

# Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery

16 Waingate, Linthwaite, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD7 5NR

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Inspection date:

26 April 2022

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## **Overall effectiveness**

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## **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

Not applicable

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision requires improvement**

Children delight in the warm and welcoming greeting they receive from staff as parents drop them off at the nursery entrance. They enter happily and with confidence. Toddlers under two years find their coat pegs, with support from the nurturing baby room staff. Children's coat pegs are labelled with their photograph, which helps them to develop a sense of belonging and early self-identity. Children settle quickly and staff comfort and distract those who are a little upset on their arrival.

Children have strong emotional attachments to staff, which helps them to feel secure and safe. However, staff's assessment of risk and knowledge of certain aspects of safeguarding children is not good enough. Children, particularly older children, understand and follow nursery rules. They are very sociable and play collaboratively, for instance, with dough and small-world sea-life resources.

Overall, children enjoy their time at the nursery. They readily access varied resources and activities that help them to develop early independence and certain skills for future learning. However, children do not make optimum progress and are not always challenged, focussed and engaged, due to weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching. This includes children in receipt of additional funding.

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

- Supervision arrangements for the relatively new manager and staff are not good enough. The manager does not receive enough support, coaching and mentoring from the provider, to enable her to effectively monitor and improve staff's knowledge and performance. Consequently, the quality of the curriculum indoors and outdoors, children's learning, and staff's teaching are not yet consistently good.
- Staff continually assess children's progress to support their future learning. However, they do not always effectively plan activities and the environment. They do not always focus on what they want children to learn and children's most relevant interests and next steps in learning, particularly where children are under three years.
- Staff promptly identify children with a developmental delay in order to secure early intervention and support. As part of this, they make timely referrals to other professionals.
- Staff work in partnership with parents to meet children's needs. There is regular information-sharing. For example, staff speak with parents at the entrance and provide daily care routine slips. Parents access online learning journals and staff share learning plans. Parents express very complimentary feedback.
- Staff gather important information to support new children's emotional well-

being as they settle in. For example, parents complete a detailed 'All about me' document. New babies readily smile at adults and contentedly explore their environment.

- Children in the pre-school room focus well during activities and build firm friendships. They kindly share dough tools while making creatures, such as a starfish. Children demonstrate early mathematical skills as they count how many tentacles an octopus has. They confidently recognise letters.
- Staff interact with children as they play. However, they do not always effectively extend or build on children's learning, engage children who lose focus, or challenge the oldest children. Staff support children's early communication skills, for instance, by reading stories and singing. Older children are very confident communicators.
- The nursery chef cooks nutritious meals using fresh, locally sourced ingredients. This helps to promote children's physical health. Children develop early independence. For example, older children serve themselves lunch and younger children readily find their drinking cups.
- Staff provide many opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. Babies pull themselves up on sturdy furniture. Toddlers excitedly negotiate a slope that has been created by staff with strategically placed soft-play blocks. Two-year-old children confidently ride wheeled toys and grasp painting tools. Older children learn to use rolling pins and cutters during dough play.
- Staff often use kind words to praise children. However, they do not always positively manage minor incidents of unwanted behaviour. They sometimes give commands, rather than using good role modelling and explanations that help children to understand behavioural expectations.
- Staff help children to learn about difference through activities based around festivals, such as Ramadan. However, such activities are not developmentally appropriate for younger children.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

All staff undertake safeguarding training. Most staff have a good knowledge of the signs of abuse, and understand how to report their concerns. This helps to promote children's welfare. However, newer staff are not specifically trained to understand the nursery's safeguarding policy and procedures. Consequently, they do not have a secure enough understanding of external whistle-blowing procedures or wider safeguarding issues linked to extreme behaviours and views. Staff monitor access to the nursery closely and they supervise children well at all times. However, they have not removed potential hazards outdoors, such as slates, some of which are broken, and an adult bike. Furthermore, foam sleep mats are not maintained in good condition.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the**

**provider must:**

	<b>Due date</b>
put in place effective supervision arrangements for staff, so that they receive effective support, coaching and training to improve the quality of education, teaching and children's learning	24/05/2022
train all staff to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures as part of their induction training, to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge of all aspects of safeguarding children	10/05/2022
improve risk assessments to ensure that outdoor areas and equipment used for sleeping purposes are fully safe and suitable.	10/05/2022

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

- improve staff's understanding of how to manage children's behaviour more positively and help children to learn why rules and boundaries exist
- provide more age-appropriate ways to help younger children learn about the diversity of the world in which they live.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY563606
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	10194297
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	38
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	60
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Little Acorns Day Nursery (Huddersfield) Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP902893
<b>Telephone number</b>	07757873668
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery registered in 2018 and is situated in Linthwaite, Huddersfield. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff, 11 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is qualified at level 2, eight at level 3 and two at level 4. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6pm, all year round, excluding bank holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Rachel Ayo

## 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 inspector held discussions with the manager and provider. She carried out a learning walk with the manager. This helped the inspector to understand how they organise the early years provision and the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact of this on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- The inspector spoke with children, staff and parents during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at various policies and documents, including those related to the suitability and qualifications of staff, planning of activities and records of learning.

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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