

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery Holt

Corpusty & Holt Childrens Centre, Charles Road, HOLT, Norfolk NR25 6DA

Inspection date: 12 July 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	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children flourish at this small and friendly nursery. They arrive with big smiles and separate from their parents with ease. Children are highly motivated and make independent decisions about their own learning. For example, they decide to research about bears. They select electronic tablets and interactive globes to find pictures and information. Young children become immersed in gluing lolly sticks into a design of their choice. Children demonstrate problem solving skills. They draw their own plans of a 'bear hunt trail' and discuss what equipment they need. Children remind each other to 'take it in turns' through a tunnel and debate how they will carry equipment.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They share resources and tell each other 'you are welcome'. Children work collaboratively to set the table for snack time. They show care and consideration. For example, they remind each other to wear sun hats. Children are quick to celebrate each other's success. They clap and say 'well done' when children write their name using water and paint brushes. Children are emotionally secure. They confidently express how they feel and take an active part in yoga and mindfulness sessions. This helps regulate their feelings. As a result, the learning environment is calm and productive.

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

- Children have exceptional bonds with staff. They hold staff's hands and wrap their arms around them affectionately. Staff treat children with the utmost care and respect. They know children very well and understand what makes them unique. As a result, children settle extremely quickly.
- Children make rapid progress. This is because the curriculum is extremely well designed. Staff consistently reflect on children's development and plan carefully to support future learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Referrals are made quickly and staff ratios are kept consistently high to enable one-to-one support.
- Children are happy, confident learners. They become fascinated by different textures in a pretend farm and imagine green rice is grass. They investigate toy farm animals and chat about what real horses eat. They spontaneously sing 'Old McDonald had a farm' and giggle when they make different animal noises.
- Staff support children's health and well-being. They provide healthy, nutritious meals, ensuring that no children are hungry while they are learning. Children enjoy time in the spacious, outdoor area. They develop their physical strength as they dig in soil and look for 'buried treasure'. They pour water and investigate how it travels down ramps and through holes.
- Children are provided with many opportunities to practise their mark-making skills in preparation for writing. They 'write' shopping lists to plan which fruits

they would like to try at snack time. They draw intricate pictures and design their own treasure maps.

- Staff are outstanding role models and have high aspirations for children. They build on children's communication and language development by expertly asking a range of questions. Children are competent communicators and speak with clarity. For example, they explain how semi-circles are half a circle.
- Children's listening and concentration skills are supported well. Staff use daily 'bucket time' to improve children's focus. As a result, children listen and sit enthralled for long periods of time. This helps prepare them for their transition to school.
- Links with the local community are exceptionally strong. The nursery owner works closely with the directors of a community cafe to provide help for families. She is passionate about involving children in this support. For example, children had recently grown vegetables for a food bank.
- Parents have very high regard for the nursery. They report that staff are 'incredibly kind and caring'. Parents value the 'expertise' and 'dedication' of the staff. They say their children are making fantastic progress and they are kept fully informed.
- The nursery owner and manager ensure the quality of care and teaching are maintained at the highest level. They nurture a strong team ethos and maintain systems to support staff. Professional development is given a high-priority. Recent training has made an exceptionally valuable contribution to securing staff's skills, particularly in supporting children with additional needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to identify, and report concerns regarding the welfare of children or the behaviour of an adult. They confidently explain the possible signs of harm and procedures to follow. Leaders have effective systems in place for staff monitoring and supervision. Staff closely supervise children to promote their welfare. Leaders worked hard during the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain regular communication and provide support for children and their families. Staff work collaboratively with other professionals to ensure relevant information is passed on to ensure the best outcomes for children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2570335
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10239360
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	17
Name of registered person	Ellison, Martyne Claire
Registered person unique reference number	RP909522
Telephone number	01263712773
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery Holt was registered in 2020 and is privately run and managed. The nursery employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 6 and two at level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 8am to 4pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three-, and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Helen Oakden

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The nursery owner and manager led the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- Staff and children spoke to the inspector at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documents 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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