

Inspection of Stepping Stones

Stanley Peters Junior & Infant School, Lake Lock Road, Stanley, WAKEFIELD, West Yorkshire WF3 4HS

Inspection date:

20 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Staff do not have high enough expectations of what children can do for themselves, to help them become independent. They have not yet planned a broad enough range of activities in the outdoor area to fully support those children who prefer to learn outdoors.

Staff warmly welcome the children as they eagerly enter the nursery. Children understand the routines of the nursery. This helps them to settle quickly and feel safe and secure. Staff ensure children follow the rules and boundaries of the nursery. They encourage the children to take turns and be kind to one another. This is reinforced through stories and activities. Children behave well and play nicely with their friends and adults. For example, they help each other to put on their coats and wellingtons. Children take turns throwing the ball and using the digger in the recently acquired outdoor area.

Staff follow children's interests and needs to provide stimulating activities that encourage and challenge children's learning. For example, children collect soil and sticks, then use a variety of tools to sieve, chop and squash the soil. 'Look it's a stick insect' children say as they point to the bug hunting sheet. Babies confidently explore a variety of treasure baskets. They are encouraged to feel textures and listen to the different sounds. As a result, children are making good progress in their learning and development, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- Leaders carry out supervisions with staff. Training requirements are identified and discussed. Staff's well-being is sometimes covered. However, supervisions do not give staff the opportunity to discuss concerns, such as safeguarding and their role as a key person. They do not identify targets for personal improvement to ensure staff understand how best to support the children they care for. As a result, staff are not always clear about how to identify children's future learning.
- Some aspects of the curriculum are not planned well enough. Staff do not plan enough opportunities to promote children's independence, particularly during daily routines. For example, staff serve lunch and pour drinks when children are capable of doing these things for themselves.
- Staff sequence learning to build on what children already know and can do. For example, younger children use ice cubes to paint and explore the melting ice. Older children recall what they have learned, and are able to sequence the freezing and melting of ice through discussion and pictures.
- Information on children's starting points is discussed with parents when children

first start at the nursery. Staff understand children's likes and dislikes, which helps them settle quickly into the nursery. Regular assessment helps to identify those children who may need additional support. Extra funding is used well to support children's identified targets and ensure any gaps in learning are reduced.

- Staff support children's growing vocabulary through stimulating storytelling. They introduce new words to children, checking that they understand the meaning of words. Children use the words in their play as they recall the story of 'Jack and the beanstalk'. They use props to retell the story, describing climbing through clouds and explaining how the beanstalk came to be. Children are developing a love of books and storytelling while developing their speech and language skills.
- Staff plan activities to help children learn to count, and recognise amounts and quantities. Through their play, staff question children about the size, positions, shape and order of different objects. Children describe the gigantic beanstalk, and they count out pasta as they put it into tubes. As a result, children are learning mathematical language within their play.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Parents comment on the good communication they receive from the provision via weekly emails and daily conversations. Parents of the baby room children have a two-way communication book. This helps keep them up to date with their baby's daily routine.
- Children are learning about how to keep themselves healthy. They choose their snack from a selection of fruit in a bowl. All children are offered a nutritious cooked lunch. They talk about having strong teeth. When asked what makes them strong, children reply 'calcium' and 'apples'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe, including local and wider safeguarding issues. Staff complete regular safeguarding training to ensure they can recognise the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Most staff hold a full paediatric first-aid certificate, so they can support children in the event of an accident or incident. Staff help children to manage risk. For instance, they talk to children about safety when climbing steps to the outside garden.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
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ensure supervision offers staff the opportunity to discuss safeguarding children, children's development and staff well-being.	15/03/2022
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- plan more opportunities for children to become independent
- develop the curriculum to provide children with greater learning opportunities outdoors.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY479376
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10218305
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 at time of inspection	1 to 11
Total number of places	38
Number of children on roll	129
Name of registered person	Dobson, Claire Louise
Registered person unique reference number	RP515733
Telephone number	01924 835353
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2018

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones registered in 2014 and is located in Stanley near Wakefield. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 7am until 6pm, all year round, except for one week between Christmas and the New Year. It provides funded education for two-, three- and four-year old children. The nursery provides wrap-around care for children aged five to 11 years. It employs 11 members of staff, all of whom hold at least a level 3 early years qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jo Clark

Inspection activities

- This was the first inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 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 provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together to understand how the early years provision and curriculum are organised.
- The inspector made observations throughout the inspection of children's experiences in the setting.
- Joint observations were carried out by the inspector and the provider.
- Children spoke to the inspector about their experiences in the setting.
- The inspector spoke to staff, parents and carers at appropriate times during the inspection.
- A meeting was held with the provider. This included a review of relevant documentation, including evidence of staff's suitability and training.

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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