

Millom Stepping Stones

Millom Pre-School Playgroup, St. Georges Road, MILLOM, Cumbria LA18 4LE



Inspection date	22 August 2019
Previous inspection date	24 February 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
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

This provision is good

- The manager is a well-qualified, knowledgeable and passionate early years practitioner. She focuses on ensuring that every child progresses well from their unique starting points. The manager works closely with a committed team of directors and her staff to achieve this outcome.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent and highly effective at supporting children's learning. For example, parents are delighted that they can access observations and assessments online and have valuable discussions with staff as they drop off and pick up their children.
- The manager ensures that all staff place safeguarding children at the heart of everything they do. Safeguarding knowledge is excellent, policies and procedures are extremely robust and evident in practice. Staff focus on keeping children safe, wherever they play.
- The environment for learning is vibrant, welcoming and inviting for children. They are keen to engage in play from the moment they enter the setting. Children form strong bonds with staff, who get to know them extremely well and build on their interests and fascinations.
- Children are extremely well supported to develop an understanding of their community. Staff have established very strong links with the local care home where children visit and spend time engaged in a range of activities with the elderly residents.
- Staff treat children with kindness and respect and are excellent role models. They help children to think about how their actions affect others. Children of all ages and stages of development play happily together. They begin to understand and follow rules, are polite and behave extremely well.
- Although staff engage in professional development, this is not yet sufficiently focused on what staff need to do to raise the quality of their teaching.
- Sometimes, children's learning is interrupted for long periods by routine activities, such as getting ready for outdoor play.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- seek opportunities for continued professional development to improve the quality of teaching even further
- review the organisation of routines to minimise interruptions to children's learning.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the setting manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the setting manager. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Julia Matthew

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

Safeguarding is effective. Staff ensure that children have opportunities to experience some risks as they play. Children are well supported to recognise dangers and use safety equipment when needed. For example, children wear goggles to shield their eyes as they enthusiastically break up large clumps of ice with hammers. Risk assessments are used effectively by staff to reduce hazards in the setting and on outings. Staff are quick to act if they have concerns for children's welfare or development. The manager tracks the progress of individuals and groups of children to highlight and meet any gaps in their learning. Staff work with a range of other professionals to meet children's individual needs. The manager seeks feedback from children, parents and staff as part of her drive for continuous improvement. This has a positive impact on practice and ensures that staff are responsive to the changing needs of children and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Overall teaching is very good. Staff plan interesting activities to help children achieve their next steps and build on their experiences at home. Children are extremely well supported to read. High-quality fiction and non-fiction texts are found in every area of the setting. Children select and use these as part of their play. Furthermore, a series of photographic books are available for children to read. These show children engaged in fun and creative activities with the residents of the local care home. Children spend time outside in all weathers. Staff help them to investigate and engage in imaginative role play. Children control long handled brushes to mix paint powder in puddles and search for 'secret ingredients' as they cook concoctions in the mud kitchen. Children learn how to be considerate to the environment. They plant seeds, grow and care for their own vegetables and flowers. This helps them connect with and understand the natural world.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Detailed information is gathered from parents when children start in the setting. Staff use this to meet children's care needs and follow their routines. This helps children to begin to settle quickly, feel safe and secure. Staff help children to develop resilience and keep trying when they find tasks difficult. Children's achievements are celebrated and shared with their peers. Staff ensure that children understand why they need to follow hygiene routines. Nutritious meals are cooked on site and children are encouraged to take regular drinks. Children demonstrate excellent social skills as they sit together, engage in conversation and help to serve at mealtimes. Staff ensure there are many opportunities for children to develop physical skills. They make marks with different writing implements, move safely over large apparatus, sing and dance together. Children learn how their bodies work and how to make healthy choices.

Outcomes for children are good

All children make at least good progress in their learning. They demonstrate the confidence to try new activities but also know when to ask for help from staff. Younger children learn how to move around the setting and climb stairs without help. Older children use mathematical language, count and solve problems as they play. Children of all ages are very well prepared for school, or the next stage in their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY370536
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10109763
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	42
Number of children on roll	112
Name of registered person	Millom Stepping Stones
Registered person unique reference number	RP527956
Date of previous inspection	24 February 2014
Telephone number	01229 775 834

Millom Stepping Stones registered in 2008 and is situated in Millom, Cumbria. The setting employs 23 members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold an appropriate early years qualification at Level 4, ten at level 3 and two at level 2. The setting is open from 7am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round and provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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