

# Inspection of Stepping Stones Nursery

Cinque Ports Avenue, Hythe, Kent CT21 6HS

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Inspection date: 3 December 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

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**

The manager and her team create an exceedingly warm and welcoming environment where children demonstrate that they feel very happy and confident. Children have incredibly nurturing and affectionate attachments with staff and demonstrate they feel safe and emotionally secure. Staff know children exceptionally well and provide a stimulating learning environment for children of all abilities, with the children at the heart of all they do.

Children behave exceptionally well. They know how to share and take turns, and give huge amounts of consideration to ensure their friends are ok. For instance, children help others new to the nursery know where things are and find what they need.

Children enjoy using the attractive range of resources. These have been carefully considered by staff to provide children with real objects and open opportunities to learn and explore. Children use small hammers to break up blocks of ice, pretend to cook with vegetables in the mud kitchen and carefully use a range of musical instruments from different countries around the world.

Staff place a strong focus on developing children's communication and language skills. For instance, they talk constantly to the children and clearly emphasise key words within their interactions to help enhance children's understanding and speaking skills. Staff also use pictorial methods to help children make choices, understand routines and express their emotional needs.

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

- The manager and staff are committed to providing the best possible care and education for all children. They plan a broad and exciting curriculum that effectively supports children to make good progress from their starting points and develop the skills they need for future learning. They work well with other professionals to provide consistent support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Children demonstrate that they feel happy, safe and settled at the nursery. Staff collect information from parents when children first start, to make sure they fully understand each child's needs. Staff carry out home visits to get to know the children and their families well. This means parents feel very confident about leaving children. Strong relationships exist between parents and the nursery from the outset.
- The manager has a clear vision for the nursery and makes ongoing improvements. She and the staff reflect together on the quality of the provision and take account of the views of parents and children. For example, they have

increased the range of opportunities children have to explore literacy throughout their play. Children have a love of books and stories; they listen intently to the staff read and join in their favourite parts of familiar stories.

- Staff get to know children and their individual personalities extremely well. Children have an excellent sense of belonging and positive self-esteem. They show pride in their achievements and are confident to share their ideas as they play. However, at times, staff do not recognise opportunities that arise to extend children's thinking skills. For example, they do not always give children time to respond to questions.
- The manager and staff work well together and are a strong team. Training opportunities are generally used effectively to improve staff knowledge and skills to maintain good-quality provision. Staff have attended training on how to support children effectively to develop their communication and language skills. The manager works in close partnership with the host school, which helps to offer children a seamless transition to school. The manager supports staff well by providing coaching and support through supervision. Although this is effective, the manager has identified ways in which she can develop this further to maximise the quality of teaching.
- Children benefit greatly and really enjoy being involved in the local community. For example, they enjoy scavenger hunts in the local parks, explore the beach and make great use of the on-site school facilities. Children gain a good understanding of the wider world and develop their physical skills through a range of active games and challenges.
- Staff encourage children's mathematical development effectively. Children regularly use mathematical language in their play. Older children confidently count out and identify numbers in sequence as they complete the symbolic timetable. Younger children help to count the children present during lunch time and begin to consider the difference between full and empty.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection procedures. They know how to help keep children safe and protect their welfare. This includes knowing who to contact to seek additional advice and follow up any concerns. The manager and staff implement effective procedures and place a good emphasis on ensuring children are cared for in a safe environment. This includes robust recruitment, selection and induction procedures. Comprehensive risk assessments are completed for all areas of the nursery, including outdoors. Effective staff deployment means that all children are well supervised and cared for.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- build on staff use of questioning to help support children's thinking skills and learning further
- strengthen the individual support and coaching for all staff to improve their skills and the quality of teaching to the highest level.

## Setting details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                   | EY333206  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                           | Kent  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                         | 10128721  |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                         | Childcare on non-domestic premises  |
| <b>Registers</b>                                 | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| <b>Day care type</b>                             | Full day care   |
| <b>Age range of children</b>                     | 2 to 4  |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                    | 22  |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                | 36  |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                 | Stepping Stones Early Years Nursery Ltd   |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b> | RP535313  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                          | 01303 230951  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>               | 23 November 2015  |

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Nursery registered in 2006 and is situated in Hythe, Kent. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.45am to 3pm, during term time only. It accepts funding for the provision of free early education for children age two, three and four years. The nursery employs five members of staff, all of whom hold early years qualifications at level 3.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Kimberley Luckham

## Inspection activities

- The manager showed the inspector around the setting and discussed the aims of the nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and took into account parents' views of the nursery.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector reviewed a variety of documents, including first-aid certificates, policies and records.
- The inspector discussed leadership and management with the manager and provided feedback regarding the inspection.

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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