

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Dogsthorpe)

10 Welland Road, Dogsthorpe, Peterborough PE1 3SF

Inspection date:

4 February 2022

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 flourish and have a thirst for learning. They thrive on the superb support given for their emotional development. This gives children a strong foundation for all their future learning. Children of all ages have very close relationships with staff, who offer the very best care and education to them. Babies' individual routines from home are followed, which offers them familiarity in the early days and weeks as they settle. Babies absolutely love music and movement, along with sensory sessions.

Children show high levels of concentration, for example as they make lots of tiny balls of dough. Older children love their 'tool school' and forest school sessions. They learn how to manage risks and the rules to keep them safe, for example when they use real tools. Children are in awe of the world. For example, they find worms, make cupcakes out of herbs, mud and water, whisk up a bubbly mixture and watch as the water they pour down the slide runs off the end. Younger children show great coordination as they carry full watering cans and pour from them competently.

Children persevere for long periods of time as they hammer nails into tree stumps and carefully wind materials around the nails to make their own creation. Some children show amazing dexterity and ability to follow instructions as they tie their own knots to secure materials in place. Children's use of vocabulary is extensive and encouraged at every opportunity. For example, a child states that he is looking for an 'allen key' on the mat of a vast array of tools, nuts and bolts.

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

- Key persons know the children exceptionally well and ensure their individual needs and interests are constantly prioritised. Staff implement a high-quality curriculum that is sequenced to ensure that all children build on what they already know, and achieve or exceed their full potential. This is particularly true for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those in receipt of early years pupil premium funding.
- Staff are highly effective in their approach to developing all children's communication and language skills as a priority. They make significant efforts to learn the correct pronunciation of key words in children's home language and use these frequently. This helps staff to engage meaningfully with children, and the children to engage with their environment.
- All staff use excellent strategies for teaching children new knowledge and skills. For example, they ask many open-ended questions, such as 'How do we do that?' This allows children time to think for themselves and gives them opportunities to solve problems. Staff are skilled at knowing when to step back.

For example, they give children time to persevere as they work together to fit cogs in a particular sequence so that they turn.

- Staff all work tirelessly in their roles, including in any additional responsibilities they take on. Their only focus is to always do whatever is best for each child and their family and to ensure that children receive the very best support at the earliest opportunity. This considerably increases the rate of progress children make.
- Children behave extremely well. There is a high level of mutual respect throughout the nursery. Staff frequently tell children they are really proud of them as they give them a 'high five'. Children are very polite to one another and, for example, are keen to ask their friends if they would like a turn at the activity too.
- Partnerships with parents are exceptional. Staff work hard and successfully to educate parents about all that their children do. They offer many opportunities for parents to get involved in their children's learning. Feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive. They make comments such as, 'It is clear that they have such vision for the nursery and just live for what they do', say the nursery is a 'positive, upbeat environment' and that 'the staff are amazing, facilities are fantastic and there is a real family feeling about the place that makes everyone feel safe, happy and secure'.
- The leadership and management of this provision is exceptional. Leaders prioritise the well-being of each staff member as much as they do each child and their individual families. This is the reason that staff turnover is extremely low and many staff have worked in this nursery for a significant number of years.
- Leaders and staff continue to strive to make plans for the future using innovative ideas to inspire each other at the highest level. Leaders show a deep and sensitive understanding of local issues that may affect the families for whom the provision provides a service. They go above and beyond to support their families and other families in the local community. Children are involved in many charitable and fundraising events so they become fully aware of people less fortunate than themselves.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are thoroughly understood by all and given utmost priority. During COVID-19 restrictions, staff stayed in constant touch with children and their families to ensure all remained safe and so that they could offer any support, where needed. They spend significant amounts of time educating parents about keeping children safe. Staff have a robust understanding about what to do if they have a concern about a child or a colleague. They regularly refresh their safeguarding knowledge and use staff meetings and supervisions to ensure they remain highly confident and competent in this subject.

Setting details

Unique reference number	256827
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10137462
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	74
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Nurseries Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP909943
Telephone number	01733 310 381
Date of previous inspection	2 November 2012

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Dogsthorpe) registered in 2000. It is a privately owned day nursery which operates from a converted Victorian manor house located in Dogsthorpe, Peterborough. The nursery is open five days a week from 8am to 5.45pm, all year round, excluding bank holidays. It employs 18 members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anna Davies

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine 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 provision.
- The manager, deputy manager and inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed how the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Children spoke to the inspector about the activities they were doing.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery manager, deputy manager and both registered individuals. She looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- Some parents spoke to the inspector during the inspection and others provided written feedback. The inspector took account of their views.

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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