

Inspection of Stepping Stones Nursery

Gledhow Lane, LEEDS LS8 1RT

Inspection date:

7 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children and their families are at the centre of the setting's ethos. Leaders have a clear, strategic vision for the nursery and future improvements. Staff and children are highly involved in the community and help create a close, family-like environment. Children are valued as individuals from the start and are supported by staff to grow into unique members of society. They form close relationships with staff and other children. They show high levels of self-esteem and the ability to have a go during play.

Partnerships with parents are exemplary. Leaders work hard to involve families in all that they do. Parents are encouraged to share information from home, attend a range of stay-and-play sessions and contribute to feedback for the nursery. Staff provide families with 'busy bags' to play with at home, containing suitably challenging activities for children to help continue their learning.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for all children. They model excellent language skills. As a result, children communicate well from a young age. Children are kind, happy and behave well. They understand how to follow simple rules and boundaries. Older children have opportunities to make important decisions as part of the 'pre-school council'. They gain independence and a sense of responsibility in preparation for their future life and learning.

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

- Children thrive in the welcoming, safe and exciting environment the nursery has to offer. They explore a wide variety of resources that ignite their imagination and investigation skills. For example, children pretend to be engineers at the 'tinker table'. They can use screwdrivers and hammers to take apart old technological equipment. Additionally, in the outdoor area, children confidently build walls with real bricks and measure how tall their houses are. They play safely, take risks and develop mathematical context.
- Leaders have a secure knowledge of child development and are working well with staff to improve their skills and understanding. They regularly identify training needs and work to support staff on an individual basis to increase the already high standards. Leaders value staff highly and believe their well-being is paramount. They are working on releasing staff to volunteer in the community to extend the setting's involvement even further. They already have good links with schemes such as elderly care, litter picking and food banks. This widens children's knowledge and understanding of the diverse society they live in and helps them respect and value others.
- Children develop an awareness of healthy living. Older children are involved in selecting food for the weekly menu. They discuss this with peers and think about

the nutritional values food has to offer. In addition, children play with real fruit and vegetables to explore the taste and smell. Children wash carrots to make them clean enough to eat and squeeze lemon into the water tray, which they then smell. As well as this, children have daily access to fresh air in the large, well-equipped outdoor area. They develop good physical well-being.

- Babies are well stimulated during play. Staff sing action songs about basic feelings such as 'happy', 'sad' and 'cross'. Babies enjoy watching different facial expressions and joining in with sign language. Communication is supported well from the start. Additionally, their care needs are sensitively met.
- Staff monitor children's progress closely and are swift to identify any gaps in learning. They plan suitable activities to challenge children and help them achieve new goals. Leaders and staff are passionate about their shared mission to place children's learning and growth at the centre of everything they do. As a result, children feel valued and confident to explore.
- Although staff plan stimulating and exciting activities, on occasion, children do not remain engaged in play. Staff sometimes fail to adapt their teaching skills quickly enough to meet the changing needs and interests of all children.
- Staff work hard to form positive relationships with children. However, for those children who need additional support through transition periods, the key-person system is not fully embedded. Some children become distressed and do not have an immediate link with a member of staff to secure their emotional well-being swiftly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leadership team has implemented robust safety and safeguarding procedures. Staff are supported to consistently understand their responsibilities in identifying and reporting child protection concerns. They are fully aware of the process. Staff understand the signs and symptoms of child abuse and use case studies to explore more extreme concerns and how to manage them. Leaders ensure staff are suitable to work with children, through rigorous vetting and employment systems. They ensure staff are highly skilled and working towards qualifications to improve their understanding. Staff keep the setting safe and secure through daily risk assessment checks both indoors and outdoors. They recognise potential hazards during play and remove them to protect children from harm.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure all children are consistently engaged in opportunities that extend their learning and meet their emerging needs and interests
- strengthen the key-person role to fully support children's emotional needs during

transition periods, such as moving into a new playroom.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY544696
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10133834
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	63
Number of children on roll	90
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Nursery School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP544695
Telephone number	01132668005
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Nursery registered in 2017. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including 3 at level 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Rachel Waterhouse

Inspection activities

- The inspector completed a learning walk with the manager and discussed how the curriculum and setting are organised.
- The inspector spoke to parents, staff and children at convenient times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The management team and the inspector completed a joint observation. The inspector took account of their views and reviewed the procedures in place for evaluating the quality of the setting. She reviewed staff training and professional development plans.
- The inspector held meetings with the leadership and management team at convenient times during the inspection. She reviewed a sample of documents, including the suitability checks for staff, policies, procedures and other records regarding health and safety.

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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