

Stepping Stones Pre-School

St. Annes Road, Denton, Manchester, Lancashire, M34 3BP



Inspection date

Previous inspection date

11 February 2015

25 January 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The manager, at times, does not ensure there is a suitable number of appropriately qualified staff to care for children.
- Some routines do not run smoothly when children move between activities, causing some children to become restless.
- Children are not consistently encouraged to think critically, in order to share their ideas and to make predications during story time.

It has the following strengths

- Children are content and they behave very well. This is because staff apply consistent strategies, meet children's needs well and encourage them to share their feelings. This supports children's emotional and physical well-being.
- Managers monitor staff's teaching and evaluate the overall quality of the pre-school, taking into account the views of parents and other professionals. This ensures that consistently good-quality teaching is achieved.
- Staff model language and make good use of strategies, such as signing, to support children's communication and language skills.
- Partnerships with parents and other professionals are secure and information about children's needs is shared effectively. This ensures there is a consistent approach to supporting children, particularly those who require perceptive intervention and additional support.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure there is a suitable number of appropriately qualified staff present to care for children at all times.

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

- organise routines so they run more smoothly when moving between activities
- support children even further to think critically, explore their own ideas and to predict what comes next, for example, by using challenging questions during story time.

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about this provider.
- The inspector spoke with children and the manager at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of the staff working with children, and they discussed the provider's improvement plans.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day, and from information included in parental questionnaires.
- The inspector looked at a sample of children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector observed activities in the main playroom and outdoor play area.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.

Inspector

Helen Gaze

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Staff have a good knowledge of how children learn and develop. They use detailed information gained from discussions with parents. This enables staff to provide a broad range of interesting learning opportunities based on children's interests and needs. This, alongside staff's regular observations of children, successfully support staff to identify and plan for children's next stage in learning. Consequently, all children's needs are identified and they make good progress in their learning. Staff's teaching is good and children are well prepared for school. Staff effectively promote children's learning by teaching them how to use various tools with their hands, to develop their early writing skills. Younger children and new children to the pre-school are supported in new social situations and they make friends easily. Children enjoy listening to their favourite stories during group time. However, staff do not always encourage children to predict what might happen next or to share their own thoughts and ideas about the story, to further support children's critical thinking skills.

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

Staff meet children's individual needs well from the moment they start and the move from home to the pre-school is smooth. This supports children to settle quickly and they develop confidence to explore the environment. Staff help all children to develop their independence skills by supporting children to take responsibility for small tasks. For example, staff encourage children to wash their hands and tidy away the resources. However, staff do not fully prepare children for the next part of the routine, such as snack time. This results in some children becoming restless when moving between activities. Staff are deployed well and they fully consider the potential risks in the environment. For example, fire exits are clear and staff perform regular fire drills with children. Staff also monitor and secure the exterior gate during collection and drop of times. They closely supervise children as they leave the premises with parents. This helps to ensure children are safe.

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

At this priority inspection, it was found that there are not always the required number of appropriately qualified staff on the premises. Recruitment is robust and the staff team is well established and experienced. There is an effective programme for professional development to support staff in their role. For instance, staff are first-aid trained and deal with accidents and emergencies effectively, and food hygiene training supports staff in handling food safely. Staff are able to identify the possible signs of abuse and neglect, and they understand the correct reporting procedures. Recent training has helped staff to monitor the varying learning styles of groups of children. For example, staff have attended training on funded two-year-olds and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This successfully supports children in their learning. The manager has an effective range of policies and procedures for parents, including a complaints procedure.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY259694
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	1005306
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	17
Number of children on roll	19
Name of provider	Lorraine Arnold
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2011
Telephone number	0161 292 1186

Stepping Stones Pre-School was registered in 2003. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 9.30am until 12.30pm. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children, and supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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