

Stepping Stones Childrens Nursery

38 Crib Street, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 9EZ



Inspection date

6 July 2017

Previous inspection date

2 January 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
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

- The nursery team has made significant improvements since the last inspection. The staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and successfully embed the nursery's policies in order to meet the needs of all the children.
- Staff support outcomes for children well. They consistently observe, track and plan effectivity for children's learning to ensure they all make good ongoing progress.
- Staff operate an effective key-person approach. All children and parents are warmly greeted by the staff who have special responsibilities for them.
- Partnerships with other professionals involved in children's care and education are strong and support consistency and continuity of care. For example, staff talk and meet regularly with professionals to share children's achievements.
- Strong recruitment, induction and appraisal programmes help ensure staff working with children are supported and improving the quality of learning and teaching.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- When staff are working with groups of children who are different ages and have different abilities, they do not consistently keep children's attention and extend what they already know.
- Some staff are not consistently providing clear guidance to children about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- revise the organisation of activities to help children of differing ages and abilities remain interested and engaged
- ensure staff respond consistently to provide clear guidance to children about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Inspection activities

- The inspector had a tour of the areas of the premises that children use.
- The inspector spoke to parents and read their written comments to gather their views.
- The inspector carried out observations with the manager and looked at staff and children's interactions.
- The inspector looked at written policies and other relevant documents.
- The inspector spoke to staff to determine their knowledge of the requirements.

Inspector

Claire Meyer

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The nursery is well managed by a knowledgeable and experienced team. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have a secure knowledge of how to keep children safe. For example, there are effective staff recruitment and vetting systems in place which help ensure that children are cared for by adults who are suitably checked and qualified. Robust risk assessments include thorough daily checks inside the premises and on outings. The manager has good systems to help coach and monitor staff. She meets with individual staff to develop plans for continued improvements. She identifies training needs and supports them well. Partnerships with other agencies are well established, which further assists children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff offer encouragement to the children and provide them with a good range of activities. Accurate planning enhances the children's individual learning stages and successfully supports their learning needs. The manager completes regular monitoring of children's progress and ensures that any additional funding is used effectively to promote children's development. Staff are helping develop children's communication and language skills well. For instance, they ask children lots of questions about their play to aid their speaking and listening skills. Staff inspire children's learning well. For example, younger children have fun with animals in the water play and older children enjoy learning about bugs and mini-beasts outdoors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children demonstrate that they feel safe at the nursery. For example, they settle well upon leaving their carer, including those who are new to the provision. Staff have good relationships with the children and aid friendships well. For instance, older children receive ample praise as they share and take turns. Staff help children to learn about healthy lifestyles. They support children's understanding of the importance of handwashing after coming in from outside and before eating. After their meals they are all encouraged to brush their teeth. Children display a very good understanding of their personal safety and how to manage risks for themselves. For example, children butter and cut their own toast competently. Staff also encourage children to be physically active and all children have opportunities to play outside.

Outcomes for children are good

Overall, children develop good communication skills. Older children speak confidently, as they join in with a rhyming story they are rehearsing for their graduation. Young children explore and enjoy playing with a wide variety of resources that interests them, such as in the outdoor area. They enjoy water play, sand play and playing with dolls and these help them develop good physical skills. Toddlers have good imaginations, for instance, they play with the cars and small-world toys. Older children show good social skills, experimenting together and mixing colours to see what happens, this also supports them to develop their understanding of the world further. Children are well prepared for their future learning and the skills they need for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127965
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1087607
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	1 - 8
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	37
Name of registered person	Susan Andrea McCall
Registered person unique reference number	RP906341
Date of previous inspection	2 January 2014
Telephone number	01920 469 698

Stepping Stones Childrens Nursery registered in 1992. It operates from a listed building in the centre of Ware, Hertfordshire. The nursery is open all year round from 7.30am until 6.30pm. Morning sessions run from 8.15am until 1.15pm and afternoon sessions from 1pm until 6pm. Children can attend a variety of sessions. The nursery employs eleven members of staff. The manager has an early years degree and six members of staff are qualified at level 3.

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