

# Stepping Stones

Castlegate Annex, Agnes Street, GRANTHAM, Lincolnshire, NG31 6QP



## Inspection date

20 August 2015

Previous inspection date

15 July 2010

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Outstanding	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Outstanding	1
The setting <b>meets legal requirements for early years settings</b>			

## Summary of key findings for parents

### This provision is outstanding

- Staff and managers give high priority to the safeguarding of children and to the safety of activities and the premises. Staff fully implement the robust policies and procedures so that children stay safe. All staff are rigorously vetted to check that they are suitable to work with children.
- The high level of qualified staff and the exceptional teaching practice have a positive impact on the learning experiences the nursery provides for children. Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language is exceptional.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Highly successful strategies engage all parents in their children's learning, including those whose home language is not English. Staff also establish excellent working relationships with outside agencies to ensure all children get the support they need.
- Leadership is inspirational. Staff work very effectively as a team because they are committed to ensuring the well-being of all children and meeting their needs.
- Staff provide highly stimulating and exciting activities that enable all children to make rapid progress in their learning and development.
- A strong caring ethos enables staff to develop very strong relationships with the children that help them to develop independence and to be self-motivated.
- Children's behaviour is exceptionally good, with staff acting as excellent role models. Staff offer explanations for what children have done well. This means that children are aware of what is expected of them and can learn and develop from their experiences.

## What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider extending further opportunities for babies and younger children to independently access creative resources.

### Inspection activities

- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with the management team, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation and a range of other documentation, including policies, procedures, risk assessments and the provider's self-evaluation.
- The inspector viewed evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff working with the children.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and activities, both indoors and outside.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the deputy manager.

### Inspector

Jane Rushby

## Inspection findings

### **How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is outstanding**

Staff have an excellent knowledge of how children learn and develop. Skilful use of discussion and questioning by staff challenges and extends children's learning further. For example, as children created their models, they decided to make the colour gold to paint them. Staff encouraged them to mix different colours together until they achieved the colour they wanted. Children's outdoor experiences are very well planned for and they benefit from learning in the fresh air. Younger children thoroughly enjoy exploring and investigating outdoors in the meadow. Children learn to balance on bridges, tyres and logs. They learn about nature through opportunities to grow tomatoes, flowers and herbs. Older children learn about reusing objects and have made a greenhouse from recycled bottles. Staff use every opportunity to reinforce mathematical language. They plan sharply focused activities based on children's interests and development. Highly comprehensive assessments help staff to identify any gaps in children's learning. Children are making rapid progress in their development, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The key person shares very good levels of information with parents, which positively contributes to children's learning at home. Children are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning and their move on to school.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is outstanding**

Children form strong friendships with other children. This helps to promote their well-being as they feel happy, safe and secure. The range of resources for all age groups is excellent and children easily find what they want to use. However, there is scope to enhance opportunities for babies and younger children to independently select even more resources to support their creative development. Babies are quick to settle with the sensitive and caring staff, who respect parents' wishes regarding care routines. All children learn about healthy eating and enjoy nutritious lunches and snacks. Older children enjoy taking responsibility for clearing their plates and cups and washing them. Children's safety is given a high priority. Staff remind children about keeping safe, while encouraging them to take appropriate risks and learn how to support their own safety and well-being.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is outstanding**

The manager and staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are enthusiastic, passionate and committed to providing children with stimulating learning experiences. Management and staff are fully committed to self-evaluation so that the nursery continually improves. All staff are supported to reflect on their practice and attend training to ensure high-quality teaching. Recruitment procedures are exemplary and a full induction programme ensures that all staff are aware of their individual roles and responsibilities. Parents consider their children very lucky to attend such a wonderful nursery.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY397245
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	849886
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 14
<b>Total number of places</b>	110
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	115
<b>Name of provider</b>	Headstart + Firststeps Nurseries Partnership
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01476 593643

Stepping Stones was registered in 2009 under the current owners. The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, 16 hold appropriate childcare qualifications, including two who hold level 2 qualifications, 12 who hold level 3 qualifications, one who holds a level 4 qualification and one who holds a level 6 qualification. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round, except for bank holidays and a week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.15am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

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