

# Inspection of Stepping Stones South Hills Nursery

Stepping Stones Nursery School, Upper Oakhill, Froxfield, Marlborough, Wiltshire  
SN8 3JT

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Inspection date: 27 July 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

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

### **The provision is good**

Children have fun at the nursery. They arrive happy and eager to see what exciting activities they can get involved in. For example, after having a cuddle with their key person, babies eagerly want to scoop sand or look at books. Toddlers manipulate dough, extending their creative imaginations and older children work out how to stop water escaping through a hole. Children feel safe and secure and develop highly positive relationships with each other and the staff, who are kind and gentle. They respect and value the children's contributions and ideas. For example, while playing African drums, children notice the different sounds they make. Staff skilfully help them to understand how this is due to the different sizes of drum and/or stick. Older children have good opportunities to write and use letters and numbers. They encounter regular problem-solving to help them think and consider alternative solutions, for example, how to transport water.

Parents confirm how well their children are progressing since attending the nursery. They have nothing but praise for the staff, especially in narrowing any gaps in their children's development. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities quickly receive any additional support they need, to ensure they can fully access the curriculum and make effective progress.

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

- The manager has an effective curriculum. She intends for staff to enable children to do as much as they can for themselves, while providing just the right amount of help for children to succeed. This they implement successfully. Staff consistently support toddlers in having a go, persevering and building resilience to setbacks. Children are eager learners and relish the opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills.
- Staff know the children well through their observations and partnerships with parents. This enables them to plan effectively for each child's next stage of development. However, sometimes, staff do not use all opportunities as they arise to help young children make even greater progress. For example, as children have fun with water, they leave wet marks on the ground with their feet. This quickly dries up in the sun, however staff miss the opportunity to help children learn about cause and effect.
- Staff provide some good support for children's language and communication skills. For example, they narrate what babies are doing and use words with gestures to give context to its meaning. They ensure every child gets a chance to talk and know when it is time to listen. Staff add new words to toddlers' developing vocabulary, using books and rhymes to help them to remember. However, on occasions, they repeat and use children's baby language, so children do not always hear correct pronunciations.

- The manager monitors and evaluates the quality of the provision well. With her deputy, she works directly with the children and staff, providing strong role models. She identifies areas for the whole team to focus on to ensure children receive consistently good quality teaching. The most recent emphasis has been on behaviour management and the next will be children's communication and language development.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They develop consistently high respect for the environment and each other. For example, children have an impressive awareness of reusing, recycling and composting. They go on litter picks and know why it's important to keep beaches clean. Children of all ages learn to share exceptionally well. Staff have introduced timers and even toddlers happily part with their toy at the end of their turn. Some no longer need this aid and willingly share with their friends. Children collaborate impressively and comment spontaneously that teamwork is a good way to complete a task.
- Children are highly motivated and eager to participate. For example, at story time, toddlers are invited to join the group, which they all willingly do. They listen attentively, concentrate and enthusiastically answer questions and join in with actions. Staff maintain children's attention from start to finish. Older children concentrate intently on the task at hand and are not distracted by others.
- Staff ensure that children develop a healthy lifestyle. They have daily exercise and outdoor play to develop large-muscle skills. Children make healthy choices for their snack, such as whole fruits and discuss their favourite vegetables at lunchtime. Older children learn why they need to take care of their teeth and all children know the importance of good handwashing.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children. They all attend regular training to keep up to date with current concerns and procedures. Staff know what to do should they have a concern that a child may be at risk of harm. Staff are clear about their whistleblowing procedures and who to contact outside of the nursery. Children learn to keep themselves safe and staff provide effective supervision. Overall, staff carry out good risk assessments to keep children safe in all areas of the environment.

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

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

- focus staff development on supporting young children's language skills even further by ensuring they hear correct words and pronunciations
- help staff to become consistent in making the best use of impromptu situations,

in order to support younger children to understand about cause and effect.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2571726
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10239223
<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>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	67
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	55
<b>Name of registered person</b>	South Hills School Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP904971
<b>Telephone number</b>	01722 744871
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones South Hills Nursery opened in 2020 and is one of 11 nurseries owned by South Hills Schools Limited. This nursery operates from Upper Oakhill, Froxfield, Marlborough, Wiltshire. The nursery opens from 7.45am until 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. They receive funding to provide free early years education for children aged two, three and four years. The management team employ 10 staff, including the manager. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 4 and four staff hold qualifications at level 3. One member of staff holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 and there are two apprentices.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Elaine Douglas

## 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 led the inspector on a walk around the setting to discuss their curriculum and observe the safety of the premises.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager in the two-year-old room.
- The inspector observed the quality of education, spoke with staff, and assessed the effectiveness of safeguarding and care procedures.
- The inspector held a leadership and management discussion with the manager and sampled documentation.
- The inspector spoke with several parents and children at the inspection and 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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