

Stepping Stones

Foxes Piece School, Newfield Road, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 1JW



Inspection date	19 February 2018
Previous inspection date	9 September 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- The manager develops highly effective partnerships and communication with an extensive network of other professionals. This has a very positive impact on supporting parents and on the safeguarding, welfare and development of their children.
- The deputy manager has established exemplary ways of monitoring children's progress. She and the nursery's special educational needs coordinator work very closely with all staff to quickly identify and target each child's next steps in learning precisely. Children make rapid progress in their learning and development.
- Managers keep their dedicated staff focused on constantly raising the level of their teaching to improve outcomes for children. Their success is clearly documented as high numbers of children starting with limited skills in different areas catch up with other children in their age group before they go to school.
- Staff plan highly engaging and exciting activities and use them to help children learn to be safe. For example, all children learn the importance of wearing safety protection clothing. Older children discuss and agree safety rules. They learn to use real tools, such as hammers, screwdrivers, nails and screws, safely.
- Children develop a strong sense of their uniqueness and their place in the group. For example, children vote for their favourite storybook and know they may not always get what they want. They also know that their views are important, respected and valued.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- build further on the superb teaching for literacy to provide more opportunities for the older children to use their knowledge of letter sounds to begin to write words.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed, listened to and talked with children as they played indoors and during outdoor play.
- The inspector talked with parents and listened to their views about the nursery and their children's progress.
- The inspector looked at children's records, discussed staff's planning and evaluation of activities, and how they exchange information with parents.
- The inspector reviewed records and procedures relating to safeguarding and risk assessment, and discussed a range of other procedures relating to children's welfare with the manager and the deputy manager.
- The inspector observed care routines and completed a joint observation with the manager. Together they discussed how staff training had contributed to children's learning and development.

Inspector

Helen Robinshaw

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

The manager has an in-depth understanding of how to use her professional network, policies and procedures to increase children's safety and enrich their well-being. She places a high priority on keeping staff up to date in their knowledge and use of good practice in all areas of safeguarding and welfare. For example, the manager checks that all staff know how to recognise and respond appropriately to any concerns about children's protection or welfare. Safeguarding is effective. The manager and the deputy manager ensure that staff know and follow daily procedures to keep the play rooms safe, clean and exciting places for children to play and learn. Extensive evaluation of all areas of the nursery helps them to identify where improvements are needed. For example, the children's toilets were recently refurbished and the baby changing area is to be refreshed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Staff make sure that opportunities for learning are enjoyable and link with children's current interests. For example, staff create an undercover 'building site' role-play area outdoors. Girls and boys thoroughly enjoying experimenting with a wide range of equipment. For instance, older children use pencils, rulers and set squares to plan, measure and improve the design of their constructions. Younger children investigate changing properties as they mix different consistencies of sand and water. Together, staff help children work out how to solve problems, such as fixing bricks and strengthening towers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Staff are highly creative in the way they use different areas of the nursery to meet the individual needs of each child. For instance, babies sleep undisturbed and toddlers safely practise new physical skills and road safety skills in their own exciting play areas. Staff diligently supervise children's explorations indoors and across various playgrounds and fields. They make excellent use of quieter areas at the nursery to promote children's skills in areas such as listening and speaking. Overall, literacy is taught extremely well, although the older children's writing skills are not always challenged as fully as possible.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

All children make impressive levels of progress during their time at the nursery. Children learning to speak English as an additional language and those who start with delayed speech skills make excellent progress. Boys and girls leave with high levels of skills in all areas of their learning and development. They go to school emotionally and academically well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Children are curious to explore, interested in learning and are able to concentrate. They persist and work through challenges, such as problem solving. They can cooperate and negotiate well together.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY316669
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	1061946
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	1 - 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	65
Name of registered person	Lisa Carlton
Registered person unique reference number	RP904399
Date of previous inspection	9 September 2013
Telephone number	01628 298363

Stepping Stones registered in 2005. It is open from 9am to 3pm each weekday during school terms. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. There are 11 staff working with the children, one of whom holds a qualification at level 6. Five staff hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 and three staff are qualified at level 2.

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