

Stepping Stones Pre-School



Lynsted Little Hall, Lynsted CP School, Lynsted Lane, Kent, ME9 0RL

Inspection date	15 March 2016
Previous inspection date	23 March 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Children make outstanding progress in their learning and development in relation to their individual starting points.
- The effective settling-in procedures and robust key-person system help children to feel safe and secure. They settle well and form exceptionally strong emotional attachments with staff.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Parents praise the progress their children make. Staff regularly exchange information with them about their children's learning and care which creates outstanding opportunities for home learning.
- Staff have excellent links with other professionals and schools. This helps to share a range of information to provide continuity in children's care and learning when they move on to, and between, settings.
- Children are inquisitive, interested and challenged in their learning. Staff provide children of all ages with an excellent range of exciting, stimulating and interesting learning experiences. Children are highly motivated and extremely ready for the next stage of their learning.
- Staff review the progress of groups of children and put in place extra strategies to support communication and language, including engaging a part-time speech therapist.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop further the organisation of daily routines to strengthen the opportunities for children to fully extend their play.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities and the quality of teaching.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation, including children's development records, their self-evaluation form, and key policies and procedures.
- The inspector took account of the parents' views through discussions and written questionnaires.
- The inspector spoke to members of staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting and completed a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Maxine Ansell

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

Safeguarding is effective. The manager ensures all staff know how to protect children's welfare. They have an excellent knowledge of the procedures to follow to report any concerns. There are very effective systems to support children's move to school. For example, the manager visits each school that children will attend to discuss their progress with the teacher. The manager completes meticulous evaluations of all aspects of the nursery, including activities, training and staff performance. She completes and follows up a comprehensive training programme. The manager values the input of all the staff, volunteers, parents and children in this process.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Children select from an extremely wide range of stimulating and challenging activities. For example, they use their excellent imaginative skills to role play being a grocer. They select, name and buy real vegetables, which helps to develop their understanding of the world in an enjoyable, exciting way. The teacher makes excellent use of children's interest in dinosaurs to extend their mathematical awareness, and communication and language skills. For example, children discuss and use descriptive language to match their chosen dinosaur to a picture on a chart. Children eagerly lead their own play. However, occasionally, they are not always able to complete their chosen activities before starting the next one. Children develop their early reading skills extremely well. For example, they excitedly use finger puppets to act out the different stories and talk about the characters.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They show respect for each other, the resources and take turns. They enjoy a highly stimulating outdoor area with exceptional opportunities to develop their imaginative and physical skills. For example, children pretend they are sailors when playing in the large wooden boat and complete enjoyable music and movement activities to kick-start their day. The children develop an excellent understanding of healthy foods and safety. For example, they learn to use knives safely to prepare their own snacks.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

All children make exceptional progress in their learning and development. They are confident and independent, and develop an excellent range of skills in order to be ready for the next stage in their learning. For example, they develop their confidence in their early writing skills when making marks in flour and foam, and copying letter patterns ready for writing. Younger children learn to communicate visually. For example, staff teach them simple signs to help them make themselves understood.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127646
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	825435
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	53
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2011
Telephone number	01795 522 736

Stepping Stones Pre-School re-registered in 1999. It operates from two rooms in a modular building, in the grounds of Lynsted and Norton School, near Sittingbourne, Kent. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 4pm, during term time only. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs eight staff; of whom, four, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3. One member of staff has Early Years Professional Status.

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