

Stepping Stones Local Offer Autumn 2014



Business Name and Ofsted Number

Stepping Stones Pre School
Ofsted number: 133083

Who is your SEND contact?

Sue Cullingford SENCO
Nicky Sparkes Pre School Leader

Provide a short paragraph about your ethos/mission statement for including children and young people with SEND. How do you aim to meet the unique needs of the child?

At Stepping Stones Pre School we provide a secure, happy and stimulating environment for children. Our dedicated staff team aim to provide inclusive opportunities for all the children who attend, including those with SEND. By the use of observations, careful planning and the appropriate choice of resources, we all work towards meeting the unique needs of each child.

How do you identify that a child is not meeting appropriate age related milestones and what do you do in this case? How do you find out what matters to the child and their family?

At Stepping Stones we operate a Key Person system. This means that each member of staff has a number of Key Children who they work with. The Key Person observes and records information about each of their children and maintains a learning journal.

By spending time with the children and by keeping careful records and undertaking observations we are able to make informed assessments using the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) to identify the levels at which the children are working. In turn we are then able to identify where children are not reaching age appropriate milestones.

If we feel that a child is not reaching age appropriate levels, then we will identify areas for development. If we feel that some additional support is appropriate then we will liaise with external professionals and agencies, and make a referral if it is appropriate.

By developing and maintaining close relationships with our children and their families, we are able to find out what matters to them and we use this information to shape how we move forward.

How do you promote positive relationships and ensure good, ongoing communication with families? How will families know what progress their children are making, how to access additional support and what they can do at home to help?

At Stepping Stones we pride ourselves on the positive and close relationships which we develop with our parents and carers. We keep parents and carers up to date with what their children have been up to in a number of different ways.

Firstly, through informal chats at the beginnings and ends of sessions.

Secondly, by writing a daily report on the notice board. Thirdly, by distributing a termly newsletter to all families. Fourthly, by carrying out reviews of the children 3 times a year. We undertake a written review which we then go through with the parents and carers at a time suitable to them.

We ensure that we provide opportunity for parents and carers to come in and speak to us if they have concerns. We always aim to speak to them at the first available opportunity.

By working closely with families, we feel confident to discuss what is happening at Pre School and at home and make suggestions about approaches that can be adopted which will provide continuity.

How will you communicate with other providers who care for a child or with providers who will be caring for the child? How do you support children to experience a smooth transition to school or a different situation?

At Stepping Stones we have a number of children who attend another Pre School or nursery or go to a childminder for part of their week. We maintain clear lines of communication with them. We talk directly to the child minders who drop off or pick up and report back to them about positive and negative aspects of the day.

When requested we can keep a diary for another setting to say what the child has been up to and any concerns we may have and how we are working to resolve them. We also speak directly to Key Workers at other settings.

Our experienced staff are very aware of the need for support at times of transition. This can be when children move from Pre School to school Reception or simply when the children stop one element of the day and move onto another.

We provide help for moving onto school by identifying children who feel could benefit from additional support. A number of schools we feed into run a Get Set For School programme, which provides additional opportunity for the children to visit their new schools in order to help them settle. We also work closely with the schools highlighting any areas where additional help or support is needed, also sharing the children's achievements.

We have experience of working with children who find it tricky to negotiate change. We have successfully worked with the children and their families to find strategies which assisted in overcoming these stressful times.

How do you provide an enabling environment for all the children in your care? Are there quiet areas and fully accessible spaces? What other adjustments can you make? What about the physical environment in and outside your setting?

Through careful planning and choice of resources we provide an environment which is both inviting and enabling for all of our children.

Stepping Stones is a pack away Pre School based in a church hall.

Our main hall is large and open and can be arranged to accommodate children with various needs. We have different areas such as a quiet book corner, a creative area, role play, construction, sand or water and an investigation station.

As a shared hall some areas are less accessible. For example there is a single step to gain entry to the hall. Also, currently there is no disabled toilet facility in the hall but access can be gained to one in the adjoining church.

Please contact us directly if you have any specific questions relating to our accessibility.

In addition to our large hall we have use of the church garden. The garden is reached down a gravelled lane at the back of the hall. We spend time in the garden as a group and as such the children are under constant supervision.

What qualities, skills and experience do you and your staff have to support a child's unique needs?

Our team of caring, calm and nurturing staff has many years of Early Years experience behind it. Two members of staff hold the EYPS (Early Years Professional Status) qualification (Level 6). While the other two hold Level 3 and 2 qualifications respectively. Three of us have children of our own who have attended Stepping Stones in previous years.

We continue to extend our professional development by attending regular training courses such as SENCO, Equal Opportunities, Child Protection, First Aid, Kick Start and most currently New To Two.