



Stepping Stones Playschool

Prospectus 2023/24

About Stepping Stones Playschool

SSP is a family run business which has been operating for 21 years. It has been situated within the school since 2005 after moving from the local community centre.

Mission Statement

The Stepping Stones ethos is the recognition of childhood in its own right-not just as a step to formal education. Our philosophy is 'Playing to Learn' and our priority is supporting the children to be happy, engaged, confident, resilient and independent.

Everyone having links with the group will welcome, support, value and respect each other.

Staff will work hard to provide the best quality care by establishing close links with parent/carers, other settings, schools and outside agencies.

First Days

Starting playschool is a big step and although exciting can also be an unsettling time for both the parent and child.

To help with this, when possible, we offer home visits before children start with the group. All children offered a place are also given the opportunity to visit for at least two 'stay and play' sessions. This is intended to provide time for the parent and child to familiarise themselves with the setting, meet the staff and ask any questions they may have. It will also reassure you that the children are happy, safe and settled in a stimulating environment.

As part of the settling in process we ask that every child sends in family photos. This will offer opportunities for discussion and support for your child in the settling in process.

The Setting

Stepping Stones Playschool is composed of two class bases- each accommodating up to 26 children- and a large outside play area. The outside area is divided to accommodate the two classes.

The preschool operates from two class bases- Explorers (the toddler room) and Adventurers (the preschool room). The curriculum in each room is planned to support the needs of the current cohort. Using our 'Playing

to Learn' attitude, staff plan a differentiated curriculum, providing experiences to support each child develop the skills, confidence and resilience they need to build friendships and meet new challenges.

Session Options

Stepping Stones operates from 8.30am-3.00pm Monday-Thursday and 8.30am-12.30pm on Fridays. Universal Free Entitlement can be accessed in three-hour blocks morning and afternoon. Lunch sessions are offered Monday-Thursday 11.30am-12.00pm and can be used to join morning and afternoon sessions (please note this may be subject to a non-refundable security). Children eligible for Extended Funding can access 30 hours of childcare. *For full details of how we offer Free Entitlement please refer to the current Policy Document.* All sessions are regularly staffed and the children will be surrounded by familiar adults with whom they will feel confident and secure.

Outside play

We have a large enclosed play area which is both paved and grassed. The area is divided to give each class access to a designated area. The access gates are kept securely locked during sessions.

The garden is regularly checked to ensure it is clean and safe for play. Outside play is carefully supervised allowing children to enjoy the benefits of fresh air in a safe, stimulating environment.

Outside play incorporates all the activities carried out in the classroom, both free play and more structured sessions.

Outside play also gives opportunities for the children to become involved in gardening projects where they can tend to seeds and plants, as well as using the natural habitat to view insects and animals.

The children may spend a large part of the session outside and we would encourage them to be appropriately dressed for the conditions. A peg and shoe box are provided for the children to store their belongings. A coat and wellies are needed for colder weather and during warm spells we encourage the children to use 'Slip, Slap, Slop' (slip on a t-shirt, slap on a hat and slop on some sun cream). We appreciate your support with this.

Key Person

We believe that for a child to progress, close links between home and setting are essential. As part of the settling in process, when possible, we

carry out home visits. This provides an opportunity for a more detailed discussion about your child and a chance for both you and your child to meet your key person. If this is not possible, a suitable time for a meeting will be arranged for your key person to gather information about your child before they start at the setting.

The key person will monitor your child's progress and liaise closely with you to plan the 'next steps' in their development. Your key person is there to share achievements from home, discuss progress and talk through any concerns you may have.

'Family' learning Journal

As part of our comprehensive nursery management system, a secure online record of your child's progress is maintained. It will be regularly updated to include photos and written observations of your child. It can be accessed any time and parents are encouraged to add photos and comments. The system can be shared with other family members (by the parent/carer).

Family Volunteer sessions

We would like to invite families to participate in our Family Volunteer sessions. Spending part of a session playing alongside your child provides an opportunity for you to see your child among their playschool friends, get to know the staff better and, if you wish, to speak to your child's key person about their progress.

Please remember, it is not just parent/carers who can participate in these sessions, Grandparents, Aunts or Uncles can also take a turn! Please speak to a member of staff to arrange a suitable time or for further details.

General Information

<p>Start/ Finish Times</p>	<p>The playschool operates from 8.30am-3.00pm Mon-Thurs and 8.30am-12.30pm Fri. Free Entitlement is offered in line with the current 'Free Entitlement Policy'.</p> <p>We ask that whenever possible families do not drive to playschool and if necessary, cars are parked away from the gate and the final part of the journey is on foot.</p> <p>At the start of session, you are encouraged to line up on the path outside the main gate. A member of staff will welcome your child and they will be encouraged to walk to their class teachers.</p> <p>At the end of the session, the external gate will be opened and you are asked to line up outside your child's class to collect your child. The children will be encouraged to remain seated in the class until the member of staff on the door calls them individually as their parent/carer reaches the front of the queue.</p>
<p>Late drop off/ collection</p>	<p>The main gate is locked once the children are in the building. Late arrivals will need to contact the office. Please collect your child promptly at the end of their session-staff are not concerned if you arrive late-but, it may be distressing for your child. If you are inexplicably delayed picking up your child, staff are required to try all emergency contact numbers you provided. If no-one has been contacted within half an hour of the session ending, staff must inform the Social Care Team. A fee is due for late collection-please see the 'Payment Policy' for details.</p>
<p>Fees</p>	<p>Invoices are sent out each half term and fees are due weekly or monthly <i>in advance</i>. The current session fee for a non-funded child is £6.00 for 2-year-olds and £5.00 for 3 & 4-year-olds per hour. Failure to pay your child's fees in line with the Payment Policy will result in the place being withdrawn. Court action is always taken to recover unpaid debt.</p> <p>Payment can be made via the Family app and we also accept cash, credit and debit cards as well as childcare vouchers.</p>
<p>Snack</p>	<p>Water is available throughout every session. There is a small charge for snack-20p per session up to a maximum of £1.50 pw). Snack is offered to all children during</p>

	<p>every session with a 'rolling snack bar' operating in Adventurer class which is open during the free flow session. Children are offered a choice of snacks to eat and either milk or water to drink.</p>
Holidays/ sickness	<p>Please let a member of staff know if your child will be absent during term time for a holiday or is absent due to sickness as a sudden unexplained absence may result in your child's place being withdrawn. Unfortunately, fees are still due during times of absence whether or not we have been informed.</p>
Security	<p>The outside gate is kept locked during sessions. The children are always supervised when accessing the outside areas.</p>
Clothing	<p>We provide aprons for messy play and while the children are encouraged to wear them, they may get very dirty! We promote the 'process' rather than the 'product' and children can experiment with messy materials. Please ensure your child comes to playschool in 'old' clothes suitable for activities which may involve paint, clay, water and gardening as we cannot guarantee that all marks will come out (although we do use 'child-friendly' products). Uniform is available to order and (although not compulsory) we recommend your child wears this. Appropriate clothing for the weather should be provided. We ask that you provide two pairs of shoes for sessions- plimsolls are required for inside the classroom and wellies or 'cros' for outside depending on the weather. We ask that you provide footwear that your child can manage themselves with adult support (laces or open toed shoes are not suitable). A coat peg and shoe box are provided to store your child's belongings during session. ALL ITEMS MUST BE NAMED.</p>
Toilet/ nappies	<p>All the children are reminded to go to the toilet at regular intervals and staff are on hand to provide help if needed. However, in case your child should have a toileting accident we ask you to send in a change of clothes every session. There is a screened area in each class for nappy changing. Staff will work closely with parent/carers to support their child's toilet training.</p>

Illness and Infectious diseases	If we believe a child may be ill their temperature will be taken using a 'non-touch' thermometer and appropriate action taken. When notified that a child has an infectious disease or condition including mumps, measles, chicken pox or head lice, families will be informed via Family.
Fire drill/Lock down drill	We will hold regular fire drills and lock down drills (in line with the school) to familiarise the children with the drill procedure. In the event of a fire, we will evacuate the building and assemble at the local church, when you will be contacted to collect your child. Visitors to the group will be given an 'emergency evacuation card' detailing their role in a fire drill.
Outings	When appropriate, we will carry out regular group outings around the community. There will always be adequate supervision and a risk assessment will be carried out before every playschool outing.
Staff/ supervision	At every session there is always a senior manager, class team leader and a suitable number of staff who are known to the children by their first names. All our staff hold, or are currently training for, an appropriate childcare qualification. All staff have undergone an enhanced DBS check. Students from local schools or colleges may sometimes be present during sessions as part of their course work or a parent participating in the parent rota. Visitors to the group will be supervised at all times, are not allowed to help children with personal hygiene or to administer first aid.
Toys	When appropriate, the children are encouraged to bring in things to display. These could include items relevant to the season, colour or shape of the week. However, we do not encourage the children to bring in their own toys as this makes 'sharing' and 'turn taking' difficult. If your child brings something in, we will encourage them to put it on the 'our special things shelf' until home time. We are unable to take responsibility for lost, damaged or stolen items.
Cultures or customs	At Stepping Stones we welcome the opportunity to observe and learn about different cultures and customs. If any parent/carer has a religious festival/event and/or

	<p>custom they would like their child to observe whilst at playschool please speak to a member of staff to arrange the necessary details to enable the whole group to understand and appreciate other religions, cultures and customs.</p>
Dummies/ bottles	<p>We do not encourage the use of dummies and bottles at playschool because of the risk of contamination. However, staff will work closely with parent/carers to ensure a suitable compromise is reached.</p>
Lost Child	<p>If a child is lost during a playschool session staff will immediately inform the police, contact the parent/carer and inform Ofsted.</p>
Home Library/ resource boxes/ story sacks/ chatterpacks	<p>A box of books for reading at home is provided outside the gate. There are a number of resource bags, story sacks and 'chatterpacks' available for families to borrow. These offer opportunities to share a variety of equipment and stories with your child. Please speak to your key person for more details.</p>
Famly Nursery Management System	<p>This secure system allows parents to access the family details and financial information held by the playschool. You will be sent a link when your child joins the setting. Details kept on this system should be regularly checked and updated when necessary.</p>
Walk once a Week	<p>The playschool supports this initiative run by the charity Living Streets. Every child is asked to walk to playschool at least once each week and to record their method of transport every session. Children who walk once a week every week for the half term receive a badge to celebrate their achievement. Further details can be accessed on their website: https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-with-us/walk-to-school/primary-schools/walk-once-a-week</p>

Grievance Procedure

We believe that children and parent/carers are entitled to expect courtesy, and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parent/carers, outside professionals and the community in generally. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our service at any time.

Making concerns known

A parent/carer who is unhappy about any aspect of the group's provision should in the first instance talk over their concerns with Jackie Tubb, the playschool manager.

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent/carer should put their concern or complaint in writing and request a formal meeting with the manager.

Each party should have a friend or partner present and a record of the meeting will be made. Copies of this record will be made available to the parent/carer and the playschool manager.

Most complaints should be resolved informally; however, if the matter is still not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, mediation will be sought.

We believe that most grievances are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interest of the playschool that complaints are taken seriously, dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality.

Parent/carers have the right to complain directly to Ofsted, The Office for Standards in Education, if they feel their complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily:

Royal Exchange Buildings
26-32 Store St,
Manchester
M1 2WD

0300 123 1231

Email- enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Finally

If at any time you have questions or grievances regarding any aspect of the playschool please bring it to Jackie's attention.

But, we would also like you to share ideas, skills or comments you feel would be of benefit to the group. This can be done via the annual survey or directly to the staff.

Remember-it's *your* playschool!!!