

Stepping Stones Pre-School



Daven Primary School, New Street, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 3AH

Inspection date 13 March 2018
Previous inspection date 11 July 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
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 leadership and management of the pre-school are good. The manager and staff are supported by an experienced committee and local professionals. Together they monitor the quality of the provision. They plan improvements based on the latest research, especially for developing children's communication skills.
- Staff use their assessments of children's abilities to plan several small-group times throughout the day, to provide targeted teaching. This helps children to move forward in their learning. Children develop very good levels of concentration and persevere with activities for a considerable period of time.
- The bright, inviting and well-equipped indoor play space encourages children's independence. It is complemented by an equally interesting outdoor area which provides a wide range of activities for children who prefer to learn outdoors.
- Children and parents have warm relationships with staff. Parents praise the friendly staff who go, 'Above and beyond' to support them and their children. Children are confident and happy. They are well behaved and play cooperatively with their friends and they show good levels of imagination and creativity.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Current arrangements for staff development do not focus strongly enough on raising the already good standard of teaching to an even higher level.
- Although the majority of activities are well planned, there are occasions in group times and general play where children are not encouraged enough to develop their understanding of letters and the sounds they represent and mathematical concepts.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- increase opportunities for staff to enhance their ongoing professional development and identify ways that their teaching can be even more effective in supporting children to make the very best progress
- provide more opportunities for all children to develop their understanding of letters and the sounds they represent and mathematical concepts.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the pre-school manager and spoke briefly to the committee chairperson and a second committee member. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Sarah Rhodes

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The manager encourages staff to evaluate the care and learning provided. She values their ideas about how things can be improved. There is a happy and calm atmosphere and staff have a good capacity to continue to improve. Safeguarding is effective. Staff have a good understanding of what constitutes a safeguarding concern and what they should do about any issues. Staff are encouraged to undertake training and further qualifications. The manager observes staff's teaching and reviews their assessments of children's progress to ensure they are accurate. Parents are pleased with children's progress. They feel well informed and supported to help their children's learning at home. Staff work with other providers and school to ensure they exchange information about children's abilities to effectively plan for children moving between provisions.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff like children to lead their play and learning and leave plenty of opportunities for children to make their own choices during free play. Staff are well motivated and fully immerse themselves in children's play. They ask pertinent questions and introduce new words to children. Staff use a varied range of teaching initiatives to specifically support children's communication and language development. They work with a wide range of professionals to gather advice on how they can further help children who are progressing less quickly than their peers. Staff consider individual children's learning needs so activities can be tailored to children's abilities. For example, children who need a more active group at registration time use the corridor area or children who will soon move on to school have targeted sessions aimed at consolidating the skills they need.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children's behaviour is good. Staff act as good role models and offer children age-appropriate guidance and reminders so that they know what is expected from them. Children are very independent, they confidently manage their own toileting needs and their lunchboxes at lunchtime. At snack time they develop their physical skills and an understanding of a healthy diet as they help to prepare their own snacks and have discussions with staff.

Outcomes for children are good

Staff are involved in a number of initiatives to raise attainment, especially in children's communication skills. Children are encouraged to become confident communicators in both small- and large-group situations. Children make good progress during their time at the pre-school from their starting points, which are sometimes lower than typical for their age. Children develop a wide range of skills. They enthusiastically use information technology equipment, look carefully at storybook pictures and retell a story or develop physical skills as they make up bouquets in the role-play florist. Assessments are undertaken for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures plans are in place to help build on their abilities and support them when they move on to school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	305341
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	1103493
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP524277
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2014
Telephone number	01260 297924

Stepping Stones Pre-School registered in 1994. It is run by a voluntary committee. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications, one at level 4 and seven at level 3. The pre-school opens term time only, Monday from 11.45am until 3.30pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8.45am to 3.30pm and Friday from 9am until 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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