

Inspection of PCC St Stephen's - STEPS

37 Waterloo Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2SW

Inspection date: 14 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. On arrival, they are excited to see their friends. Children receive a warm welcome from staff, which helps them to confidently separate from their parents. Children who are upset on arrival, receive cuddles and reassurance from staff and quickly settle. Children have positive relationships with staff. A well-established key-person system helps children to form secure attachments. This helps children to feel safe.

Children thoroughly enjoy a range of activities and resources, which help them to learn across all areas. For example, young children develop their imaginations and language skills when they make 'cakes' in the mud kitchen. Children show high levels of confidence as they move freely around the environment choosing what they would like to play with. Children who are less confident are successfully supported by staff to make choices in their play and learning.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles. They spend long periods learning outdoors where they benefit from fresh air and develop their physical skills. For example, they ride trikes and chase each other in the garden. Additionally, they plant vegetables and herbs in the growing garden, which helps them to understand about healthy foods.

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

- Staff help children to link their learning and build on their ideas. For example, they have planned a 'bug hunt' in response to children recently finding worms in the garden. This improves children's understanding of nature and the world. Additionally, staff remind children to be gentle with the worms and to put them back under the logs where they found them. This helps children to learn to respect other living creatures.
- Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, successfully improve their communication and language skills. Staff use effective ways, such as picture cards, to introduce new vocabulary to children. Additionally, children listen to stories and look at books in different languages, which helps to enhance their listening skills.
- Staff have high expectations of children. They swiftly address any unwanted behaviour and support children to learn the effects their behaviour has on others. Children are kind to each other. For example, they help each other to stand up the skittles that their friends have successfully knocked down with a ball. Furthermore, staff use a variety of strategies, such as reading 'The Colour Monster' story, to help children understand their emotions. This helps children to learn how to manage their own feelings and behaviour.
- Staff support children well with transitions. For example, when children start at

the setting, staff work closely with parents and adapt settling-in processes to meet the individual needs of children. This positively supports children's emotional well-being. Furthermore, staff share information with other settings children attend to ensure continuity of care and learning.

- Children are offered opportunities to promote their independence. For example, they are encouraged to pour their own drinks and cut up their banana at snack time. However, this is not consistent throughout the day. For example, sometimes staff do things for children that they could try for themselves.
- The manager and staff use observation and assessment effectively to help identify any emerging gaps in children's learning and development. They work closely with other professionals to help children get the help they need to make continued progress. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well. For example, the manager and special educational needs coordinator work closely with staff to ensure they provide inclusive provision for all children. The manager uses funding effectively to buy resources, which help fill any gaps in children's learning.
- Managers support staff well through regular supervision and staff meetings. Staff are encouraged to identify their own professional development needs. However, monitoring of staff performance is not fully embedded to help identify all areas of weakness in practice, to ensure teaching is of consistently high quality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures staff complete safeguarding training. They have a strong knowledge of the signs of potential abuse and neglect. They understand the processes to follow should they be concerned about children's safety. The manager further supports this by displaying the contact numbers to report any concerns in the office. Leaders have a good understanding of what to do if there is an allegation against a staff member. Robust recruitment processes are in place, including checking staff's ongoing suitability. Staff complete checks to ensure the environment is safe and secure for children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- improve strategies to ensure all staff consistently encourage children to develop their independence skills and try things for themselves
- develop procedures for monitoring staff performance to ensure all staff are supported to teach to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	956291
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10234601
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	52
Name of registered person	St. Stephens Tonbridge Parochial Church Council
Registered person unique reference number	RP908027
Telephone number	01732 363642
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2017

Information about this early years setting

PCC St Stephen's - STEPS registered in 1979. It is located in Tonbridge, Kent. The pre-school operates term time only. It is open Monday to Friday, from 8.45am until 3.45pm. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs nine members of staff with childcare qualifications between levels 2 and 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Michaela Borland

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector conducted a tour of the setting to understand the how the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents throughout the visit and took their views into account.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.

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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