

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery

147 London Road, Stockton Heath, Warrington WA4 6LG

Inspection date: 18 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

All children thrive in this calm and caring nursery. Children are supported by nurturing staff, who offer cuddles and reassurance throughout the day. This supports children to feel safe and secure and be ready to learn. Children have adapted well to changes due to COVID-19, such as having their temperatures taken on arrival.

Children show impressive levels of concentration and curiosity and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Younger children enjoy making marks with water outside, which helps to prepare them for early writing. Babies enjoy playing peekaboo with staff. They giggle with delight as the fabric gently falls over their face and the staff member reappears. Older children use tape measures to check how much they have grown. They measure their friends and use mathematical language, such as 'taller' and 'smaller'. Children recall things they have learned in the past. For example, they know that their name begins with the same sound as some of their friends.

Children behave well and show kindness. They invite peers to join in with their play and cheer when their friends sing on the microphone in the role play concert. Children's independence is supported well at this nursery, and staff have high expectations for all children. For instance, babies put on their own bibs and feed themselves. Older children serve their own lunch and set the table at mealtimes, and toddlers pour drinks into real glasses with great care. These responsibilities help to promote children's independence and self-care skills.

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

- Managers and staff have ambitious learning intentions for all children. They value children's individual characters and interests. Staff use this knowledge to help them plan an exciting curriculum that builds on what children know and can do. All children make good progress in their learning.
- The nursery environment and activities are well planned by staff. Older children work together to test out if objects will fit through long tubes. They make predictions together and look for bigger and smaller objects. Children are confident and demonstrate good problem-solving techniques as they transport stones to other areas of the garden. This enhances children's learning opportunities and sparks their curiosity.
- Staff provide lots of opportunities for children to be active throughout the day. All children enjoy daily opportunities to develop their core physical skills. For example, children develop their muscles as they push wheelbarrows and balance on the beams. Younger children explore sensory trays, and older children squeeze out juice from oranges in the water tray and grasp the mint-scented

play dough. This supports them to develop their smaller muscle skills. Staff are aware of the importance of providing these opportunities to support later writing skills.

- Overall, staff support children's communication and language development well. They introduce new words during everyday activities. They also ensure that all children have access to a wide range of stories and songs. Children are developing a love of books as they seek out adults to read familiar stories with them. However, on occasions, staff do not always fully promote children's thinking skills. For example, when staff ask questions, they do not always give children enough time to think and respond.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is supported particularly well by staff. They encourage children to share their achievements, boosting their self-esteem. Children show confidence and are keen to talk about stories that they have read as they go on to re-enact them outside, hiding from the 'big bad wolf'. Younger children proudly share the names of dinosaurs that they have learned, demonstrating their self-confidence.
- Staff promote good hygiene practices. They sing to babies as they wash their hands and regularly encourage children to wipe their noses. Children also know that they should cough into their elbow to minimise the spread of germs. Staff regularly remind children about the importance of keeping hydrated when they have been outside or after dancing. Children have a secure awareness of healthy food choices, which they name with confidence. During the inspection, children share the healthy foods their family members also enjoy. Children benefit from many opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles.
- The enthusiastic manager provides staff with a range of support and training opportunities to help them to develop their skills. Staff feel well supported in their professional development and well-being. However, the manager does not consistently check the impact this support makes to staff's practice. This means that professional development is not targeted effectively enough to ensure that all staff embed practice to the highest level.
- Partnership working with families is good. Parents are highly complimentary of this 'home-from-home' nursery. Staff keep parents informed about their children's learning and progress. Parents also receive ideas to help extend their children's learning at home. Parents report that their children are safe and have become confident and independent since attending the nursery.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager is knowledgeable about her roles and responsibilities as the designated safeguarding lead. She ensures that all staff are aware of signs and symptoms that may be a cause for concern. Staff understand the nursery's safeguarding policy and know where to report concerns to. Most staff hold a paediatric first-aid qualification. This means there is always someone available to deal with accidents. The manager ensures that staff are recruited safely by completing rigorous checks and comprehensive inductions. Children are supported

to identify risks in the environment. For example, toddlers sweep up sand as it falls on the floor 'so no one slips'.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- give children sufficient time to think and respond when answering questions
- monitor the effectiveness of staff's professional development to raise the quality of practice to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY477616
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10217722
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	48
Number of children on roll	60
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP535314
Telephone number	01925 600111
Date of previous inspection	12 August 2016

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery registered in 2014 and is situated in Stockton Heath, Warrington. The nursery employs 14 members of childcare staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate qualifications at levels 2, 3, 4 and 6. The nursery operates Monday to Friday, from 7.30am until 6pm, all year round, except for bank holidays. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Rebecca Weston

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and discussed the curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager to assess the impact of staff's teaching on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with several parents, children and staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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