

# Inspection of Stepping Stones Pre-School

Meadway School, Dunsfold Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG30 4NP

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Inspection date: 25 January 2023

<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 learn about Chinese culture and New Year celebrations. They have fun exploring chopsticks, food and dressing up in traditional Chinese clothes. These activities teach children about the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Children feel safe. They are confident to approach staff at the pre-school for help and reassurance. They explore plenty of fun activities inside the pre-school. Children take turns pretending to be a shopkeeper. They pack their shopping into bags and then pay for it. Staff help children to learn new words, such as 'squash' and 'sweet potato.' Children learn to take turns during their games. Staff encourage the use of sand timers to help children share when certain toys and games are popular.

Specially trained staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children enjoy an accessible room, which helps them to explore their senses and learn to communicate their needs. For example, children use picture timetables and exchange pictures with staff to communicate what they would like to do next. Children enjoy activities that encourage them to explore a range of fun items in a bucket. These activities are shared with parents to extend children's learning when they go home. Children form close bonds with staff. Staff make sure that all children integrate at the nursery and develop skills from carefully planned activities.

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

- Managers and staff are extremely knowledgeable about the needs of the children and their local community. They work closely with a range of local services to make sure all children have the support they need. Children make good progress in their learning and development.
- Managers have addressed previous recommendations and arranged bespoke training for staff. The whole team has developed its knowledge of teaching early mathematics. Members of the team also completed training to develop their communication with younger children. Managers regularly observe staff practice and support staff to develop their teaching skills.
- Children are encouraged to develop a wide range of independence skills to help them prepare for school. For example, they hang up their own coats and learn to recognise their names on the pegs as they arrive each day. Younger children learn to wash up their plates after lunch and help to tidy up their playroom.
- Overall, children are engaged in activities and benefit from the learning opportunities planned for them indoors. However, sometimes, the organisation of activities throughout the day results in lots of children sharing the same space. At times, this can become noisy, and some children struggle to concentrate on planned tasks. This does not enable some children to benefit

from the planned learning intentions.

- Staff assess what children know and can do. They identify areas where children need extra help and then plan activities to support children to fill gaps in their learning. For example, staff plan physical activities for children who need to develop their balance and coordination. They also plan many opportunities for children to learn how to share and take turns.
- Children enjoy the opportunity to sit together at mealtimes. Staff develop conversations and join children to eat their lunch. However, some children are not eating food that is sufficiently nutritious. This does not give them the best opportunities to be healthy and develop an understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- Managers use funding to make sure that all children have equal opportunities to go on trips and gain experiences that develop their understanding of the natural world. They organise expert help for children who need extra support with their communication and language. Managers make sure that staff are trained to implement communication strategies, helping children to express their needs.
- Children have daily opportunities to get fresh air and exercise outdoors. They develop their balance and coordination by climbing on equipment and using ride-on toys to move around the garden area.
- Parents speak highly of the support given to their children. They are enthusiastic to join the committee and contribute to plans for their children's learning. Management feel well supported by the committee. They look forward to planned events, which will help form closer partnerships with parents and enhance children's learning.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Parents report that their children feel safe and secure at the setting. Staff all know who to report concerns to if they are worried about a child's welfare. They undertake regular training to develop their knowledge about the many ways they can keep children safe. All staff describe a range of indicators that would give them concerns about a child. Managers quickly follow up any non-attendance to check on children's welfare. Staff supervise children closely and ensure they complete headcounts during garden play to ensure children's safety.

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

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

- review the organisation of resources and group opportunities, indoors and outdoors, to support children to concentrate and engage further with their learning
- consider further ways to work in partnership with parents to support children to eat a nutritious diet and develop healthy lifestyles.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY275967
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	10234768
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	60
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	60
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP522049
<b>Telephone number</b>	01189429492
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 March 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School registered in 2001. It is located in Tilehurst, Reading. The pre-school is open term time only, Monday to Friday, from 8.45am until 11.45am for three- and four-year olds. The pre-school provides services for two-year olds on Monday to Friday, from midday to 3pm, and offers all-day spaces for three- and four-year olds from 8.45am to 2.45pm. There is a lunch club from Monday to Friday, 11.45am to 12.45pm. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The setting employs 13 staff, 11 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Charlotte Foster

## 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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The managers and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The special educational needs coordinators spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector assessed staff's understanding of how to keep children safe.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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