

STEPS

37 Waterloo Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 2SW

Inspection date	13/01/2015
Previous inspection date	01/12/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Staff respond to children's interests well. They plan and provide a wide range of activities that help children make good progress in their learning and development.
- Children have positive relationships with staff and quickly grow in confidence.
- Staff work closely with parents and inform them regularly about their child's progress.
- The staff team regularly reflect on their practice and take effective steps to develop and improve the pre-school.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Large group activities are not always effectively planned to fully engage all children.
- Staff do not always fully encourage children to be independent and use their imagination during adult-led activities.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children taking part in indoor and outdoor activities.
- The inspector had discussions with the manager and staff.
- The inspector sampled records including children's files, planning and staff suitability records.
- The inspector took part in a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took account of their views.

Inspector

Rebecca Khabbazi

Full report

Information about the setting

STEPS first opened 1979. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is run by St. Stephens Tonbridge Parochial Church Council and operates from the church hall in Tonbridge, Kent. Children have access to a main hall and there is an enclosed outdoor play area. The preschool is open each weekday during term time from 8.45am to 3.45pm. Children attend for either the morning session from 8.45am to 11.45am, or the afternoon from 12.45pm to 3.45pm or may stay all day.

There are currently 65 children on roll in the early years age range. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four. It supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language.

There are eight staff who work at the pre-school, including the acting manager. One member of staff holds a level 5 qualification, four have qualifications at level 3 and three hold relevant level 2 qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review the organisation and planning of large group activities, such as story time to fully engage and involve all children

- extend opportunities for children to complete tasks for themselves and express their own ideas during adult-led creative activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff gather a range of information about each child's background, starting points and needs. They talk to parents during settling-in visits and ask them to fill in comprehensive registration forms. This ensures staff get to know children well and can provide all the support they require. Staff make good use of their observations of children to plan a wide variety of activities based on children's interests and needs. As a result, children are keen to take part in activities and they make good progress in their development. Staff involve parents in their child's learning by talking to them each day to give feedback. They keep them up-to-date with their child's progress through regular written reports and reviews. They encourage parents to share as much information as possible from home, which helps

ensure a consistent approach.

Staff teach children a range of useful skills that prepare them well for the next stage of learning and for school. They support children's communication and language skills effectively because they encourage children to join in conversations. They give them time to answer questions and listen carefully to children who are quieter or less confident. Staff support children who are learning English as an additional language appropriately by finding out words from home. They successfully promote children's interest in books by developing projects around familiar stories. Children enjoy looking at books independently as well as sharing stories with staff. They learn to recognise their name when they find their name card. Staff talk to children about the sounds that letters make to support their early literacy skills. Children enjoy adult-led creative activities and during the inspection they proudly showed off the shakers they made. However, staff sometimes did not use all the opportunities available to encourage children to tear their own paper or stick the tape themselves. This means that children are not able to fully develop their independence skills and express their own ideas in art and design.

Staff build on children's interests skilfully and respond quickly to extend their ideas and investigations. When they noticed children making patterns in the steamed up windows, they quickly got out some shaving foam for children to spread out on a table to further develop their exploration and learning. Children benefit from a well-balanced routine and take part in group activities alongside free choice play. However, during the inspection, some group sessions were too large and were not effectively planned to involve all children. As a result, some children became a little bored and distracted. This affects how much all children learn from and enjoy these activities.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children settle quickly in the pre-school and grow in self-confidence. They get to know staff well and form secure bonds with their key-person. Staff are caring and sensitive to children's individual needs. This helps children feel secure and effectively supports their emotional and physical well-being. Staff remind children of the rules and expectations frequently and provide consistent support and guidance. As a result, children behave well. They quickly become familiar with the routines and expectations of the pre-school. They help tidy away the toys and sit quietly on the carpet for group time.

Staff use the space available at the pre-school well to create an interesting learning environment. They make daily checks to ensure that all areas are free from hazards so that children can play safely. They organise resources so that children can easily select a wide variety of appropriate play materials for themselves. Children grow in confidence and independence as they choose what they want to play with. Staff are vigilant in supervising children closely at all times. They have clear responsibilities and make sure that enough staff are inside and outside to support children appropriately. Children learn about risks and how to keep themselves safe when staff remind them why they should not run inside. Children take part in regular fire drills so that everyone learns what to do in an emergency.

Staff promote children's good health effectively. All staff complete first-aid training to help ensure children are cared for if they have an accident or are unwell. Children learn to manage their own personal needs when they wash their hands before snack time. They enjoy a variety of healthy options at snack time. Staff encourage children to help prepare their own fruit, which helps them learn useful self-care skills. Children play outside every day in all weathers as part of a healthy lifestyle. They have fun practising their physical skills as they run around, ride tricycles or balance carefully along a beam.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The management team implement robust recruitment procedures to help ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. This helps safeguard children's welfare. Staff all complete child protection training and are familiar with the steps to take if they have concerns about a child. All required documentation is in place. The staff team are well established and work well together. The manager monitors staff performance through supervision and appraisals and identifies any training needs. The pre-school is part of a local training initiative and as a result, staff have good opportunities to attend a wide range of training courses to further develop their skills. This has a positive impact on the quality of teaching. For instance, the staff member with lead responsibility for outdoor play has brought back ideas from training courses to extend outdoor learning opportunities for children.

Staff have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements. They provide a well-balanced educational programme that covers all areas of learning. They monitor children's progress effectively and promptly identify any gaps in learning or areas for further support. They offer appropriate support to children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and work well with other professionals and agencies. This helps ensure children experience a consistent approach. Staff show a positive commitment to the continuous development of the pre-school. They each have lead responsibility for a particular area of the pre-school, such as the outdoor area, music or the provision for children aged two. This helps them continue to develop their skills and expertise. It also means children benefit from new and varied challenges as staff introduce new ideas.

Staff keep parents well informed through daily conversations, regular newsletters and the noticeboards. Parents have access to a range of policies and procedures and other useful written information. Parents comment that they particularly value the friendly and helpful staff team, who always have time to talk to them. They are pleased with their children's good progress and feel they are safe and well cared for.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	956291
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	842426
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	65
Name of provider	St. Stephens Tonbridge Parochial Church Council
Date of previous inspection	01/12/2008
Telephone number	01732 363642

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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