

Small Steps Preschool Boreham

Village Hall, Main Road, Boreham, CHELMSFORD, CM3 3JD

Inspection date	15/07/2014
Previous inspection date	27/04/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Staffing arrangements and the organisation of the daily routine do not always fully support the learning needs of all children.
- Children experience delays when waiting to use the outside area which has an adverse effect on their learning experiences.
- Younger children are not provided with enough opportunities to explore and investigate sensory and malleable resources, such as sand and water.

It has the following strengths

- Effective interventions ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress, given their starting points.
- Children feel happy and settled at the pre-school because they have good relationships with the practitioners.
- Partnerships with parents ensure information is exchanged to support children's all-round learning and development.

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 indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The inspector checked evidence of practitioner and committee members' suitability and qualifications, and a selection of other documentation.
- The inspector had discussions with the manager, practitioners and committee member at various times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journals, assessment records and planning documentation.

Inspector

Stephanie Collins

Full report

Information about the setting

Small Steps Preschool Boreham is run by a committee. The pre-school was registered in 2009 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a community hall in the village of Boreham, Essex. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates term time only, from 9.15am until 12.15pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and on Thursday 9am until 3pm. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one with Early Years Professional status. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 45 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure a Disclosure and Barring Service check is obtained, in respect of all practitioners and committee members, and information regarding completed vetting processes is recorded
- ensure that staffing arrangements and organisation of the daily routine fully support the learning needs of all children.

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

- develop the range of sensory and malleable resources, so that younger children have more opportunities to explore and investigate different materials.

Inspection judgements

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

The pre-school provides a range of good quality resources for children. Equipment is laid out to give children easy access and they independently choose where to play. However, some practitioners do not have a Disclosure and Barring Service check. This does not fully support the learning needs of all children because they cannot be left with staff that have not been vetted. Therefore, the organisation of the daily routine is dependent on vetted practitioners being available to supervise children. As a result, children spend too long waiting between activities. Practitioners encourage children's engagement in self-chosen activities. However, younger children have fewer opportunities to play with sensory and

malleable resources, such as sand and water, to experiment and explore with. Practitioners sit at children's level and talk to them as they build models with inter-locking bricks. Children take time to explore activities as they are supported to play and learn by the practitioners. Their early literacy skills are developing as children and practitioners share familiar books. Children learn about the structure of stories as they actively join in the repeated refrains from familiar texts. As a result, children acquire the skills they need for their next stage in learning.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress. This is because practitioners quickly identify children who need additional support and put effective measures in place. Children benefit from targeted intervention as they spend time in a small group with an experienced practitioner. They enjoy practising turn taking and developing listening skills. They follow the practitioner's instructions, clap rhythms and listen carefully, and are enthusiastically rewarded for their efforts. Information is shared with parents about the approach that is being used support their child's learning. This ensures consistency of learning between home and the pre-school. Practitioners work well with other professionals involved with children and together they implement agreed targets to move children forward in their learning.

Practitioners collect some information from parents about children's interests before they begin attending. Each child has a journal where practitioners regularly record careful written observations and photographic evidence. The observations are used to map children's development in the seven areas of learning. Each child's progress is recorded on a developmental tracker graph. The information is used to identify children's next steps in learning. As a result, children make progress. Activities are planned to match children's interests and meet their next steps in learning. For example, a recent coach trip, with parents to the local park, was organised to support children's interest in caterpillars.

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

Children are secure and show clear attachments to their key person who offer strong settled relationships. However, children have a false sense of security as there are lapses in safeguarding practices, which compromise their safety. This is because the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service checks have not been obtained for all practitioners and committee members. The key-person system ensures that children have a smooth transition from home. The initial visits, parents and children make, are tailored to their individual needs and, as a result, children settle well and are happy. Practitioners are sensitive to children's needs and they are on hand to comfort children when they are unsettled. They offer cuddles and soothe children until they are ready to move on. This ensures children develop good bonds, feel safe and secure, and are emotionally prepared for their next steps in learning.

The pre-school is proactive in establishing links with children's next settings. Reception teachers from local schools visit to meet their prospective pupils, sharing information on their learning and development. This ensures children are prepared for their move to school when the time comes. Children's behaviour is generally good. Practitioners skilfully help children to cope with their emotions, supporting them to take turns and share. They

use visual clues, such as egg timers, to help children wait and take turns. Children are supported to take calculated risks as they negotiate the climbing frame and practitioners remind them to 'be careful'. Children learn healthy routines as practitioners remind them to wash their hands before snack time and wear a hat outside in the sunshine. Children's dietary requirements are clearly displayed in the kitchen and only food suitable for all children is served. This ensures all children feel included and their dietary needs are safely met. Children develop independence as they help themselves to the pre-prepared snack and pour their own drinks.

Children play happily together as they work co-operatively to construct a balance wall. They talk about what they are doing, negotiate and take turns to slot the pieces together. Practitioners take all the children outside to play in the small, enclosed public-play area attached to the hall. They use the outside area once a day before the end of the session. Children have plenty of opportunity to develop good physical skills as they enthusiastically climb on the play equipment. This supports their well-being.

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

Safeguarding practices are weak because Disclosure and Barring Service checks have not been obtained for all of the practitioners and the committee. This is because the provider does not fully understand their legal responsibility with regard to checking the suitability of practitioners and committee members. Practitioners have completed safeguarding training and demonstrate a sound understanding of the procedures to follow in the event they are concerned for a child's welfare. Practitioners carry out a daily risk assessment of the inside and outside areas. As a result, equipment is safe for children and the outside area is free from hazards. All the relevant policies and procedures are in place, and important information is clearly displayed on the notice board for parents.

The manager has implemented a system for the monitoring and coaching of practitioners. As a result, she effectively identifies and agrees, with individual practitioners, areas of practice that they would like to improve. This ensures that relevant training can be sourced, so practitioners improve their knowledge and understanding of childcare practice. Practitioners receive support, such as non-contact days, to pursue their chosen professional development, which ensures their continued commitment. Children's progress is monitored using developmental graphs. This information is used to monitor the educational programmes to ensure they match children's learning requirements. Although there is a system to evaluate the provision to bring about improvement, the provider has failed to identify weaknesses in the vetting procedures and, subsequently, this has a negative impact on children's learning and well-being.

There is a strong emphasis within the pre-school on providing support for children with additional needs. Parents compliment practitioners and say 'they have been brilliant' in supporting their child. Consequently, the gaps are narrowing for these children as they make very good progress due to the intervention of the pre-school. The pre-school effectively shares information with professionals and the children's next settings to ensure children are well supported in their next steps in 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	EY399734
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	879362
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	45
Name of provider	Small Steps Preschool Boreham Committee
Date of previous inspection	27/04/2010
Telephone number	07952 471616

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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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