

Stepping Stones Day Nursery and Nursery School

5 Edington Square, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 5YT



Inspection date	18 October 2016
Previous inspection date	22 October 2015

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Effectiveness of the 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

- Concerted action has been taken to bring about improvement. A strong partnership with the local authority has been highly effective in raising the quality of teaching.
- Staff provide children with good role models. They treat children with care and respect. Children behave well and staff manage any unwanted behaviour consistently.
- The nursery is constantly developing new ways to improve partnerships with parents. Communication is good and effective use is made of the frequent feedback gathered from parents to bring about positive changes.
- Children, including those for whom the setting receives additional funding, make good progress in their learning. New systems to monitor children's development mean that those that need some extra help receive support quickly.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Teaching has improved, but is not yet outstanding. More effective supervision is needed so that staff are clear on aspects of their practice that they must develop further.
- The nursery has identified that not all boys achieve as well as girls. Staff are introducing strategies to further develop the teaching of communication, language and literacy for boys in order to close this gap.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve the rigour of staff supervision in order to raise the quality of teaching to an outstanding level
- continue to develop strategies to improve the skills of boys, especially in the areas of communication and language, and literacy, so that they achieve as well as girls.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to some parents and took their views into account.
- The inspector observed children's play and learning and the quality of teaching both indoors and outside.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the nursery manager.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and the office manager at the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to the representative from the local authority who has been working with the nursery staff.
- The inspector sampled some documentation such as children's folders, policies, records of staff suitability, the nursery's self-evaluation and the development plan.

Inspector

Penny Fisher, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The capable and reflective manager is ambitious for the nursery children and families. He has a good understanding of the needs of the local area. Clear plans are in place to improve the provision further and the nursery's self-evaluation is accurate. This demonstrates a keen awareness of the strengths and areas for further improvement within the nursery. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. The staff have a shared understanding of their duty to protect children. An open-door policy ensures that staff have good opportunities to discuss any safeguarding or developmental concerns regarding children in their care. The ongoing suitability of staff is checked regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Leaders and managers have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching across the nursery. Parents now provide helpful information to ensure that staff understand what children are interested in, already know and can do when they first attend. New systems in place to observe, assess and plan for children's learning are effective. Staff identify what children need to learn next and plan activities that meet individual children's needs. This ensures that children make good progress and are ready for school. Nursery staff let parents know about additional funding which is available to support children who need extra help with their learning. Careful thought is given to ensure that planned interventions support children effectively and gaps in children's learning are addressed quickly. For example, resources that enable children and parents to join in activities together at home have been purchased.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff work well with other agencies, such as children's centres, children's social care and health visitors, to support children and families in need of some extra help. Children of all ages are learning how to share and take turns, for example, they share tools when making patterns in the dough. Children treat each other kindly, such as when reaching out a hand to help a friend up. Children are engaged in purposeful play and are becoming keen learners. Good use is made of the outside area for those that prefer to learn outdoors. For example, two-year-olds are encouraged to explore natural materials in the mud kitchen which supports their developing understanding of the world.

Outcomes for children are good

Children make good progress in the nursery. Older children enjoy circle time and confidently contribute to discussions about autumn and the changing leaves. They are developing their mathematical skills as they compare small, medium and large bowls of porridge as part of the tale of Goldilocks. They count confidently. Some children are beginning to learn the sounds that letters represent. Younger children select their own resources confidently and enjoy role play at the 'doctors'. They are learning to take 'safe' risks and challenge themselves. For example, they are proud of their achievements when they climb down a slippery slope on their own without falling. Babies form warm

relationships with their key carers. They develop their listening skills as they enjoy singing sessions, joining in enthusiastically with action songs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY258333
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	1036764
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	73
Number of children on roll	80
Name of provider	Stepping Stones Day Nursery & Nursery School Limited
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2015
Telephone number	01993 708822

Stepping Stones Day Nursery and Nursery School has been registered to the current owner since 2003. It operates from purpose-built premises over two floors. It is situated in a residential area of Deer Park in Witney. The nursery accepts funding for the early education of children aged two, three and four years. It is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm, all year round excluding bank holidays. The nursery employs 19 staff in total, including the nursery cook. Of these, 16 staff have relevant childcare qualifications.

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