

# Inspection of Stepping Stones Pre School

Ascension Church Hall, Claude Avenue, Oldfield Park, Bath BA2 1AG

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Inspection date: 3 November 2022

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b> |
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|--------------------------|-------------|
| The quality of education | <b>Good</b> |
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|                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Behaviour and attitudes | <b>Good</b> |
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|----------------------|-------------|
| Personal development | <b>Good</b> |
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|---------------------------|-------------|
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b> |
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| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |
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## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is good

Children form strong and beneficial relationships with their key persons and the other staff working at the pre-school, which helps to foster their confidence and well-being very effectively. Staff are very kind and extremely patient. Children flourish on the individual attention they receive. Parents say that staff are flexible in their approach for each child and what works best for them, and that they can absolutely trust their child is valued, safe, nurtured and thriving at the pre-school.

Staff create a calm and caring atmosphere. Their thoughtful, sensitive interactions provide good support for children. Staff plan interesting new experiences and group times to extend children's knowledge and skills. Children's communication, language and social skills develop effectively, including children who speak English as an additional language and two-year-olds in receipt of funding. Their confidence and self-awareness progress well. For instance, children happily reply to staff who use greetings in their home language, and staff encourage other children to do the same. Staff offer strong, consistent support to develop children's speech and progress their skills, modelling language and using actions and signs to reinforce their messages and ensure that children understand. Children listen well and are keen to learn. They proudly recognise different noises in a sound game. They enjoy stories and readily join in with songs and action games.

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

- Staff observe children as they play, tracking their achievements carefully. They know children well and develop good partnerships with parents. Staff ensure that there is a strong two-way flow of information with parents through daily chats, entries in the pre-school's online system and regular parents' meetings. Staff follow children's interests and focus carefully on their individual learning needs, home cultures, languages, and religions.
- Children make good progress. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need additional help are closely supported. Leaders and staff, such as the special educational needs coordinator, give high priority to working with other professionals. They identify and carry out interventions to enable children to achieve their potential and be well prepared for their move on to school.
- Children are curious and are keen to explore and create. They connect blocks and construct items such as an aeroplane. They pay attention to details and carefully select blocks of the right size and colour for their design. However, staff do not always plan activities to encourage children to experiment in their own ways. Some creative areas lack variety, or staff do not adapt activities to help children test out their ideas and try different techniques and materials. Consequently, children's creative thinking and exploration does not develop as

much as it could.

- Staff are responsive to children's needs and quickly give lots of reassurance and support when children are upset or struggling to understand expectations. Children show respect for staff, listening to them and beginning to learn about the needs of others. They share toys and start to play cooperatively. Staff offer very timely and effective help for children who require additional support.
- Children are happy to take on challenges and do things for themselves. They proudly put their pictures into their tubs to ensure that they take them home. They tidy and put things away, helping staff carry mats to the cupboard. However, staff do not consistently encourage children with other tasks, such as getting their bags or putting their coats on. Additionally, at times, staff do things for the children instead of encouraging them to try for themselves, such as opening packets or peeling fruit. This means that children's sense of responsibility and self-care skills do not develop as much as possible.
- The long-standing staff team work well together. They hold daily briefings and regular meetings to share ideas and plans. Staff morale is high. The pre-school leader regularly conducts review meetings with staff. She supports them to attend training, focusing this on the changing needs of the children who attend. All staff show dedication to achieving good outcomes for the children, and effectively support children with a complex and diverse range of needs.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The pre-school leader undertakes higher-level child protection training. She uses this, together with regular updates from the local authority, to lead the safeguarding practice at the pre-school. Staff also refresh their knowledge through training. The staff team follows clear risk assessment procedures for all areas, implementing these well to effectively identify and minimise hazards to children. They understand what to do if they are worried about the children or if they have concerns about another member of staff. They are vigilant in their security procedures and their supervision of the children, to ensure that children receive good care and are kept safe.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- extend the opportunities for children to develop their creativity, supporting them to test out their ideas and develop their creative thinking and exploration as much as possible
- make the most of opportunities to encourage children to do things for themselves and develop their independence skills further.

## Setting details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                     | 133083  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                             | Bath and North East Somerset Council  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                           | 10234163  |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                           | Childcare on non-domestic premises  |
| <b>Registers</b>                                   | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| <b>Day care type</b>                               | Full day care   |
| <b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b> | 2 to 4  |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                      | 20  |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                  | 11  |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                   | Stepping Stones Pre-school (Bath) Committee                                       |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b>   | RP522173  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                            | 07811 973568  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                 | 23 February 2017  |

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Pre School registered in 1994 and is located in Oldfield Park, Bath. It operates on Mondays from 9am to 2.30pm, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am to 12.30pm, and on Thursdays from 9am to 1.30pm. There are four members of staff, of whom one has early years professional status and three hold an appropriate qualification at level 3. The pre-school provides funded places for children aged two, three and four years.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Rachel Howell

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the nominated individual, who is also the pre-school leader, and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provision.
- The inspector viewed all areas of the provision and discussed with the leader how these areas are used.
- The pre-school leader and the inspector evaluated the effectiveness of an activity together.
- The inspector observed the children and staff and spoke with them at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Parents shared their views of the provision with the inspector.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including suitability checks and paediatric first-aid qualifications.
- The leader discussed their safety and child protection procedures, and safeguarding discussions were undertaken with members of the staff team.

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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