

Inspection of Stepping Stones Pre School

Stepping Stones Nursery, High Street, Maresfield, UCKFIELD, East Sussex TN22 2EG

Inspection date: 7 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are constantly motivated to explore and investigate the endless exciting opportunities, both indoors and in the extensive outdoor environment. They show great enjoyment and high levels of curiosity, as they eagerly find the resources they need and manage their own play. The attentive and extremely skilful staff watch and support, adding just the right amount of challenge and interaction to ensure children learn as much as they can from each activity. For example, children mixed their own play dough with flour and paint to make 'autumn orange'. Staff used accidental mark making in the flour on the floor to accentuate the sound of the letter 's'. Children excitedly used their feet to squash the snakes and spiders they had drawn. Staff use their expert knowledge of the children to maximise opportunities for learning in the moment, as well as to plan activities to support and embed learning further.

Children remain focused for long periods of time and become deeply involved in learning. They are extremely willing to try new things and develop exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Staff consistently model respectful behaviour. They speak kindly and with great consideration to children. Children's behaviour is impeccable, and they show care and concern for others. The wonderfully nurturing ethos in this delightful pre-school helps children to feel happy, secure and settled.

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

- Staff nurture children's language and communication skills extremely well. They enable all children to communicate, through the use of signing or picture cues, for example. They skilfully engage children in group activities that help them to listen carefully, take turns and become highly confident talkers. Children intently discuss what might be hidden in some socks, describing the different shapes and textures they feel. Staff add new words, such as 'metal', to describe a spoon.
- Staff help children to be independent, reflective and to think about their learning. For example, children find a hose to fill the water butt. They measure how long it takes using sand timers and decide to draw lines to show how far the water has reached when the sand runs out. Younger children find ways to catch the water as it runs out again and learn about recycling.
- Children are encouraged to manage their own risks and self-care and they do this extremely well. For example, they know they need boots to go in the very wet sand pit. They help each other to collect cups of water when they are thirsty and clean up spills, in case they slip.
- The inspirational management team shows great commitment to ongoing improvement and closely monitors staff performance. Managers provide personalised coaching and high-quality training. They encourage staff to reflect on their role in children's learning as they observe each other. This, and

managers' extensive feedback, helps to maintain very high standards and raise children's outcomes even further.

- Managers and staff recognise and support the individual developmental needs of children extremely well. They provide an exceptionally inclusive environment and work tirelessly to ensure all children receive the individually tailored care and learning they need. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make rapid progress.
- Staff have developed highly engaging strategies to involve parents. They regularly share information and give a wealth of ideas and practical support to help parents support their child's learning at home. Parents are exceptionally complimentary of staff for the care and attention given to the children and for the support they receive themselves.
- Staff actively teach children to be part of their own community and to understand different people beyond their own experiences. Through age-appropriate and imaginative ways, staff teach children about equality and diversity. For example, building on children's interest in other countries, they have begun to write to a child from the pre-school who is now living abroad.
- Superb opportunities are provided to prepare children emotionally for their eventual move to school. Staff have formed a partnership with the local school which allows the children to have positive contact throughout the year, in the forest school area, for example.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have an excellent understanding of what might be a concern about a child's welfare. They follow clear procedures to help protect children from harm. They regularly refresh their knowledge of safeguarding, through staff meeting discussions and training courses, for example. Staff work extremely closely with other professionals to help to ensure children and their families are very well supported with any additional services they may need. Very comprehensive recruitment procedures, including rigorous background checks, ensure that children are cared for by suitable adults. Risk assessments are completed regularly to minimise any risks to the children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY421842
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10128622
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	28
Number of children on roll	40
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Pre School (Fairwarp and Maresfield) Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519636
Telephone number	01825765241
Date of previous inspection	21 October 2015

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Pre School registered in 2011 in Maresfield, East Sussex. It is open from 8am to 6pm every weekday for 48 weeks of the year. The pre-school provides funded early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs 19 members of staff; 13 of these hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sue Suleyman

Inspection activities

- The inspector completed a learning walk around the pre-school with the manager, to understand how the environment and curriculum are planned.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity to help three-year-olds further develop their speaking and listening skills.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors.
- Some parents gave their views to the inspector and these were taken into account.
- The inspector held a meeting with managers and the chair of trustees, considered a sample of relevant documentation and checked the suitability of staff.

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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