taking. This means children are developing good social skills. Consequently, children are able to use these skills when they move onto school.

Staff re-shape children's learning comprehensively as they make the most of all learning opportunities. For example, children make pizzas to celebrate the end of term. Staff develop children's physical skills as they remind children to wash their hands to get rid of

germs. Children develop an understanding of the world and different foods as they learn where pizza comes from and where different foods are grown. Children's imagination is enhanced through role-play opportunities as children wear chef hats and pretend to pay for their pizza from a restaurant. This means staff enhance all learning opportunities. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of learning. Staff are good at extending children's prior learning. For example, following a recent visit from the dentist staff created a role-play area to replicate a dentist clinic. Staff use resources effectively to enhance children's learning further allowing them to develop their skills. As a result, children know how many minutes to brush their teeth for and the best methods to use.

Children's starting points are identified efficiently and precisely by staff. Staff use information from parents when children first start and their own observations to identify children's initial stage of learning. As a result, children are engaged in learning quickly. Parents are kept well informed about children's progress. All parents are invited to meet with their child's key person and those who choose not to, are kept updated through detailed handovers and a home diary system. Consequently, all parents have a good understanding of children's next steps in their learning. Key persons complete the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. They make an accurate and detailed assessment of children's progress including their next steps in their learning. They provide parents with a written summary, which enables them to support learning at home. Teaching is based on detailed observations of children's progress. Staff know children extremely well, and are able to give detailed account of children's learning and what they need to do next to extend their learning. Parents are fully involved in children's learning. This is because staff keep them well informed about children's progress and provide ideas and strategies to support learning at home. For example, key persons share activities in children's daily diary that parents could try at home. Staff are skilled in supporting children who are not making the expected progress. For example, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported by a range of professionals and the special educational needs coordinator. This means individual targets are met and the gaps in children's learning are closing.

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

The key-person system is extremely well embedded and understood by all staff. All children are allocated a key person when they start according to whom they form an attachment with. The arrangements of the key person contribute to the very strong bond the pre-school has with parents and the community. Children and parents know who their key person is. As a result, parents feel confident in asking for support with children's development. Due to the established staff team and a strong sense of community cohesion, there is an extremely strong bond between staff and children. Children show an obvious fondness for staff through the delight of seeing them when they arrive. Children share special memories of staff and the fun things they have done together. Children seek comfort and reassurance when they try out new activities and are confident in asking for support to manage their own personal needs when required. Children share their imaginative ideas as they act out scenarios, such as the dentist. Resources are of an exceptionally high quality and well matched to the development stages of the children who attend. Resources are accessible to children and adults have organised them superbly in

learning areas. For example, the early writing area is very well stocked with a range of materials to make marks with.

The behaviour of children is exemplary. Children play harmoniously together by sharing toys and waiting for their go with popular items, such as the bicycles. Children learn how to solve conflicts that arise as staff provide timers for children to take turns. Staff have a first class knowledge of how to manage behaviour in line with the behaviour management policy. Positive rules are introduced when children start at pre-school and are displayed for children to see. Staff and children remind those who are not following the positive rules. Children feel very safe and secure at pre-school. They are very comfortable in the familiar surroundings and show great respect for the environment. Staff explain the safety rules and children contribute to identifying how to keep everyone safe. For example, children suggest not playing with toys in front of the door in case they need to get out.

Children have a superb knowledge of why physical exercise is important. Everyday they have the opportunity to develop physically through activities and outdoor learning, refining skills, such as jumping. Staff join in physical games to emphasise the importance and through skilful teaching demonstrate the impact exercise has on their bodies. For example, children feel warm when they have been outside. Meal times are healthy and children know it is important to eat a healthy diet. Staff discuss with children the different food groups, as children learn what protein is. There are regular opportunities for children to access fresh air, and they know how important it is. Staff support children's understanding on the importance of good hygiene. Staff model good hygiene and demonstrate how to wash hands removing all the germs. As a result, children have a exceptional understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

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

The leadership team has a very good understanding of how to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements. As a result, children are kept safe and their welfare is promoted well. Safety is of the utmost priority and this is ensured through the recording of visitors and not allowing the use of mobile phones or unauthorised cameras in the pre-school. Recruitment procedures are robust and the leadership team follow the safer recruitment policy. As a result, the staff employed are extremely knowledgeable and are able to fulfil their roles well. All staff and committee members are vetted and are safe and suitable to work with children. All staff, students and volunteers receive a detailed induction to ensure they know how the pre-school operates and to comply with all requirements including policies and procedures. Staff have access to a wide range of training both internal and external. Training is completed on a regular basis by all staff matched to the strengths and areas of development of the pre-school. Training is disseminated well to all staff. As a result, training continually improves the quality of teaching. For example, a recent early language development programme has improved the variety of teaching. All staff undertake child protection training and have a clear knowledge of local child protection procedures. All staff receive regular supervision and appraisals, which enables strengths to be shared and coaching to build on personal performance. Policies and procedures are current and cover all relevant requirements. They are understood by all staff and

committee who are both involved in reviewing them; therefore, the practice of staff is consistent.

The manager has a detailed understanding of the learning and development requirements and as a result they are well met. The management team have a clear understanding of what quality teaching looks like, by using guidance and working with the reception teacher from school. They manager and deputy monitor different aspects of the teaching and planning including planning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and teaching of the youngest children, through observations, sampling planning and feedback. However, there is scope to further improve the monitoring of staffs teaching through more regular observations of staff practice and enhancing the evaluation of staff teaching so that exceptionally high quality teaching is promoted throughout the pre-school. Due to the imaginative teaching, the manager is clearly able to demonstrate through effective monitoring how the activities and experiences provide depth to children's learning including how well they are matched to the needs and interests of each individual child. The progress of children is recorded through tracking documents and speech and language assessments. These provide a clear overview of the progress children make from their starting points. The manager routinely checks the accuracy of these assessments through reviewing observations and using guidance to benchmark judgements. The special educational needs coordinator monitors children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, quickly identifying those children not making the expected progress to ensure gaps in learning are closing through meeting their individual needs.

Self-evaluation is extremely effective and as a result, the pre-school has made significant progress since their last inspection. Written self-evaluation, action plans and the progress children are making demonstrate how this progress has been made. Self-evaluation involves all children, parents, staff and the committee. Since the last inspection all staff have received up-to-date child protection training. There have been extensive improvements in the environment and the range of resources to support children's learning, especially inside. The pre-school has clear plans for future improvement by extending the learning opportunities even further in the outdoor area. Future developments have been identified as a result of reflective practice. Partnerships are extremely successful, with a wide range of partners including the adjacent children's centre, local authority and on-site school. Partnerships are focused on improving the experiences for children. For example, the local authority early years teacher visits the pre-school to deliver rhyme time sessions with children. As a result of this partnership, gaps have closed in children's learning. Parents are an integral part of the pre-school, both through the management committee but also in working with staff to support children's learning. Parents involvement in learning is extremely successful and staff and parents work hard to maintain this. Parents are involved in achieving areas for improvement, as they have helped to develop the outdoor area. The committee is made up of a group of parents; they contribute to the decision making of the pre-school and act conscientiously to improve the quality of the pre-school and the outcomes for children who attend.

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	305341
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	876744
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	58
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	15/01/2009
Telephone number	01260 297924

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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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