

Inspection of Stepping Stones

Gloucester Hall, Gloucester Gardens, Bagshot GU19 5NU

Inspection date: 18 July 2022

The quality and standards of early years provision

This inspection

Met

Previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

This provision meets requirements

Children flourish in a friendly, child-led play environment. They come into the club happily and quickly settle to their chosen activity. Children are clearly pleased to see the staff and chat about their day. They benefit from attentive staff who listen to them and make them feel welcome and valued. Staff provide a vast range of exciting resources and activities, which children use with great enthusiasm. For instance, children enjoy making 'pizza' with play dough, and create their own 'toppings'. They concentrate and persevere for long periods of time as they squeeze and roll the dough. Children understand the routines of the club and follow instructions well. For example, children instinctively know where to place their personal belongings on arrival and the need to wash their hands before sitting down for their meal.

Staff engage with children, listening to their views and opinions. They consistently apply fair boundaries, so that children understand how to behave at the club. Staff use explanations and gentle reminders to help children manage their emotions and consider others. This helps children learn how to behave well. Older children happily play with younger children, helping them to access resources, for example. Children are extremely happy and enjoy their time at the club. They tell the inspector, 'I really love coming to the club'.

Staff understand the importance of promoting children's physical health. They use every opportunity for the children to be physically active in the fresh air. Children challenge their developing physical skills and learn to take risks as they use climbing frames and practise learning to walk using stilts.

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

- The management team are highly dedicated professionals who aim to provide a high-quality setting for children. The manager frequently meets with staff to evaluate the provision and consider any changes. He gathers feedback from staff, parents and children on ways to improve the club. This helps ensure improvements in the quality of service. For example, he recognises that staff would benefit from further continued professional opportunities to strengthen their existing knowledge.
- Children eat freshly prepared and nutritious hot meals. Mealtimes are a social occasion. Children sit and chat with their friends about their school day and develop appropriate table manners. Staff obtain information regarding any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies, and ensure they adhere to this information accordingly.
- Parents are very complimentary about the club staff. They speak highly about

the effective communication from staff and how much their children enjoy attending the club. Parents state that staff are 'simply fantastic, and go above and beyond in what they do for children.'

- Staff build positive partnerships with the school staff, complementing children's learning at the club. Staff reliably pass messages to and from parents, ensuring effective communication. This helps to support high levels of consistency for children's care and learning.
- Children enjoy the company of their friends and form new friendships with children from other schools. They learn to cooperate and play well together. This is evident as children share jugs and syringes during water play. They wait their turn to spurt the water down the tubes and laugh as the water splashes at the bottom.
- Supervision meetings support staff performance. The manager completes regular appraisals with his staff. He ensures levels of staff well-being are high, and provides staff with support when needed. Staff say how much they feel well supported in their role, and that they feel highly valued.
- Younger children are allocated a key person who works closely with them and their families. Staff are confident to talk about their key children, with a good understanding of their level of development, including their next steps for learning. For instance, children enjoy engaging in mark-making activities. They use large chalks during outdoor play and talk about the marks they make on the ground. This helps to develop children's early literacy skills.
- There is a strong focus on children developing their problem-solving skills. For instance, children show great perseverance skills when building a water run. Staff ask the children what they think the water mill will do when they pour the water through it. Children delight as they see the mill spin around as the water flows through.
- Children have many opportunities to be active after school or to settle down and play quietly. Staff deploy themselves effectively to offer support and company to children wherever they need it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff place high importance on keeping children safe. They risk assess thoroughly to ensure that areas used by children are safe and suitable for their needs. Robust procedures are in place for collecting children. Children have a secure understanding of how they can keep themselves safe in the minibus. For example, they know they must keep their seatbelt on at all times. The manager and staff all have mandatory safeguarding training. The manager ensures that staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues and how to respond to concerns about a child's welfare. Staff know the procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child, or about the conduct of a colleague. The manager implements safer recruitment procedures to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2572151
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10239541
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Out-of-school day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	4 to 7
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones (Surrey) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP540404
Telephone number	07747 013667
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones registered in 2020. It is a privately owned provision offering after-school care. The club operates from Gloucester hall in Bagshot, Surrey. It operates Monday to Friday, from 3pm to 6pm, term-time only. There are five staff who work regularly with the children, of which three hold relevant qualifications at level 3 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Richards

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 her evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector asked staff questions throughout the inspection to establish their understanding of how to safeguard children.
- The inspector sampled documentation, including staff suitability checks and evidence of paediatric first-aid training.
- The inspector viewed all areas of the provision used by children.
- Parents spoke to the inspector to provide their views on the club.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The manager and the inspector evaluated an activity together.

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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