

Stepping Stones Pre-School

Kendall Hall, Nunnery Fields, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3JN



Inspection date

4 December 2017

Previous inspection date

20 April 2015

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Children have access to an exciting range of toys and activities, which is easily accessible to enable children to make informed choices in their play. Children are interested in their play and make good progress in their learning and development.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Staff keep parents well informed about their children's achievements and provide information to help support children's learning at home.
- There are good systems to keep children safe. The management and staff have a clear understanding of their role in protecting children from harm. The manager is fully aware of what to do should she have any concerns in relation to child protection.
- The manager and committee have effectively used evaluation to help identify strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they have successfully addressed the recommendation set at the last inspection and increased the resources and opportunities children have to develop their mathematical language, in all areas of play.
- Staff provide children with a wide variety of experiences to expand their interest in the world around them. For instance, they go on walks to the shops and visit the local cathedral and fire station to gain a good awareness of their community

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Younger children do not have suitable opportunities to explore printed materials when playing in all areas of the pre-school, to help them learn that words carry meaning.
- Staff do not consistently share information with other early years professionals, to help provide a continuity of care and learning.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review and improve the opportunities younger children have to see and explore the written word, to further develop their interest in literacy
- strengthen further ways of working with other early years professionals, to help provide a much stronger consistency in children's care and learning.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children, and how these have an impact on outcomes for children.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents to gain their views on the service they receive.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation, including the safeguarding policies and procedures, and staff and committee suitability checks.

Inspector

Sara Garrity

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The manager and committee implement good safeguarding procedures that keep children safe and meet their care and well-being needs effectively. The manager ensures that staff are deployed well throughout the day and constantly risk assess the environment and resources used. Safeguarding is effective. The manager is new in her role and the committee has implemented strong induction procedures to help new staff and those taking on new roles, to ensure they are supported fully in their roles. The manager supports staff practice. For instance, she provides them with opportunities to increase their knowledge and teaching skills, such as attending safeguarding training and short courses. The manager and staff track children's progress carefully across all areas of learning. They notice any gaps in development and quickly target them to help children catch up, gaining support from other early years professionals as required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff make effective use of observations and assessments, and teach children through enjoyable, well-planned activities. Good use is made of the outside area to extend children's learning and broaden their experiences. For example, children make bird feeders in the mud kitchen and describe the textures of the ingredients, which helps to improve their language skills. Staff encourage children to think things through and to solve problems. For example, younger children excitedly press the buttons in the farm book and predict which noise the animal will make. The older children work out how much paper and sticky tape they need to wrap up different sized boxes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff have very secure settling-in procedures, such as meeting children in their own homes to enable children to forge close bonds with the staff. Children's behaviour is good. They are kind and courteous to one another and listen attentively to staff. Staff offer children a range of opportunities to develop their independence. For instance, children prepare their own snacks and take an active role in looking after themselves. Staff encourage children to exercise in the garden in all weathers to practise their physical skills and learn how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Outcomes for children are good

All children, including those who need extra support and children who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points. Children show a real interest in learning and finding out new things. They develop important skills which help them become ready for starting school. Children learn to respect and value their own and other people's differences. They develop good communication skills. For example, they are eager to join in at group time, talking about their weekend's events and news. Children develop their physical skills and learn how to manage their own safety. For example, they carefully use knives to cut up vegetables in the home corner as they make dinner for their friends.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127645
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	1089371
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 - 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP522600
Date of previous inspection	20 April 2015
Telephone number	07980 492024

Stepping Stones Pre-School registered in 1967 and is run by a voluntary committee. It operates in Canterbury, Kent. The pre-school is open each weekday morning from 9am to midday, during term time only. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged three and four years. The committee employ five members of staff, of whom, three hold a relevant early years qualification at level 3 and one holds a qualification at level 5.

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