

Stepping Stones Pre-School



Bedford Road Lower School, Hillgrounds Road, Kempston, Bedford, MK42 8QH

Inspection date 12 January 2018
Previous inspection date 4 October 2017

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The manager has taken positive steps to address the action raised at the last inspection. All suitability checks are now carried out on all members of the new committee.
- The manager regularly evaluates practice and works well with other professionals to ensure that staff maintain high standards for children's development.
- Staff check children's progress carefully and with this knowledge target their teaching to meet the precise needs of each child. All children make good progress.
- Children confidently choose from a range of resources, indoors and outdoors. They thoroughly enjoy both practical and creative activities.
- Staff interact very well with children and help develop their language skills, such as through useful conversations during activities.
- Staff use activities well to support children's physical development. Children are encouraged to take risks and to assess levels of safety for themselves.
- Staff's high expectations, nurturing manner and well-established routines support children's good behaviour.
- Staff involve parents in children's care and learning, and listen to their views. Parents are very pleased with the staff's methods and practices.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The manager does not place sufficient emphasis on raising the quality of mathematics teaching to the highest possible level.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the programme of professional development to consistently raise staff knowledge and skills of teaching mathematics to the highest level.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor play areas and the outdoor learning environment. She conducted a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the deputy manager of the pre-school. She spoke with the new chairperson of the committee. She also spoke with staff and children throughout the inspection when appropriate.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, such as children's assessment and planning records, and the setting's risk assessment and safety records.
- The inspector checked evidence of self-evaluation, and the suitability and qualifications of staff working within the pre-school and the committee members.
- The inspector spoke to a selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Liz Kissane

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

Safeguarding is effective. Robust recruitment procedures are now in place to ensure both staff and committee members are suitable to work with children. All staff know and understand safeguarding procedures, which they follow closely to promote children's welfare and safety. Staff are alert for signs that children may be at risk, and know how to report concerns. The manager regularly monitors and reviews staff performance and supports staff's development. Teaching is strong. Staff use their recent training to develop children's language and communication skills. For example, they know whether to correct, repeat or extend children's language. All children, including those who speak English as an additional language, start to share ideas and conversations with growing confidence.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Children enjoy learning in the well-organised and stimulating environment. They develop skills in manipulating and exploring objects and materials. For example, they enjoy testing the flow of water through various apparatus. They have fun melting large chunks of ice and discover that the heat from their hands releases hidden objects such as glitter and models of animals as the ice melts. Staff expertly use these activities to extend children's learning. For example, about animals that live in cold places or what makes snow fall. Children count, name shapes and compare sizes. They make different colours by mixing paint and explore patterns and shapes that different objects make in the paint. Parents say that the pre-school prepares their children very well for school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children's behaviour is good. Staff speak considerately with children and model good manners, for example, at lunchtime when they sit and eat with the children. Staff make learning fun by playing games with the children. Children take turns as they travel across a log trail outdoors and listen carefully as staff discreetly guide them to achieve the challenge. Staff know the children very well. They know when to assist children and when to give them time to work things out for themselves. Children learn to put on their own coats, and to choose appropriate clothing for different activities and weathers. They know when they need to take a rest. They help themselves to a range of healthy snacks. Staff deal with their individual care needs to a high standard.

Outcomes for children are good

All children make good progress, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children develop positive attitudes to learning and to each other. They enjoy challenges, become independent and resilient. They become attentive listeners and develop concentration skills. They learn to handle books and develop early reading and writing skills. Children learn a good range of skills that prepare them for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY356433
Local authority	Bedford Borough
Inspection number	1115870
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	40
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518986
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2017
Telephone number	01234 400114

Stepping Stones Pre-School registered in 2007. It is managed by a voluntary management committee. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until midday and from midday to 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school employs six staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above.

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