

Inspection of Stepping Stones Pre School Play and Learn

Alrewas Village Hall, Wellfield Road, Alrewas, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13
7HB

Inspection date: 7 July 2025

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 develop strong emotional security in a calm environment with a consistent routine. To celebrate achievements, staff place encouraging notes in children's lunch boxes for parents and carers to read. They use one-to-one support and additional funding to ensure disadvantaged children achieve well and access the same experiences as their peers. A portable growing area enhances children's cultural capital, giving them the opportunity to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Staff consistently model good manners and respectful behaviour by actively listening to children and valuing their contributions. They praise acts of kindness, helping children to recognise what positive behaviour looks like. Positive interactions boost children's engagement throughout the day. For example, staff encourage children to conduct their own headcounts before going outside and appoint daily helpers to carry out purposeful tasks, such as giving out name cards at lunchtime. These opportunities help to build children's confidence and strengthen their self-help skills.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene through well-established routines. For example, they wash their hands independently while happily singing a handwashing song to reinforce each step. They practise handwashing techniques during foam play, showing that good habits are embedded in their learning. Children explain to staff why handwashing matters, demonstrating their understanding. Staff further support healthy habits by encouraging children to make nutritious food choices.

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

- Ambitious leaders effectively manage the setting, supporting both staff and children. For instance, they seek staff's input on training needs, monitor workload and well-being, and maintain a clear focus on continuous improvement. Staff meet each morning to discuss children's interests and ways to challenge their learning. They report feeling well supported and valued.
- Staff create a new learning environment each day. They recognise that every child is unique and plan with them in mind. For instance, they choose activities and resources that reflect current topics of interest, such as the 'seaside'. However, on occasion, some staff do not implement the curriculum as effectively as intended, reducing children's progress towards expected learning outcomes.
- Staff ensure that children feel part of the community by providing them with hands-on experiences. For example, children regularly visit the local shop to observe everyday activities such as selecting and paying for food. They take part in fundraising and village events, fostering a sense of social responsibility.
- Staff invite local volunteers and service providers into the setting to enrich the

curriculum. For example, paramedics teach children about emergency services, while a dentist supports the setting's focus on promoting oral health. These connections help children to deepen their understanding of the world.

- Children develop a positive attitude towards mathematics through frequent opportunities to practise. For example, staff introduce counting songs during group time, hide coins in the sand for children to find and count, and encourage them to compare raspberry sizes at mealtimes. These activities foster children's confidence and curiosity in early mathematics.
- Staff provide a wide range of physical play opportunities to support children's gross and fine motor development. They lead activities such as scarf dancing and parachute play to encourage movement and coordination. Children make marks in the sand, developing early writing skills. Even the youngest of children show increasing control as they use tweezers to pick up pom-poms.
- Staff use communication tools to identify the support children need to progress in their language skills. Taking ownership of their roles, they actively engage in training to learn about the local referral process. This ensures that children at risk of falling behind receive timely support when needed.
- Staff have built strong, positive relationships with parents. Ongoing parent surveys highlight the progress the setting has made. All parents report that their children are happy and treated fairly. Many describe the setting as 'like a family' and feel that staff genuinely care about their children.
- Parents have an excellent understanding of developmental targets and receive strong support to extend their children's learning at home. For example, staff place coloured stickers on older children's shoes to encourage meaningful conversations about patterns outside of the setting.
- Staff help ease the transition to school by inviting teachers into the setting to meet children and sharing practical tips with parents to support school readiness at home. However, when children share their education across two settings, staff do not consistently share information to promote continuity in learning.

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:

- continue to develop staff practice to improve the already good level of teaching so that children further benefit from the desired curriculum intentions
- develop partnerships with other childcare settings that children attend to promote continuity in their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	218625
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10394871
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 at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	31
Name of registered person	Alrewas Stepping Stones Pre School Play And Learn
Registered person unique reference number	RP520143
Telephone number	07890530616
Date of previous inspection	30 September 2019

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Pre School Play and Learn registered in 1992 and is situated in Alrewas, Burton-on-Trent. The setting employs six members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The setting is open Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 9am to 3pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Mikaela Stallard

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk to discuss the intentions for children's learning.
- The inspector and manager carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children throughout the day and evaluated the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The views of parents were considered by the inspector through verbal discussions.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability of those working with children.

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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