

Inspection of Stepping Stones Nursery

Wittersham CEP School, The Street, Wittersham, Kent TN30 7EA

Inspection date: 12 September 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff get to know children and their individual personalities well. This helps children settle quickly, confidently and happily into their play. Children have a good sense of belonging and positive levels of well-being and self-esteem. They enjoy their time at the setting. All staff are positive role models. Children's behaviour is good, and they are polite. Children recall the rules and boundaries daily and know what is expected of them. Staff meet children's care needs well.

Children develop good physical well-being. For example, they independently wash their hands after toileting and follow good health and hygiene routines with confidence. Staff build on children's ideas and interests well. For example, children show great excitement to make their own props following a story about a tiger. They are excited to retell the story in their own words and use the props to bring their imagination alive.

Children have good opportunities to learn about the natural world around them. For instance, children regularly visit the school pond in small groups and observe the pond life, such as fish and newts. Children understand the cycle of life, as they watch tadpoles turn into frogs.

Staff have high expectations for all children. Additional funding is used effectively to support children to reach their full potential.

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

- There are good opportunities for children to challenge their physical skills. For example, they negotiate balancing and climbing equipment, such as climbing walls, crates and tyres.
- All children are independent. They choose their own play with confidence and find their own belongings. Children take pride in their achievements, for instance as they help to prepare and serve their snack.
- The manager and staff establish positive partnerships with other early years professionals. They share children's achievements regularly with other staff at settings they also attend. This helps provide children with a good, consistent approach to their shared care and learning.
- All staff, including the manager, evaluate their practice together effectively. For instance, they reflect daily on how well the day's events and activities motivate children to learn. They use their findings to support their future activity plans. Overall, children enjoy their time at the setting and are engaged in a wide range of learning opportunities. However, staff do not make the most of the organisation of larger-group activities to ensure that all children remain fully engaged throughout.

- Children enjoy a wide range of stories and songs. Staff support children to develop good speaking and listening skills. For example, they consistently ask thought-provoking questions and give them time to think and then respond. Children are keen to share their ideas and thoughts with both staff and their friends.
- Staff establish positive relationships with parents and keep them involved and informed in their children's learning. For instance, they encourage them to add to their children's learning records regularly. Staff routinely share helpful tips with parents, such as healthy eating ideas.
- Staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum and provide children with motivating activities. Staff ensure that they provide children with the skills they need to succeed. All children, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. However, staff do not make the most of ways to develop children's understanding and respect of other people's similarities and differences more extensively.
- Children gain good mathematical skills to support their future learning. For instance, they use fishing rods to hook numbered plastic ducks. They confidently recognise and order the ducks.
- The manager closely monitors the quality of care and education that staff provide children. For example, she holds regular one-to-one meetings with them to discuss their performance. She uses the findings to highlight any potential training needs. Staff attend training beneficial to their practice. For instance, they have learned about the different ways to support children to communicate, such as using signing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding and child protection policies and how they help keep children safe and protect their welfare. Staff know who to contact to seek additional advice and follow up any concerns. Staff teach children how to remain safe. For example, they encourage them to participate in activities that require good levels of maturity, such as using real hammers and nails in woodwork activities. Children learn the rules about how to enjoy the activity safely, such as always watching where they are banging to avoid hurting their fingers.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- extend children's opportunities to gain even more understanding of other people's similarities and differences outside of their own communities and beliefs

- review and improve the length and organisation of group activities to ensure that all children remain engaged and make the most of the learning opportunities throughout.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY468982 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10108870 |
| Type of provision | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| Registers | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| Day care type | Full day care |
| Age range of children | 2 to 4 |
| Total number of places | 20 |
| Number of children on roll | 23 |
| Name of registered person | Stepping Stones Nursery Ltd |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP520926 |
| Telephone number | 07826593027 |
| Date of previous inspection | 20 March 2014 |

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Nursery registered in 2013. It is located in the grounds of Wittersham CEP School in Wittersham, Kent. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am until 3pm, term time only. The setting receives funding to provide free early education for children two, three and four years. The setting employs six members of staff, four of whom hold relevant early years qualification at level 3 or above. This includes one member of staff who has a level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kelly Hawkins

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the staff interacting with children and carried out a learning walk with the manager. The inspector assessed the impact interaction and learning opportunities have on children's learning.
- The inspector viewed the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The inspector looked at written documentation, including safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, children, parents and staff, and considered their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.

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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