

# Stepping Stones Pre-School

J H Godwin Primary School, Melbourne Road, Blacon, Cheshire, CH1 5JG

<b>Inspection date</b>	16/10/2014
Previous inspection date	12/01/2011

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	1
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
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		1

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is consistently of a very high quality, often inspirational because staff use skilful questioning techniques to encourage children to think critically and creatively in their learning. As a result, children are enthusiastically motivated and very eager to learn.
- Staff provide a rich variety of challenging activities in an exciting and extremely stimulating learning environment. This results in children, who are actively involved in their learning, making excellent progress.
- Management and staff provide a highly effective, secure and safe environment, so that children feel safe in their care and build significantly strong attachments.
- Children's emotional well-being is given a high priority from the outset. As a result, they are happy, settled and confident to explore their environment, preparing them extremely well for the next stages in their learning.
- Partnerships with parents are prioritised and highly valued by the management team. As a result, opportunities for parents to share information about their children and to become actively involved in their learning, are promoted continuously.

## 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 play activities and staff interaction with children both indoors and in the outdoor environment.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector examined a representative sample of children's records, policies and procedures and safeguarding children documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of inspection.

## Inspector

Patricia Pickens

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School was registered in 1982 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is run by a voluntary committee. It operates from a purpose-built unit, comprising of two classrooms, in the grounds of J. H. Godwin Primary School, in Blacon, Chester. The pre-school opens five days a week from 8.50am to 2.50pm, term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 52 children in the early years age range. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are currently nine staff working directly with the children, all of whom have an appropriate early years qualification at level 3. The manager holds Early Years Professional status. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and 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:

- enhance the already excellent resources in the indoor and outdoor environment, for instance, by providing further opportunities to promote children's imagination, to further develop their creative expression during play.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are enthusiastic, highly motivated explorers of this exciting stimulating environment. They are confident learners, who are able to solve problems and make decisions to develop their own ideas, to try new things and take risks to succeed. The quality of teaching is consistently of a very high quality. Children are supported by staff, who value their opinions and ideas so much that activity planning is varied and changed by the children themselves. This leads to exciting, challenging and interesting play experiences for all children. For example, children express their interest in animals, in particular in a favourite story about goats and make intelligent links from real-life events to their play. An absorbing activity follows in the indoor environment using a wooden bridge made of blocks, a family of toy goats, some grass, a river and a troll. Children gather around the bridge and excitedly listen to the story enacted by a member of staff. They agree, 'we like the baby goat' and become instantly engaged in their story. Children walk the goats over the bridge, to find fresh grass on the other side. The goats are various sizes and children are busy re-telling the story, using mathematical terms to convey more and less, addition and subtraction. Interaction between staff and children is inspirational as they learn new words relating to numbers; they add, subtract, recognise

and sequence numbers, busily absorbed in their task of problem solving as a fourth goat is introduced to the story. Children solve their own problems of where to move the animals and which goat takes the longest to cross the bridge. They are very creative in their play and enthusiastically embrace the challenge of where to build the fourth goat into their story. Children discuss and share ideas, solve their own problems and find successful solutions. They are well motivated, very eager to join in and consistently demonstrate their ability to be creative, think critically and sustain their thinking over a period of time. Staff value children's achievements highly, taking time to allow each child to re-tell the story to the group, as they recall proudly the sequence of events.

Exceptional educational programmes have depth and breadth across all areas of learning enhanced by a range of innovative resources to create stimulating exciting play activities for children. Staff have very high expectations of children. Using their expert knowledge of the areas of learning and a clear understanding of how children learn, they provide rich, varied and imaginative experiences for the children. Playrooms are colourful and inspirational and children are fully involved in initiating their own play experiences and organising resources, supported by staff, who value their preferences and interests. There are separate areas of learning, enabling children to move independently between activities. In the reading area, there are a rich variety of books on display, enhanced by puppets and soft toy characters from familiar stories. Staff have designed and created a hospital, filled with excellent additional fun resources to bring children's life experiences with doctors into their play, to fire the imagination, as they act out the roles of doctor and patients with innovative props. This includes a stethoscope, doctor's bag and utensils to carry out a health check-up on each other. Bilingual books, factual books and tablet computers complement children's cultural language and enrich their understanding of the world. Although, there are already excellent resources in the indoor and outdoor environment, there is scope to enhance opportunities to promote children's imagination. For instance, by using natural resources to prompt children to explore and express themselves creatively in their play.

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

Staff are highly skilled and sensitive in helping children of all ages to form secure emotional attachments, they provide a strong base for helping them to develop their independence and ability to explore. Right from the start, settling-in procedures for new children are extremely well embedded and effective through discussions with parents to meet individual family needs. Parents are very complimentary about the high level of care staff provide. They say, 'My children adore coming here, they love spending time at pre-school'. Parents say, 'The time our children spend here is very valuable in preparing them for school'. Children demonstrate they feel a strong sense of belonging and security in the pre-school. They are actively encouraged to develop independence and to care for their environment. Children are supported in keeping themselves and others healthy by learning to address their own personal needs. For example, they are supervised in the safe use of the toilets and are encouraged to wash their hands. This promotes well-being and limits cross-infection, instilling a healthy lifestyle for children. As a result, they develop self-help skills of independence and confidence in caring for themselves and others appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

Children increasingly show high levels of self-control during activities and confidence in social situations. For example, during mealtimes, children serve themselves a choice of a hot school meal or bring a lunchbox from home. They pour drinks, lay tables and are proficient in the use of social manners. Established routines ensure children form happy, secure attachments with staff and each other. Staff model and consistently gives clear guidance on expected behaviour, providing secure boundaries for children. As a result, minor conflicts are minimised, strengthening relationships amongst children and their peers.

Children are developing an excellent understanding of how to manage risks and challenges relative to their age. In the garden before lunch, children enjoy vigorous play in the fresh air. In this way, staff actively promote physical development and a healthy lifestyle. There is a highly stimulating environment with child-accessible resources that promotes learning and challenges children both indoors and outdoors. Children run and chase leaves in the wind. They ride tricycles, scooters, play football and sports, challenging one another in a light hearted, competitive way. Children are busy in their play, laughing and learning together, moving excitedly from one activity to another. Children's safety and safeguarding are central to everything staff do. They effectively support children's growing understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Tall, secure fencing and locked gates enclose the garden. A variety of mature trees provide natural shade from direct sunlight, encouraging children to sit in small social groups to forge lasting friendships with their peers. In this way, children are extremely well prepared emotionally and socially for the next stage in their learning journey, including school.

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

The pursuit of excellence in all management team activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising, highly successful and well-documented drive to strongly improve achievement for all children over a sustained period of time. The safeguarding and security of children are a clear priority for the manager, who since the last inspection, has taken measures to ensure rigorous vetting procedures are in place. Risk assessments, both indoors and outdoors, are in place daily to ensure children are safe and secure at all times. She is able to demonstrate an excellent awareness and understanding of potential harm to children and confidence in dealing with any potential safeguarding issues or causes for concern. Children's behaviour shows that they feel safe in the pre-school, as they share concerns with staff with ease. Visitors are challenged and their identity is checked. Security arrangements and effective procedures are in place to ensure children's safety. For example, children's transitions at lunch time, as they arrive and leave the pre-school, are managed exceptionally well. One classroom is utilised as a dining room and another as a reception area for children arriving. Staff maintain close supervision of children in the wider outdoor environment and ensures that those leaving the premises are collected by parents or authorised adults.

The manager has an excellent understanding of her responsibility to ensure that her provision meets the safeguarding and welfare and the learning and development

requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She is an inspirational leader, who has a clear view of how to drive forward improvements for the benefit of children entrusted to her care. For example, an astute and targeted programme of professional development has been put together by the manager and Early Years Foundation Stage teachers, to moderate areas of learning and assessment of children. This ensures that staff are constantly improving their already first-rate understanding and practice. A high quality professional partnership has been created to enhance parents' knowledge and understanding of their children's learning, with the introduction of parents' workshops. This results in children making excellent progress because of the high quality of teaching and learning experiences they receive from teachers and staff, who are highly enthusiastic and committed to achieve outstanding performances in all areas. The management team have an excellent overview of the educational programmes in all areas of learning.

Children's needs are quickly identified and exceptionally well met through highly effective partnerships between staff, parents, and external agencies. This means that children are fully supported in their learning now and in the move into school in the future. Parents value the contributions staff make to their children's learning. They feel their children are safe and cared for by, 'a very caring, honest, and creative team'. One parent said, 'I am extremely comfortable in the knowledge that staff are capable of looking after my child to a high level of care'.

### **The Childcare Register**

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	<b>Met</b>

## 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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	305344
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	870671
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	52
<b>Name of provider</b>	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12/01/2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244 669050

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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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