

# Inspection of Stepping Stones Nursery School

Shardeloes Cricket Pavillion, Shardeloes, Missenden Road, Amersham HP7 0RL

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Inspection date: 10 June 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is good

Children develop positive relationships with staff, which helps them to feel settled and safe. There is a buzz of chatter as children eagerly join their friends and confidently choose activities. Children's imagination and curiosity is met well as staff follow their current interests in animals. For example, children have great fun as they pretend to feed toy animals dog biscuits and bandage a toy dog's leg in the vet's play area.

Staff ensure that children are motivated to learn by planning stimulating activities that extend and challenge their learning. For example, children work harmoniously together as they build train tracks and take turns watching cars rolling down ramps.

Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength at the nursery. Key persons know the children well and provide experiences which capture children's natural interests and curiosity. For example, children spend long periods of time making bubbles in the water and giggle out loud as they watch the bubbles 'grow' and 'pop'.

Children have access to an extremely spacious and well-resourced outside space, which is used well to support children's physical development. Staff have high expectations of the children, encouraging them to take controlled risks as they climb and balance on the large play equipment. Children's behaviour inside and outside of the nursery is good. Children are respectful and understand the nursery routines well.

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

- Partnership working is a strength. Parents share examples of practical support they receive. They say that staff go 'above and beyond' to support them with their children's behaviour and learning. This approach provides consistency for children and extends their learning at home. Parents comment on how they were supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. They explain how staff contacted them regularly to check in on their children and guide them on how they could support their children's learning at home.
- The dedicated and passionate manager has a clear vision for how she wants the provision and the staff to develop. She has a good understanding of the curriculum and works with staff to plan and implement an interesting range of activities that engage children in their learning.
- Staff encourage children's mathematical development effectively. Children regularly use mathematical language in their play. For example, they proudly count out how many dog biscuits they have and categorise the various shapes

into groups.

- Children eagerly take part in story times and enjoy dancing to music during tidy-up time. However, staff have not fully considered ways to support children's concentration and engagement during planned group activities.
- Overall, children are encouraged to be independent and carry out tasks, such as tidying up and hanging up their coats. However, at times staff carry out tasks which children could do for themselves. Such as, spreading their own toppings onto crackers and pouring their own drinks.
- Children understand what makes them unique. They also learn about differences between themselves and others. Children are kind and considerate to their friends. They learn about other cultures and ways of life. This helps children understand the diverse world around them.
- The manager and staff identify children with SEND through their observations and assessments. They work with parents and other professionals to ensure a suitable curriculum is put in place. Where formal plans are needed, these are completed in time for children to move on to the next stage in their learning and school with the correct level of support.
- Staff express a high level of satisfaction in their roles. They say that they get opportunities to discuss their well-being and professional practice with the manager. Overall, the manager provides a comprehensive training programme and regular supervision sessions to drive improvement across the whole nursery.
- Staff promote being healthy by encouraging children to make healthy choices. For example, children are provided with milk and fruit and are reminded to eat up their fruit as it will make them big and strong. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after playing in the garden.
- Staff actively support children's developing communication and language skills. They carefully repeat back the correct pronunciations to children. For example, by breaking down sounds to enable children to start to recognise letters and the sounds they represent.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager, who is the designated safeguarding lead, is aware of her responsibilities. She keeps her knowledge up to date and regularly attends training. Staff complete training, so they are also aware of the local authority's procedures, and the manager monitors their practice. The manager and staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about children's welfare. Staff are aware of how to whistle-blow if they still have concerns. The manager implements rigorous recruitment processes and ensures that the staff are suitable to work with the children. Staff assist children to learn how to keep themselves safe.

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

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

- review the organisation and structure of group times to take into consideration the age ranges and individual needs of the children present, to enhance learning opportunities to the highest level
- use opportunities to support and encourage children to develop their independence.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY376771
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228471
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	30
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	35
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Leaping Lizards Day Nursery Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP527473
<b>Telephone number</b>	0149 443 3020
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 September 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Nursery School registered in 2008 and is situated on the outskirts of Amersham, Buckinghamshire. It operates from 9.15am to 3.15pm, Monday to Friday, during term time only. The provider is in receipt of funding to provide free early years education to children aged two, three and four years. There are nine members of staff, one of whom holds qualified teacher status, and four members of staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 3.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Chris Lamey

## 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 observed the quality of education being provided indoors and outdoors and, assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all the areas of the setting. The manager discussed the curriculum and what they want the children to learn and why.
- Children talked to the inspector at various times throughout the inspection and she 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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