

Inspection of Stepping Stone Pre School (Knebworth)

The Sporting Pavillion, Knebworth Recreation Ground, Off Watton Road, Knebworth SG3 6AH

Inspection date: 9 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children have a thoroughly enjoyable time while at pre-school. They develop strong bonds with staff and demonstrate that they feel emotionally safe and secure. Staff provide children with positive praise to build their self-esteem. Children make firm friendships with other children and behave well. They learn practical life skills, such as preparing their snacks and tidying away their toys.

Children listen attentively to stories and eagerly speculate about the characters and what happens next. Staff offer children innovative experiences, such as the 'curiosity corner', where children can explore unusual objects. Staff encourage children to investigate different materials, such as cornflour and water, which leads to much fun and laughter. Children use numbers with confidence. They count out loud as they build with blocks and sort toys into size, shape and colour.

Staff use repetitive themes to help children consolidate their learning. For example, children count the days of the week and remember what the date was yesterday. Staff set out plentiful resources and activities for children. They have a good understanding of children's individual interests, which helps them to tailor activities to meet children's learning needs.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Staff know the children well and understand their individual interests and learning styles. They make regular assessments of children's achievements and use their knowledge effectively to plan activities that promote children's good progress. Staff skilfully adapt activities to enable children with different abilities to learn at their own pace.
- Children experience varied physical activities that enhance their health and well-being. They play energetically outdoors, learn yoga and dance to music. Staff positively promote children's understanding of healthy eating. They discuss healthy food choices with children and provide nutritious snacks.
- Staff successfully focus on ways that help children to acquire new language and extend their vocabulary. They engage children in wide-ranging conversations. For example, they encourage children to talk about their holiday experiences. Older children learn the letters of their names and the sounds that go with them. This helps them to prepare for the next stage of their education.
- Children demonstrate a good understanding of how to share and take turns. They use tools, such as timers, to decide who goes next with a favourite toy. Staff encourage polite behaviour through their own warm and friendly interactions.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from strong support. Staff undertake additional training, such as behaviour management,

and work well with parents to include children in the activities. Managers carefully assess children's needs so any extra funding can be spent wisely.

- Parents speak highly of the pre-school and the staff. They say staff gather detailed information about their children, which helps them to settle quickly. Parents value home visits and the regular meetings they have with their children's key person.
- Managers and staff work well together to plan and provide successfully for children's development and well-being. They undertake reading and research to enhance their teaching skills. The management committee has a good overview of the pre-school and provides effective support. Regular meetings enable staff to share their ideas and enhance their practice.
- Staff do not make the most of opportunities to help children to broaden their understanding of the wider community around them or each other's diverse cultures and lifestyles.
- While staff help children develop independence in practical skills, they do not always consider how they can inspire children to think creatively about what they want to do and how they can achieve their aims.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have a good understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. They regularly update their knowledge of wider aspects of safeguarding, such as the 'Prevent' duty. The manager follows thorough recruitment procedures and reviews the ongoing suitability to staff. There are clear procedures to follow if allegations are made against members of staff. All this helps to keep children safe from harm.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance children's understanding of the wider community and each other's diverse cultures and lifestyles
- provide children with greater opportunities to think creatively about their activities and consider how they can achieve their aims.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY452006
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10121819
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	Stepping Stone Pre-School Knebworth Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP907489
Telephone number	01438 813070
Date of previous inspection	25 October 2012

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stone Pre School (Knebworth) re-registered in 2012 but has been established since 1992. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff, including the manager. Of these, five have relevant qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 8.30am until 3.30pm during school term time. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Veronica Sharpe

Inspection activities

- The inspector carried out a joint evaluation of a planned activity with the manager. She observed children and staff to assess the quality of teaching, and the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at all areas of the building used by the children and the resources available to them. She spoke with staff, children and parents during the inspection.
- The inspector sampled documents, including children's records, evidence of the suitability of staff and their qualifications. She spoke with two members of the management committee about their overview of the pre-school.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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