

# Small Steps Preschool Boreham

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

<b>Inspection date</b>	04/12/2014
Previous inspection date	15/07/2014

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	3
	Previous inspection:	4
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		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision requires improvement

- Children are protected from harm as staff demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and ensure children's safety is robustly maintained.
- Children form close relationships with their key persons, who are attentive to their needs. This helps them make effective emotional attachments and gain confidence.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and positive links are established with outside agencies who share children's care to ensure continuity.

### It is not yet good because

- Assessments of children's development are not always accurate across all areas of learning, therefore, staff do not consistently plan activities that are fully tailored to children's individual needs.
- Opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills in everyday play are not fully maximised.
- The routine of the day is not efficiently organised. This means children's learning is not consistently developed and play is often interrupted.
- Children's thinking and independent skills are not fully supported because some activities are too adult-led and do not maximise opportunities for children to think for themselves and have a go.

## 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 all playrooms and the outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection and engaged in discussions with the children and staff.
- The inspector looked at a sample of children's development records, planning documentation and some written policy documents.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and checked evidence of staff's suitability and qualifications.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation of children's activities with the manager.

## Inspector

Lynn A Hartigan

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Small Steps Preschool Boreham was registered in 2009 on the Early Years Register. It is situated in the village hall in Chelmsford, Essex, and is managed by a parent committee. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from one main playroom. The pre-school employs ten members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications from level 2 to level 6. One member of staff has Early Years Professional status. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm everyday; with the exception of Tuesday when sessions are from 9am until 3pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 31 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure that ongoing assessment is effectively used to assess children's stage of development in each area of learning more accurately and plan activities more tailored to their individual needs
- ensure that the organisation of routines, in particular, at snack time and in preparation for outdoor play, is improved so that children have more opportunities for sustained play and active learning, for example, by reducing waiting times to ensure that children do not become bored and restless.

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

- include opportunities for writing during role play and other activities provided
- provide more opportunities for children to develop their thinking and independent skills, for example, by maximising their involvement in the preparation of snack and their participation in cooking activities.

### Inspection judgements

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

Children are cared for by a new team of qualified and experienced staff who are attentive to children's emotional and physical needs. Children enjoy their time at pre-school and are provided with an educational programme indoors that covers all areas of learning. The provision of quality resources supports children in their development. Children sit comfortably in the cosy book area and enjoy stories. They use this space for their imaginary games and read to one another as they role play teachers at school. Children show sustained levels of concentration as they scoop rice using spoons and diggers to transport. Children excitedly take part in printing activities, preparing folders for their Christmas artwork. They have fun mixing paint and making new colours. Children enjoy group activities as they draw on large sheets of paper on the floor and they work well together as they colour and discuss what they draw. However, while some activities are offered to support children's early writing skills, there are fewer opportunities to routinely access paper and pencils to mark make in everyday play. In general, staff members are skilful in how they pose questions to ensure children are encouraged to think critically and they are given time to respond. For example, staff help children to work out how to take turns. Children are encouraged to think of a solution and are praised when they suggest they use a sand timer. The organisation of the session, in regards to including opportunities to play outdoors and the provision of snack, impacts on children's play. This is because their activities are interrupted and the toys are packed away early. This limits children's choices, as children who prefer to play and learn indoors are not effectively supported throughout the session.

The manager has made improvements since the last inspection, to ensure children have more opportunities to explore and investigate using different materials. For example, children relish opportunities to use shaving foam and shredded paper. The lack of a secure outdoor play area and restrictions made on the premises, limit learning opportunities outdoors. However, staff ensure children develop physical skills using climbing apparatus as they use a communal park daily and are developing the range of activities offered to children outdoors, such as sand play, using portable units. Children's communication, language, emotional and social skills are supported adequately. This is because the importance of these areas of learning and development are recognised by staff to support children in their future learning and in preparation for school. For example, children are very confident, secure and settled, and ask many questions. They confidently talk to visitors and include them in games. Children listen and follow instructions when participating in group activities. They sit together to listen to stories about when they go to school. Children are generally encouraged to develop their independent skills, such as putting on aprons before painting or their coats and shoes to play outside. However, some activities, such as cooking sessions, offer limited opportunities for children to develop their independence. This is because these activities are too adult-led. For example, children have to wait to stir cake mixture, weighing ingredients is guided by staff and they cannot have a go to maximise learning potential. As a result, children lose interest and cannot recall what ingredients they use to make the cakes when they eat them for snack.

The manager works hard to establish positive partnerships with parents. They are warmly welcomed into pre-school and encouraged to stay and play if they choose. Children's key persons document useful information with regard to their likes, interests and abilities. Staff complete regular observations of children's development and these demonstrate that most children are working within the typical range expected for their age, taking into account

their starting points. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive good support. However, at times, staff do not accurately assess children's development in order to fully tailor the planned activities to children's individual needs. Learning journals are available to parents on request and staff share the next steps in children's learning and their termly reports. Parents are positively encouraged to contribute what they know about their child when staff complete the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years.

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

Children are happy, confident and most settle quickly, engaging in an activity of their choice. This is because they have formed close attachments to their key person who are attentive and affectionate toward them. This ensures that children are emotionally secure and helps the smooth settling-in process and, as a result, children are happy when they separate from their parents. Children preparing for the move to full-time education are supported well. Positive links are established with the local school and children are already familiar with the premises. Children are invited to attend special assemblies and watch the school nativity play. This enables children to become familiar with the school environment, and supports their confidence when they move to the next stage in their education. All primary schools children will attend are contacted and the reception teachers are invited to spend time at pre-school to meet the children. This also provides opportunities to discuss children's individual needs and promote continuity in care and learning.

Children play in a safe and secure environment because staff are vigilant and minimise any potential hazards using daily risk assessments. Children are taught how to stay safe through everyday routines and pre-school rules. For example, staff remind them not to run in the hall and explain the importance of sitting on chairs correctly so as not to hurt themselves. Children respond to staff when they shake a tambourine and know to listen carefully, for example, they stand still on request while a table is moved within the playroom. They are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their friends. For example, they know to tidy away after themselves to prevent trip hazards. Overall, children behave well at pre-school. This is because children learn what is expected of them through the simple rules in place. All staff promote children's self-esteem through praise and recognition of their achievements.

Children understand the need to wash their hands before eating snack and after using the toilet, as this is reinforced through the everyday routines. They learn about being healthy and are able to exercise daily in fresh air. Drinking water is available for children to access throughout the session. Healthy and nutritious snacks are offered and consideration is given to every child's dietary requirements. For example, children make gluten and dairy-free cakes for snack time to ensure everyone can eat them. However, the provision and routine of snack time impacts on children's play, as they do not decide for themselves when they are hungry and have to stop what they are doing to have their snack. In addition, the preparation of snack does not maximise opportunities to extend children's independence. For example, tables are laid and cleared away, drinks are often poured for them and plates are washed by staff. Fruit and vegetables are often cut and pre-prepared.

This means learning opportunities are not maximised at this time and there are fewer opportunities in place for children to have a go for themselves and extend their independent skills.

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

Children are protected from harm as the manager and the team of staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of their individual responsibilities in regards to protecting children. They are able to confidently discuss the possible signs of abuse and the process to follow should they have concerns. The designated person completes appropriate training to enable them to support staff through any safeguarding issues. Since the last inspection, the committee and manager now ensure all staff members are suitable to work with children through safe recruitment, vetting and induction. This means the staffing arrangements no longer impacts on the organisation of the session, because all staff have been appropriately vetted. Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Play areas are monitored daily to ensure children's safety and hazards are minimised through safety checks before children arrive.

Children are cared for by staff who want the best for all children in their care. Positive relationships are established with outside agencies and the pre-school staff work well with other early years professionals to ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. All staff contribute to the evaluation process and parents' comments, with regard to the continuous improvement of the pre-school, are welcomed and valued. They are provided with newsletters to encourage comments regarding highlighted areas for improvement. For example, parents are asked for their views about the provision of a proposed outdoor play area and staff provide clear explanations about the importance of this for their children's learning. The manager ensures staff performance is monitored and staff are supported with training to improve the quality of teaching and enhance practice. Observations made by staff inform future planning. However, the manager and her team do not consistently monitor children's progress, to ensure that assessments are accurate across all areas of learning. This means the manager does not have a broad overview of how each child is developing and how the educational programme should be improved, so that any gaps in learning can be supported. As a result, the activities that the staff plan for the children are not always tailored to their individual learning needs.

The manager positively encourages strong partnerships with parents. Parents comment that they feel very welcome and that, overall, staff are friendly and approachable. Parents also say that they choose this pre-school over more local ones to their home and that they can leave their children with confidence knowing their children are safe and well cared for. Most parents know their children's key person and are aware of their children's development records. Information for parents and the provision of policies and procedures are available through a prospectus and noticeboards, which includes a selection of useful information with regard to local schools, children's centres and support groups. Because of the positive links with the local schools, children are well prepared and confident when

moving on to school.

## 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>	EY399734
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	985500
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	31
<b>Name of provider</b>	Small Steps Preschool Boreham Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15/07/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	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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