

Inspection of Stepping Stones Preschool

Avonway Community Centre, 36 Shaftesbury Street, FORDINGBRIDGE, Hampshire
SP6 1JF

Inspection date: 22 February 2024

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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy, confident, and settled at the welcoming pre-school. Staff greet them warmly on arrival. Staff are kind and gentle in their approach to children. This helps children to feel safe and secure. Children demonstrate that they are happy to attend the pre-school. They initiate conversation with staff and hug them warmly. Staff are attentive to children's needs. They sensitively guide children to follow routines, such as self-registering attendance, and to participate in the activities that have been set up for them to enjoy. These experiences support children to settle and understand rules and procedures.

Children benefit from valuable experiences to support their knowledge and understanding of their local community. Staff teach children about emergency services. For example, fire officers visit the pre-school and talk to the children about their roles. Children enjoy sitting in the fire engine and using the hosepipe. This experience supports children to learn about people who help us in the community and to broaden their understanding of how to stay safe.

Children are confident communicators. They initiate conversation and share their ideas for play. Staff recognise the importance of developing children's language skills. They incorporate music and song into daily routines and activities that support children's developing communication and language skills. For example, children enjoy singing while pretending to be little bunnies and repeat new words that staff have modelled. These experiences help children to build a range of vocabulary.

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

- Leaders implement effective strategies to promote staff well-being. Leaders ensure that staff have regular opportunities to discuss how they are getting on and any issues they might have. They ensure that staff complete mandatory training and encourage them to seek out training of interest. However, current systems are not robust enough to coach and support less-experienced staff to deliver activities that fully engage children.
- Leaders have a well-thought-out curriculum. They know what they want children to learn and be able to do. They understand the importance of sequencing children's learning to help them to make good progress. Leaders place a strong focus on supporting children's developing independence, communication and language, and preparation for their next stage of learning at school.
- Leaders support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. They work closely with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists and portage workers, to develop strategies to support each child to meet their individual targets. Leaders work in partnership with parents to help

them to use these strategies at home. This helps to provide children with continuity of care and to help close gaps in their learning and development.

- Staff have established secure parent partnerships. Parents comment that they feel very supported by staff and that children make good progress. Leaders accompany parents to school transition meetings and meetings with other professionals. Staff provide regular feedback about children's learning and development. This helps parents to understand the progress that their children are making.
- Overall, children behave well and interact positively with staff and each other. However, when children display inappropriate behaviour, staff do not always use consistent strategies to manage this effectively. For example, some children shout and push each other when queueing to wash their hands, and staff remind children to wait quietly. However, when children do not respond, staff do not always provide children with clear boundaries. This means that children do not always know what is expected of them.
- Staff support children's physical development well. Children benefit from regular opportunities to access fresh air and exercise. Children develop their core strength while using the climbing frame, and develop hand-to-eye coordination during ball games. Staff support children to adopt healthy lifestyles. They use funding to purchase boxes filled with fruit and vegetables to help ensure that all children have access to healthy foods.
- Staff support children to be independent. They encourage children to wash and dry their hands, use the toilet, and get their own belongings. Children choose from a variety of resources and activities indoors and outdoors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance the arrangements to support and coach staff to identify and address minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
- provide consistent boundaries and strategies for children to help them to understand the expectations for behaviour so they learn the impact that their actions may have on others.

Setting details

Unique reference number	511673
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10317281
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	35
Number of children on roll	23
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Pre School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP906822
Telephone number	01425653517
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Preschool registered in 1997 and is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9am to 3pm, during term time only. Children may attend for a half day or a full day. The pre-school receives early education funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are nine members of staff working with the children. Of these, eight members of staff hold relevant qualifications at level 3 and one member of staff is an apprentice.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Loretta Murphy

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 her evaluation of the pre-school.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss how the provider supports children's learning.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The manager evaluated children's learning during activities with the inspector.
- The inspector viewed a sample of key documentation.
- Parents shared their views of the provision with the inspector.

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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