

Stepping Stones Under 5s

Coupals CP School, Chalkstone Way, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 0LB



Inspection date

7 May 2015

Previous inspection date

27 November 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Outstanding	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Outstanding	1
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Partnerships with parents are extremely purposeful and effective. Staff nurture excellent relationships, which support and encourage parents to be proactive in their children's continuing learning and development at home.
- Monitoring and assessment of children's learning is rigorous and highly focused. Well-timed interventions are secured, in order to deliver targeted support based on an inclusive knowledge of each child. Teaching practice across the team is excellent.
- The high expectations of staff, along with their excellent attention to delivering consistent messages, results in children's exemplary behaviour. Positive and constructive support, with plenty of descriptive praise and encouragement, successfully promotes children's growing self-esteem. This helps to make sure that they are emotionally ready for the next phase in their learning.
- All staff demonstrate that they have an excellent understanding of how to reduce potential risks to children. They are very knowledgeable about the signs of abuse, and exceptionally clear about their responsibility to protect children from harm. This includes guarding them from known risks associated with the use of computers, social media sites and other forms of electronic devices.
- The provider and staff have a comprehensive understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All required records are meticulously updated and safely retained, as required. The provider and her staff respect the confidentiality of each family.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enrich further, the very good teaching and cultural learning opportunities for children to explore expressive arts, introducing them to creative adults within the local environment, such as artists, dancers, storytellers and musicians.

Inspection activities

- The inspector talked to the provider, deputy manager, members of staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection. In addition, the inspector spoke to the headteacher of the on-site school about the established partnerships between the school and the pre-school.
- The inspector held discussions with the provider and deputy manager, in relation to observations of the children's play, learning and progress.
- The inspector observed general play and the snack and lunch time routines in the pre-school.
- The inspector looked at evidence of the suitability checks for the provider and all members of staff, and a range of other documentation. First-aid and safeguarding training certificates were viewed.
- The inspector reviewed the provider's self-evaluation document.

Inspector

Lynn Clements

Inspection findings

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

Children's development in communication, literacy and maths is consistently and imaginatively promoted by the outstanding learning opportunities provided. For example, while gardening, they extend their physical and observational skills, identifying and digging up weeds. Staff expertly extend children's thinking skills as they encourage them to question what they are doing, seeing or feeling. As children select seeds to plant, staff encourage them to use their excellent phonic skills to sound out the flower names. Children use this information to record each name on signs, to remind them what was planted. The children speak knowledgeably about plants, and how they require water and sunlight. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of sustainability. For example, they place waste into a composting bin, telling the staff that this will help to make new compost for future seeds. Children are exceptionally motivated to explore the similarities and differences of other cultures and customs. There are further opportunities to complement and enrich these experiences within the local community.

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

Excellent arrangements are in place to support children's self-help skills. Children confidently decide when to have their snack, and make choices from an exciting range of healthy options. They talk about which foods help them to grow strong, and which give them energy to play. Staff work exceptionally well with parents, learning all they can about each child. As a result, children are extremely well settled and very confident. Exemplary partnerships are in place with staff from the primary school, in which the setting is based. For example, children join the rest of the school for meals and participate in many collaborative activities. This means, when it is time to move in to the Reception class, they do so with ease because they are very familiar in the environment and with school staff. Especially good attention is paid to the provision of storage at children's level. This provides children with the freedom to enjoy making their own selections. Children delight in the very wide range of physical activities, developing excellent spatial awareness and control when moving their bodies and engaging in more intricate tasks.

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

Exceptionally robust recruitment procedures ensure staff are thoroughly checked and safe to be with children. Excellent attention to ongoing staff supervision accurately identifies, and targets staff training needs. Unqualified staff are well supported to gain a relevant qualification. As a result, staff are highly effective and extremely knowledgeable, in supporting children's learning and development. The pre-school purposefully shares ideas for good practice with the headteacher and staff of the school extending staff understanding and skills even further. As a result, children enjoy very high-quality teaching and dynamic learning opportunities. Children's and families' views are listened to, as staff evaluate practice and identify areas for future improvement. For example, the annual sports day is now held on a Sunday, to enable working family members to attend.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY290184
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	861370
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 11
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	48
Name of provider	Elaine McManus
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2009
Telephone number	01440 761018 07884 270724

Stepping Stones Under 5's pre-school was registered in 2004. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications. The provider/manager has a relevant early years degree and holds Early Years Professional status. The pre-school also employs two apprentices. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are 8.45am to 11.45am and then 11.45am to 2.45pm. The breakfast club is open from 7.45am until 8.45am and the after school club runs from 2.45pm until 5.30pm. In addition, a holiday club operates for four weeks of the summer holidays from 8.45am until 2.45pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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