

Stepping Stones Pre-School



Lee Chapel South Community Hall, Kibcaps, The Knares,, BASILDON, Essex, SS16 5RX

Inspection date	24 May 2016
Previous inspection date	28 September 2015

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	3
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Inadequate	4
Outcomes for children		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is inadequate

- Leaders have failed to meet actions set at the previous inspection regarding recruitment procedures for staff to ensure all adults are suitable to work with, or be involved with children.
- The system in place to monitor the accuracy of the assessments made by staff is not good enough.
- Expectations of leaders are not high enough. They do not have a clear picture of the strengths and weakness of the setting. This hinders their abilities to make improvements.
- Some aspects of teaching require improvement. The assessment systems only records the achievements in the prime areas of learning and staff do not incorporate the next steps in learning and children interest into planning of activities.
- Sufficient focus is not place on providing a safe learning environment.

It has the following strengths

- Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and benefit from positive relationships with the staff.
- Parents hold the pre-school in high regard and comment positively about the supportive and caring relationships staff form with them.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improve the procedures for the recruitment of staff by ensuring that references are taken up so that leaders can be assured that adults are suitable to work with children 	01/07/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improve systems for assessing and tracking children's progress so that it includes all seven areas of learning 	01/07/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure ongoing assessment is used to inform the planning of challenging activities that sharply focus on children's individual learning needs and interests, helping them to make the best possible progress 	01/07/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that robust risk assessment are carried out and appropriate action is taken to keep children safe. 	01/07/2016

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

- make better use of self-evaluation to measure performance and set precise targets to deliver practice of a good standard.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and its impact on children's learning both indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including evidence of staff and committee suitability, records of the progress children have made, planning documents and evidence to show the improvements that have been made to the pre-school provision.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and of the pre-school's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and the deputy manager.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times throughout the inspection.

Inspector

Susan Brockhouse Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is inadequate

Safeguarding arrangements are not effective. Recruitment procedures are not rigorous enough and do not ensure that new staff employed are suitable because references have not been obtained. Leaders have met their legal responsibility to notify us of changes to the committee. Most staff have attended safeguarding training and are able to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse. Since the last inspection, the provider has been supported by the local authority and some improvements have been made in terms of the quality of the observations made by staff and tracking children's progress. However, self-evaluation remains weak because leaders do not have high enough expectations of what staff and children can achieve. They fail to monitor practice effectively in order to identify and remedy the inconsistencies in teaching. Although supervision meetings are held, these are not used effectively to target variations in practice to help teaching to improve.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

The quality and use of assessments of children's progress vary. Not all staff accurately identify where children are in their learning. They concentrate their assessments only on the prime areas of learning for children of all ages. Consequently, they do not have a full understanding of what children can and cannot do. Despite this, staff follow procedure and seek appropriate support when they have concerns about children's development. Staff plan enjoyable activities, but they do not take sufficient account of children's individual learning needs to ensure that they make good progress. They enable children to practise their developing language skills and provide opportunities for children to develop physical skills. For example, children of all ages like rolling tyres down the slope, playing running games and making marks with water on the fence. Most staff use questioning appropriately to support children's learning. For example, when playing with the sand, they encourage children to add water and ask them to describe what is different between wet and dry sand.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

Children's welfare is compromised because the provider has failed to check the suitability of all staff. In addition, potential hazards to children such as being able to lock themselves in a toilet cubicle have not been identified. Other hazards, for instance the broken drain cover, have been identified and reported but staff have taken no action to reduce the risk while they wait for it to be repaired or replaced. Effective arrangements are in place to gather information from parents about their children when they first start. Staff provide useful information to parents through displays and newsletters. They gently remind them to provide healthy snack for their children and of the need to be vigilant at arrival and departure time to keep children safe. Most staff offer them gentle guidance and praise, which helps them to mainly behave well.

Outcomes for children require improvement

Overall, most children make steady progress in their learning. They are happy and engage in self-chosen activities. Children are developing their communication and language skills. Older children take part in phonics sessions and mark-making activities. Children count to

10 as they play Hopscotch and confidentially identify colours and numbers. They are developing socially; they are beginning to cooperate with their peers to play and share ideas and equipment. These help to provide children with some of the key skills required for future learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	402243
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	1041085
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	45
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	28 September 2015
Telephone number	07711 637159

Stepping Stones Pre-School was registered in 1964. The pre-school employs seven members of staff. All staff hold an appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school opens during school term time only. The sessions Monday to Friday from 8:45am until 11:45am and 12:15pm until 3:15pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for three and four-year-old children. The pre-school supports children who speak English as an additional language.

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