

Inspection of Stepping Stones Playgroup

The Scout Hut, Inmans Lane, Sheet, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 2AN

Inspection date: 17 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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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 greet each other with delight when they arrive. They settle into activities extremely quickly. Children have exceptional relationships with all staff and especially their key person. The buddy system is securely in place, which means all children feel safe and secure even if their key person is away. Children flourish and are exceedingly happy. Staff have exceptionally high expectations of children. They are superb role models. Children thrive and behave impeccably well. They have very high levels of self-esteem and confidence. Children's individual efforts are celebrated frequently. Staff ensure praise is unique to each child.

Children have a superb understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They wipe their noses, put the tissue in the bin and then wash their hands thoroughly. Children explain that they have to wash their hands because of the 'germs'. Children risk assess independently. They skilfully climb up a ladder they have built out of crates into a 'pirate ship'. Children talk knowledgeably about how to keep themselves safe as they climb. They are curious and love to learn. Children eagerly notice the changes in the daffodils they visit each week. Children's favourite books are skilfully linked into other activities by staff. For example, they animatedly tell staff 'that's not my triangle, its too spikey' as they discover different textures outside.

Staff have an exemplary understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on children's learning and development. They ensure interventions to close any gaps in learning are quickly put in place.

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

- The manager is highly passionate and dedicated to meeting the needs of every individual child. She regularly reflects and evaluates the provision to ensure the highest quality of teaching is being provided.
- Staff's well-being is exceptionally well supported. The manager and deputy take a very personalised approach in supporting their team. They are warm, compassionate, and understanding. The deputy manager ensures that supervision meetings highlight strengths and provides targeted support that further enhances their quality of teaching.
- Staff support children's personal, social and emotional development. Children learn to self-regulate through taking deep breaths and putting their hands on their chest. Staff further support children's well-being by talking through their emotions. Staff use their exceptional knowledge of children and their families to tailor the support needed.
- Staff treat children with high levels of respect. During snack time, they drink their milk from cups and saucers. They learn about democracy as they vote for

which book to read. Children patiently listen to each other as they vote. They happily accept they might not get their choice.

- The curriculum is very ambitious and is tailored to meet the needs of every child. Staff know exactly where children are in their learning. They have an excellent understanding of what children need to learn next to help them progress. Staff skilfully implement these next steps, such as developing children's mathematical knowledge as they play. For example, staff support children as they estimate which size blanket they need to cover their den.
- Staff build highly effective relationships with parents. They describe staff as 'incredibly experienced and knowledgeable'. Parents speak highly of the communication and support they receive. They receive frequent and detailed updates on their children's progress. Parents describe how the manager and staff have gone above and beyond in supporting the whole family during any difficulties they may face.
- Partnerships with other professionals are excellent. Staff ensure there are high levels of communication between all agencies. This helps children to flourish as their individual needs are being met effectively.
- Staff are exceptionally skilled at developing children's communication and language skills. They expertly support children with non-verbal language by demonstrating how to sign words, such as 'more'. This helps children communicate with others. Older children learn words, such as 'extinct' and 'evolved' as they play with model dinosaurs.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive. They receive exceptionally high levels of support and make remarkable progress. Children with SEND feel safe and are extremely well included. Children gleefully shout 'go' after staff prompt 'ready, steady' while playing with toy vehicles. Staff skilfully engage children in activities through using picture boards to help children choose. Children use visual timetables to help follow the routine of the day.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and the deputy have a secure understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities as safeguarding leads. Staff are highly knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms that may suggest a child is a risk from harm. They understand the wider aspects of safeguarding, such as the 'Prevent' duty. All staff know the procedures they must follow if they have a concern about a child. They also have a secure understanding of the whistle-blowing procedure. The manager has a robust understanding of safer recruitment. She understands the procedures to follow to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	109865
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10104172
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	33
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP909085
Telephone number	01730 269610
Date of previous inspection	22 April 2015

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Playgroup registered in 2000 and is situated in Sheet, Petersfield. The playgroup operates Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm term time only. There are seven members of staff. All staff apart from one are qualified to a minimum of level 3. In addition, two members hold relevant level 6 qualifications. The provider accepts funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Natasha Jarvis

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 provider.
- The manager explained the curriculum intentions to the inspector during the learning walk.
- Parents shared their views with the inspector.
- The inspector talked with other professionals who work in partnership with the manager.
- The inspector took part in discussions with the manager and staff during the inspection.
- The deputy manager and the inspector observed and evaluated an activity together.
- The inspector observed staff and children throughout the day.
- Children chatted to the inspector and shared 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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