

Inspection of Stepping Stones

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

Inspection date:

18 September 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children radiate joy, giggling with delight as they engage with staff during puppet play. This reflects the strong bonds staff develop with them. They thrive under the attentive care of knowledgeable staff, who have a deep understanding of their needs, interests and developmental journey. Children show that they feel safe, as they independently explore a peaceful sensory room, captivated by the shimmering reflections of bubbles from a lamp. Their cues are responded to swiftly and sensitively, fostering their security, self-esteem and confidence.

Children make extraordinary progress through the expertly crafted and ambitious curriculum. They are fully immersed in engaging activities that enhance focus and attention, such as watching a balloon being inflated by staff. Through rich interactions, children are supported to express themselves, form friendships and make independent choices. Children learn to process language and navigate routines with confidence using visuals, such as photos of parents, to signal it is home time.

Staff bring enthusiasm, passion and unwavering commitment to their roles. They work seamlessly as a team, proactively monitoring each child's progress, adapting their strategies as they weave learning into every playful moment. Staff celebrate children's uniqueness and every milestone. This dedication fosters a vibrant team culture, where children's well-being and development remain at the heart of everything they do.

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

- Children flourish through leaders' exemplary approach to settling them into the setting. From the initial referral, staff gather detailed information about children, and work closely with everyone involved in the child's journey. They tailor their approach to each child. They offer stay-and-play sessions, and often visit children in their homes, current settings, or welcome staff from those settings into their own. This enables consistency in care and ensures every child's settling-in process is thoughtfully planned.
- Leaders build exemplary partnerships with external agencies, enabling staff to develop the expertise needed to meet children's individual needs. Staff share this knowledge with staff from children's other settings, equipping everyone working with the child to deliver targeted interventions that promote each child's learning.
- Children benefit from highly skilled and experienced staff. Leaders carry out rigorous interviews and induction processes. Staff embrace ongoing professional development with regular training and opportunities to collaborate with specialists. Staff take part in regular evaluative and reflective practice daily,

enabling their practice to be ever evolving.

- Parents highlight how regular meetings, clear communication and shared targets create a genuine partnership. Leaders invite specialists into the setting for talks with parents to share training and advice on key topics, such as building healthy sleep habits or using core boards to promote communication. Many parents praise the significant progress their children have made, putting this down to the consistent techniques staff use in the setting and providing the support needed to continue them at home.
- Staff act as excellent role models for children, consistently treating one another with respect and offering support. For example, in the outdoor space, staff regularly check in with each other to see if help is needed.
- Parents report exceptional support. Several parents report that they feel listened to, empowered and no longer feel alone in navigating their child's needs. They receive practical help with tasks, such as completing school transition paperwork and funding applications. Some parents describe leaders' and staff's guidance as lifting a heavy emotional burden.
- Leaders place strong emphasis on staff well-being, with an appointed well-being lead in place. Staff speak positively about their happiness at work, and regular morning and afternoon briefings provide opportunities to share challenges, access support and celebrate achievements. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting and promotes a supportive and motivated team culture.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY410582
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10407992
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	70
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones - West Wiltshire Opportunity Group For Children With Special Needs
Registered person unique reference number	RP522411
Telephone number	01225 350015
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones is an opportunity group and the district specialist centre for West Wiltshire. It 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. The setting employs 12 members of staff who work directly with the children. All hold approved qualifications between level 3 and level 6. The settings provides sessions from 9am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday, term time only. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Catherine Parker-Johns

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- Leaders joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- Children interacted with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Parents shared their views on the setting with the inspector, and the inspector took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with leaders.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.

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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