

# Inspection of Stepping Stones

Longfield Children's Centre, Broadcloth Lane, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 7HE

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Inspection date: 22 January 2020

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

Managers and staff at this exceptional pre-school place children's individual needs at the centre of everything they do. Children flourish in the extremely nurturing and caring environment. There are excellent settling-in procedures. Parents are confident staff know and will expertly meet their children's various needs. Home visits ensure staff get to know children before they start, and that children have a familiar face at the pre-school. Children make excellent progress based on their individual starting points.

Children enter the pre-school enthusiastically, and their key person quickly supports them to settle into an activity of their choosing. Children can select from a well-chosen range of toys based on the individual interests and needs of each child. Staff communicate enthusiastically in a variety of ways to ensure all children are included. For example, they use picture exchange cards, symbols, signs and speech. Staff are highly sensitive to each child's level of interaction. When a child indicates a need, no matter how subtle, staff quickly respond. This helps children to feel listened to and know that their attempts to communicate are important. Staff know the children very well. They sensitively use various techniques, such as gentle modelling, to support children with their behaviour. Children are happy, safe and behave well.

### **What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?**

- The highly proactive and inspirational manager has a strong vision. She places a high emphasis on professional development. Staff are extremely enthusiastic and happy in their role. The manager talks to staff about their well-being during the regular appraisal meetings. This helps staff to feel highly valued. Staff say that the manager is always available to support and encourage them in their challenging but rewarding role. Children thrive in this positive and happy environment.
- Staff plan a stimulating, individualised curriculum for the children in their care. They use exciting methods to support children to communicate. For example, staff put favourite toys into a lidded see-through box. This inspires children to ask for help to open the box so they can play with the toy.
- Staff skilfully weave all areas of learning into the day, while valuing each child's uniqueness. For example, staff develop children's listening and attention skills by playing a recording of different animal sounds. Staff use signing, pictures of animals and speech to help children identify which sound each animal makes.
- There is an exceptional partnership with parents. Parents say that the pre-school is 'amazing' and that their children would not have progressed as they have done without the support of the staff. Parents receive help with all aspects of their children's care. For example, staff help parents to complete paperwork for

additional funding, and they increase parents' confidence to leave their children, sometimes for the first time. Parents are inspired to support their children's learning at home. Staff share what they are working on with children so parents can continue their development at home. Staff hold regular meetings with parents, individually and as a group, to share their knowledge and set learning targets together. Parents are regularly invited to training events to help them build their knowledge and understanding of different ways to communicate with their children.

- Staff use mealtimes as learning opportunities. For example, they encourage children to use picture exchange cards to ask for more snack. Staff notice and celebrate all children's achievements. This helps to build children's self-esteem.
- Professional development is a high priority. The manager strongly believes there is always more to learn. She encourages staff to attend training and share their knowledge with the rest of the enthusiastic team. Staff strive 'to always do better', and this is evident in the ethos of the pre-school.
- Partnerships with other agencies and settings are exceptional. For example, staff regularly visit other settings that some of the children also attend. They invite staff from other settings to visit the pre-school, and they share their specialist knowledge and information to ensure continuity of care. The pre-school also provides training for staff from other settings.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have a comprehensive understanding of how to keep children safe, and know their responsibilities to protect children. They know the signs and symptoms to look out for that may indicate a child is at risk, and understand the procedures to follow if they need to report a concern. During home visits, staff share key safeguarding messages with parents, for example, not to take photographs and not to let others into the building. Posters around the setting remind parents of these safety messages. An extremely robust recruitment procedure ensures that the best and most knowledgeable staff, who are thoroughly vetted, work at the pre-school.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY410582
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10126025
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 to 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	24
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	53
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Stepping Stones - West Wiltshire Opportunity Group For Children With Special Needs
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP522411
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 350015
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 October 2015

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones is an opportunity group and the district specialist centre for West Wiltshire that provides specialist support for early years children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is managed by a committee and is located in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. The group originally registered in 1974, and re-registered in 2010. It provides sessions from Monday to Friday, term time only. There are 14 members of staff who work directly with the children, of whom 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Joanne Neenan

## Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to parents on the day and took their views on the pre-school into account.
- The inspector spoke to the managers, a representative from the committee, and staff at appropriate times during the day, to gather information on the pre-school.
- The inspector and the deputy playroom manager jointly observed an activity in the pre-school room, and discussed the quality of teaching seen.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documents including a record of staff's qualifications and training, suitability checks and policies.
- The inspector and the playroom manager completed a learning walk, discussing all aspects of the pre-school.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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