



Early Years Prospectus

STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL CLIPSTON

Serving Clipston and all surrounding areas

www.steppingstonesclipston.co.uk

Registered Charity Number 1023443

Member of the Early Years Alliance

1. Overview of the Stepping Stones Pre-school setting

Stepping Stones Pre-school is dedicated to providing an environment for children where they can learn through play. By joining Stepping Stones they will be learning the basic skills which make their entry into 'big school' so much easier. All Stepping Stones children are encouraged to become more confident and independent and develop their own unique personalities. The coming pages of this prospectus will show you just how we set out to do this, and how we make sure that all the children who attend, and their parents/carers, are treated with individuality, care and early years specialism.



Our Location

Clipston is a friendly village situated in North Northamptonshire, just near the border with Leicestershire and near the town of Market Harborough.

Stepping Stones Pre-school welcomes children between the ages of two-and-a-half and five, from Clipston and all surrounding areas including Arthingworth, Great Oxendon, Lubenham, Market Harborough, Naseby, Sibbertoft, Sulby, Welford and more.

We are located next door to Clipston Primary School in the centre of Clipston.

Contact details

Stepping Stones Pre-School

High Street, Clipston, Market Harborough,
Northamptonshire, LE16 9RU

Tel. No: 01858 525113

Email: Preschool1@clipston.northants.sch.uk

Website: www.steppingstonesclipston.co.uk

Manager: Sam Frape





The Stepping Stones setting aims to:

- provide high quality care and education for children below statutory school age;
- work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop;
- add to the life and well-being of the local community; and
- offer children and their parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity.



We aim to ensure that each child:

- is in a safe and stimulating environment;
- is given generous care and attention because of our high ratio of qualified staff to children, as well as our volunteers and helpers;
- has the chance to join with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together;
- is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do;
- has a personal 'key person' who makes sure that each child makes satisfying progress;
- is in a setting that sees parents as partners in helping each child to learn and develop;
- is in a setting in which parents help to shape the service it offers.

Parents

Whenever the word 'parent' is used, it should be taken to mean 'parent or carer' as we realise that parents are not necessarily the only adults who care for and have responsibility for young children.

Parents are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- valued and respected;
- kept informed;
- consulted;
- involved;
- included at all levels.

As a community based, voluntary managed setting, we also depend on the good will of parents and their involvement to keep going. Membership of the setting carries expectations on parents for their support and commitment.

Please visit our website www.steppingstonesclipston.co.uk for more information for parents.

2. Children's development and learning

The provision for children's development and learning is guided by The Early Years Foundation Stage, the mandatory framework for all early years providers from 1 September 2021. Our provision at Stepping Stones reflects the four guiding themes and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A Unique Child

- Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.

Positive Relationships

- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments

- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interest and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and/or carers.

Learning and Development

- Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

You can download a copy of the Early Years Foundation Stage parent guide booklet via this link (you may need to copy and paste into your browser):

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf>

3. How we provide for development and learning



Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all of the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The Areas of Development and Learning comprise:

Prime Areas

- personal, social and emotional development;
- physical development;
- communication and language;

Specific Areas

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design.

For each area, the level of progress which children should be expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is defined by the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know and be able to do by the end of the reception year of their education.



4. Our approach to learning, development and assessment

Learning through play

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. Our setting uses '*Development Matters*' and '*Birth to five*' supporting guidance to plan and provide a range of play activities which help children to make progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In

some of these activities children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead in helping the children to take part in the activity.

Characteristics of effective learning

We understand that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning that are described in the Early Years Foundation Stage as:

- playing and exploring - engagement
- active learning - motivation
- creating and thinking critically - thinking

We aim to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child is learning and being clear about what we can do and provide in order to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Assessment - Tapestry

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them frequently using the online learning journey programme Tapestry. We use information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs or videos of the children, to document their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents know their children best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children like to do at home and how they as parents are supporting development.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children's achievement based on our ongoing development records. These form part of children's records of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves into a different group or when they go on to school.

The progress check at age two

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that we supply parents and carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the three prime learning and development areas of the EYFS: personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language; when a child is aged between 24 - 36 months. The key person is responsible for completing the check using information from ongoing observational assessments carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

Records of achievement - Tapestry



The setting keeps a record of achievement for each child. Staff and parents working together on their children's records of achievement is one of the ways in which your child's key person

(see more about this below) and parents work in partnership. Your child's record of achievement helps us to celebrate her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work with you to keep this record. To do this you and she/he will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's stage of progress. You and the key person will then decide on how to help your child to move on to the next stage.

5. Working together for your children

Opening details

We provide care and education for young children between the ages of two-and-a-half years to five years old.

We are open for:	38 weeks each year.
We are closed:	In the Northamptonshire school holidays.
We are open for:	Five days each week.
The times we are open are:	Full days from 08.40am – 3.10pm Monday- Friday Morning sessions 8:40am - 11:40am Lunch club 11:40am-12:10pm Afternoon sessions 12:10 -3:10pm.

Adult to child ratios

In our setting we maintain the ratio of adults to children in the setting that is set through the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. We also have volunteer parent helpers where possible to complement these ratios. Having these ratios helps us to:

- give time and attention to each child;
- talk with the children about their interests and activities;
- help children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide; and
- allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety.



Our staff and adult learning opportunities

The photographs of staff who work at our setting are displayed in our entrance hallway. As well as gaining qualifications in early years care and education, our staff members all take part in further training to help them to keep up-to-date with thinking about early years care and education. The setting also keeps itself up-to-date with best practice in early years care and education as a member of the Early Years Alliance, through the *Under 5 magazine* and publications produced by the Alliance.



Key persons and your child

Our setting uses a key person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that what we provide is right for your child's own needs and interests. When your child first starts at the setting, she/he will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at the setting, she/he will help your child to benefit from the setting's activities.

Your child's key person will keep records of your child's learning journey using a specially designed online system for Early Years Education called Tapestry. They will use Ipads to record observations, take photographs, and complete regular progress summaries. Parents will be able to access your child's records online at any point. You can find out more about the Tapestry system via this link: <https://tapestry.info/parents-carers.html>

It will allow you to see what topics/activities your child has been interested in, and gives you the opportunity for ongoing involvement and understanding. You will also be able to share your own inputs from your child's life outside of Stepping Stones to help your Key Person engage with and understand your child even more fully.

How parents take part in the setting

Our setting recognises parents as the first and most important educators of their children. All of the staff see themselves as partners with parents in providing care and education for their child. There are many ways in which parents take part in making the setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents, such as:

- exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with the staff;
- contributing to the progress check at age two;
- sharing their own special interests with the children
 - *joining the parent rota is not the only means of taking part in the life of the setting. Parents can offer to take part in a session by sharing their own interests and skills with the children. Parents have visited the setting to read stories to the children, bring their new baby, and to show them animals or pets;*
- helping to provide, make and look after the equipment and materials used in the children's play activities;
- being part of the management committee of the setting;
- taking part in events and informal discussions about the activities and curriculum provided by the setting;
- joining in community activities in which the setting takes part;
- building friendships with other parents in the setting;
- attending parent meetings; and
- attending learning events for parents that are held at the setting from time to time. These usually look at how adults can help children to learn and develop in their early years. Courses on similar topics are held locally by the Early Learning Alliance; watch out for information about these.

6. The setting's timetable and routines

Our setting believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in the setting are provided in ways that:

- help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting;
- ensure the safety of each child;
- help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group; and
- provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning.

Morning welcome and settling in

Children are welcomed to Stepping Stones by the staff each day, staff are available to talk to parents at this time, or after the session. Each child has their own peg with their name and a picture on it. Children change into their indoor shoes and hang up their bag and coat. The children are settled in by the staff with a variety of toys and activities on offer. We also offer

'stay and play' sessions throughout the year where parents and carers are welcome to spend time at the setting with their children doing art, craft and games.

The sessions

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others. Staff are always on hand to encourage or assist so that the children become confident at experimenting with new things.



There are two large playrooms through which children can move from activity to activity depending on their interest each day. In the Butterfly room there is role play dressing up, a car, a climbing frame, and a wide range of toys for imaginative and creative play. In the



Ladybird room there is a reading corner, shop, computers, cars, car mats, building blocks, making corner and lots more. Messy play is located in any area where there is hard flooring, within the Ladybird room, central area and/or the Butterfly room. Children can paint, mould play dough, create with sand and water, as well as ever changing textural play.

Outdoor activities contribute to children's health, their physical development and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities. We have an enclosed space outside to enable free flow play. This allows children to experience learning both indoors and outdoors. Children are also given opportunities for planting and nurturing

vegetables and fruit. Also, at points during the session the children are able to use the adjacent primary school playground and field.

Forest School

The philosophy of Forest Schools is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through an innovative, long term, educational approach to outdoor play and learning in a woodland environment.



We have been given permission to run our Forest School at the playing fields on the outskirts of Clipston village. Forest School runs on a Thursday, the length of time varies depending on the activity planned and weather. We always enjoy a picnic lunch at Forest School.

Snacks and meals

The setting makes snacks and meals a social time at which children and adults eat together. We ensure the choice of snacks provide the children with healthy and nutritious food, and this usually consists of breadsticks, crumpets, crackers, wraps with a variety of fresh fruit, with a choice of milk or water to drink. Children choose when they want to have a snack, fostering independence. Do tell us about your child's dietary needs and we will make sure that these are met.

"Lunch club" can be taken as an additional optional ½ hour following each morning session. Each child brings a packed lunch to be eaten at the table with the other children fully supervised by the staff. Good table manners and consideration of other children are encouraged. Assistance is given where necessary, but we would ask that parents provide a lunch that their child can manage to eat by themselves. Lunch boxes are stored in a cupboard and are not refrigerated, therefore please ensure your child's lunch is non-perishable and preferably with an ice pack. We endeavour to teach children about healthy eating and would ask that it is reflected in the contents of their lunch box.

7. Further 'need to know' information

School intake

Although Stepping Stones is located within the Clipston Primary School building it does operate as an independent organisation. We have good links with the school so that we can help to transition all Stepping Stones children (whether they will be going to Clipston Primary School or elsewhere) into 'readiness' for school. However, a place at the preschool will not guarantee entry into the school itself.

Policies

Copies of the setting's policies and procedures are available for you to see at the setting and on our website www.steppingstonesclipston.co.uk. The setting's policies help us to make sure that the service provided by the setting is a high quality one and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her/his parents.

Safeguarding children

Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual 'significant harm'.

Our employment practices protect children against the likelihood of abuse in our setting and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents ensures we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

Special needs

As part of the setting's policy to make sure that its provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special needs a child may have. This may be physical adaptation of the environment or specialised training for staff. The number of adults present in the preschool enables us to provide individual attention to each child. Each child is able to progress at her/his own rate in all areas of development, and this is true for children with and without disabilities or learning difficulties. We are experienced in working in close liaison with professionals across the range of special needs. Please contact us to discuss any specific concerns you may have.

The setting works to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014.

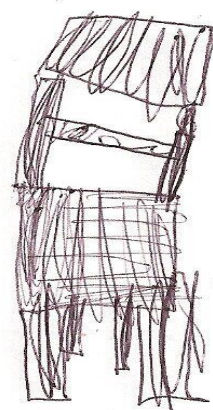
The management of our setting

A parent management committee - whose members are elected by the parents of the children who attend the setting - manages the setting. The elections take place at our Annual General Meeting.

The committee is responsible for:

- managing the setting's finances;
- employing and managing the staff;
- making sure that the setting has, and works to, policies that help it to provide a high quality service; and
- making sure that the setting works in partnership with the children's parents.

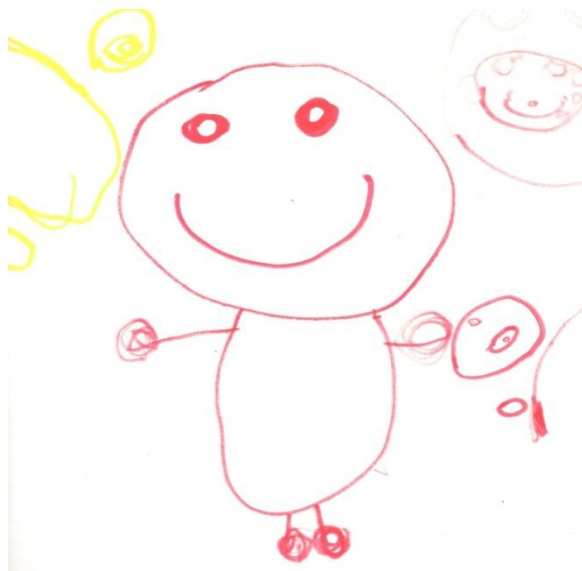
The Annual General Meeting is open to the parents of all of the children who attend the setting. It is our shared forum for looking back over the previous year's activities and shaping the coming year's plan.



Fees

From April 2022 fees are £18.00 per session payable half-termly in advance (a full day is 2 sessions plus lunch club). Lunch club is an additional £3.00. It also greatly helps us cover running costs if we request additional voluntary contributions of £1.50 per day for daily consumables and £7.00 per session for Forest school.

3 and 4-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours of free early education each week for 38 weeks of the year, and, if the child's parents both work you may be eligible for up to 30 hours free funding. Some 2-year-olds are also eligible for free funding. The date you can claim funding from will depend on when the child's birthday is. Talk to us at any point and we can help you find out what you are eligible for and when. For your child to keep her/his place at the setting, you must pay the fees or claim for the funding. Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, talk to the committee chairperson or Sam Frape, the setting's manager.



Stepping Stones accepts payments via the government tax-free childcare scheme and other companies offering voucher schemes. If you would like to pay via one of the schemes, please discuss that with us.

8. Starting at our setting

The first days

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, the staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child settle into the setting.

What to bring

Each child is allocated her/his own bag which they should bring to each session. It should contain indoor shoes (plimsolls or slippers are ideal) and a basic change of clothes in case of accidental wetness, as well as nappies/wipes if required. Also, it will need to contain weather appropriate extras such as sun hats or winter hats/gloves. We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet, and taking off, and putting on, outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this. We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities, but we do always suggest that easy comfortable clothes are worn, something which won't matter too much if it gets paint, mud, etc, on it. If your child

is staying for lunch club they will need to bring a healthy packed lunch and drink in an easy-to-open lunch box or bag.

We hope that you and your child enjoy being members of our setting and that you both find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. The staff are always ready and willing to talk with you about your ideas, views or questions.

Useful Links

<https://www.steppingstonesclipston.co.uk/>

<https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/parents>

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf>

