

Stepping Stones

48 Wheeler Street, Maidstone ME14 1UA



Inspection date	19 October 2018
Previous inspection date	Not applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Good Not applicable	2
Effectiveness of 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

The provision is good

- Staff are motivated and receive regular supervision meetings to help them reflect on their own practice. They attend training and implement what they have learnt into practice to improve the outcomes for children.
- Staff help children to learn about the wider world. For example, they share stories that celebrate children and families that are different from themselves.
- Parents are actively involved in their children's learning. For example, staff provide resources, such as books, to extend children's learning at home.
- Staff provide children with a colourful and well-organised environment. Children enjoy helping themselves to the wide range of resources available.
- Children learn about making healthy food choices. For example, during mealtimes staff talk to children about foods that are good for them.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The systems for monitoring the progress made by groups of children are still being developed.
- Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to enhance younger children's independence.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the monitoring systems of groups of children to help identify any gaps in learning
- improve opportunities for younger children to develop their independence.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to staff, parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector had a tour of the pre-school and checked the providers safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities and the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The inspector sampled relevant documentation, such as policies, staff suitability checks and children's records.

Inspector
Michaela Borland

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

The manager has robust systems for the recruitment and vetting of staff. This ensures staff are suitable to work with children. Safeguarding is effective. Staff have a thorough understanding of child protection issues. They know the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare. The manager monitors the progress of individual children effectively. She is able to quickly identify areas where children require extra help and takes action to secure extra support. Additional funding is used effectively to support children's individual needs. For example, the new covered area in the garden allows children to learn outdoors in all weathers. Staff work well together as part of a supportive and motivated team. The manager evaluates the service regularly and takes into account the views of parents and staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff observe children regularly and use this information to plan for future learning. They interact well with children. Staff make good use of opportunities to extend children's learning further. For example, while playing with sand they ask children about things they might find at the seaside. Staff provide a range of interesting activities indoors and outdoors. This helps to motivate children to investigate and explore. For example, children fill containers with water using a range of utensils, such as pipettes and sponges. Children are fully engaged in their play and celebrate their achievements. For example, children proudly show staff the sandcastles that they have built.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff are good role models for children's social skills and behaviour. Every opportunity is taken to remind children of good hygiene practices. For example, staff remind children to wash their hands after playing with sand and before eating. Children enjoy having regular opportunities to be physically active. For example, they use a range of equipment to practise their balancing skills. Staff have warm and positive relationships with children. They respond to children's individual needs and give lots of praise and encouragement. This builds children's confidence. Staff work well with other agencies to ensure the continued well-being of children.

Outcomes for children are good

All children, including those who have special education needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points. Children behave well and enjoy each other's company. They develop positive attitudes and enjoy their time at pre-school. Children benefit from challenging activities that extend their thinking skills. For example, they discuss why wet sand will not pass through a sieve. Children are developing the necessary skills they require for their next stage of learning and eventual move on to school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY498225
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10060687
Type of provision	Sessional day care
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	20
Name of registered person	Waterman, Sharon
Registered person unique reference number	RP900904
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	07595700979

Stepping Stones registered in 2016. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday, term time only. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years, as well as early years pupil premium funding. There are three staff, including the manager. All hold an early years qualification at level 2 or 3.

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