

Inspection of Stepping Stones Nursery

High Leys, St. Ives PE27 6RU

Inspection date: 27 July 2021

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 are happy, settled and enjoy their time at the nursery. They show a positive attitude to their learning. Children enjoy the company of their friends and demonstrate that they feel safe and secure. They know the routines of the day, behave well and learn to share and take their turn with the toys. Older children confidently demonstrate their independence skills. They serve their own food and put on their own clothing to go outside to play.

Younger children use their hands to splash the water and feel the cold ice cubes. They learn to hold paintbrushes and thoroughly enjoy making colourful marks on the painting easel. Younger children have lots of fun as they reach out and chase floating bubbles. They explore the sand and use tools, such as spades, to dig.

Older children enjoy being physically active in the fresh air. They confidently use their climbing and balancing skills as they manoeuvre their bodies around the larger outdoor play equipment. They successfully challenge their physical skills and shout out 'ready, steady go' as they skilfully jump down from the equipment onto the ground. Children enjoy drawing around each other and learn to measure and compare each other's differing heights.

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

- The manager demonstrates a strong commitment to providing good quality experiences for the children attending. She has a good relationship with the staff team and high expectations for what the children can achieve. She has begun to broaden the range of training opportunities available to staff. However, this requires further evaluation to ensure that the future training staff take part in, best enhances the quality of learning experiences for the children attending.
- Staff are kind and welcoming to the children. Younger children receive cuddles if they are upset. Older children confidently approach staff for help if needed. These positive relationships help to develop secure attachments and support children's emotional well-being well. Parents speak highly of the manager and staff. They talk about the good quality care their children receive and how they are making progress in their learning.
- Throughout the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, the manager and staff have continued to support those children who did not attend. They kept in touch with families through online meetings and telephone calls. Additionally, staff have successfully adapted daily routines to ensure the good health of children attending. Parents are currently not allowed in the building and children sanitise their hands on arrival and at regular times during the day.
- Staff join in the children's play. They make observations of the children's interests and achievements and use this information to sequence the next steps

in their learning. However, on occasions, some staff do not always make the most of the opportunities that arise to extend and challenge children's learning.

- Staff effectively support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with the child's family and other professionals involved in the child's care. Achievable targets are set to promote the children's ongoing care and progression in their development. Parents comment on how pleased they are with the progress and development their children make and the support they receive from the staff.
- Staff effectively promote children's language and literacy skills. Children enjoy listening to a story. They sit well and respond when staff ask them to remember familiar phrases or words. Older children narrate their own stories. Staff record what the children have said and make this into a laminated story book. Children then illustrate the story book with colourful drawings and write their names at the end of the book. Older children are learning to form recognisable letters.
- Staff extend children's range of experiences effectively. They have recently reintroduced forest school sessions, which supports children to learn about the natural world. Children plant strawberries to learn about where food comes from. They learn about the Muslim celebration, Eid and celebrate Christian traditions, such as Easter. This supports children to learn to respect and appreciate the diversity of others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff are able to recognise potential safeguarding concerns. They understand the procedures to follow to help protect children from harm. All staff receive regular training to strengthen their knowledge of safeguarding issues. Management and staff complete daily checks to ensure the premises and outdoor area are secure, and the manager swiftly addresses any required maintenance of the nursery building. The manager follows secure recruitment procedures and ensures essential background checks are completed. This ensures that everyone working at the nursery is suitable.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to better recognise and make more effective use of spontaneous opportunities to extend and challenge children's learning
- source a broader range of training opportunities to further enhance the implementation of the curriculum to support all children to achieve to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY554380
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10174720
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	39
Name of registered person	Evans, Tiffany Dee
Registered person unique reference number	RP554379
Telephone number	01480 464105
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Nursery registered in 2017. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Ann Austen

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector and the manager completed a learning walk across all areas of the nursery to understand how the early years curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed staffs' interactions with the children during indoor and outdoor activities, and assessed the impact this has on the children's progress and achievements.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, deputy staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out their joint observation with the manager and discussed the children's progress and achievements.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

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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