

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Clay Cross) Ltd

Ash House, Tower Business Park, High Street, Clay Cross, Chesterfield, Derbyshire
S45 9DX

Inspection date: 9 August 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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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

The sound of children having fun is heard across this small and friendly nursery. The atmosphere is delightful. Babies' and toddlers' infectious giggles can be heard as they play 'peek-a-boo' with the enthusiastic staff. They hide in the playhouse, covering their eyes with their hands, and eagerly wait to be found. They jump on the staff for big cuddles and laugh with delight. Children show that they feel safe and secure with the staff that care for them. Children are confident to communicate with their friends and the staff. They share their opinions and ideas. Staff listen attentively and hold meaningful conversations with them. Children have high levels of confidence in their abilities in social situations. They eagerly share information about birdwatching with visitors, saying 'we found pigeons and sparrows, but not owls, they come out at night.'

Children make good progress in their learning and develop good independence skills. They join in serving food at lunchtime, change their own shoes and help with tidying up. This helps children to develop skills that they need for life and for the next stages of their learning. Older children manage the stairs well and remind their friends to 'hold the rail' to keep them safe. Children are well behaved, and they show genuine kindness towards each other. All children receive good levels of support and reassurance from the staff. This has a positive effect on children's confidence, behaviour and emotional well-being.

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

- Staff provide a wide range of enjoyable activities and experiences that stimulate and intrigue children. For example, they add herbs and spices to the play dough. Staff and children talk about the different smells and compare ideas, such as 'the mint looks like spinach' and 'the garlic smells like dinner.' Children enhance their physical skills as they chop herbs and squeeze the juice from fruit. While staff plan and provide these activities, they do not always provide extra challenge for children, to help them further build on what they already know and can do.
- There is a strong focus on supporting children's emotional well-being. Staff use stories effectively to help children to talk about their feelings and emotions. Children link colours to help them talk about how they feel. They say 'I feel yellow because this is calm and relaxed.'
- Older children enjoy spending time in the large, well-designed outdoor space. Their physical skills are developing well. They competently run, hop and ride their bicycles, climb up ladders and slide down slides. Staff challenge children further as they suggest throwing and catching a ball. Staff demonstrate how to throw a ball. Children cheer as they manage to aim the ball to stick to the target. However, babies' physical skills are not promoted as well inside. Staff

working with babies do not always provide the support they need to further develop early standing and walking skills.

- The manager and deputy have worked together for a number of years. They have created a strong and dedicated staff team. All staff have high expectations for children and each other. Staff say they feel valued and supported, including those who are newer to the team. Staff benefit from regular team meetings and opportunities to reflect on their practice.
- The curriculum is ambitious for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, the SEND coordinator and staff work tirelessly to ensure that they address any gaps in learning immediately and without delay. This means that children receive prompt support to help them make the best possible progress in their learning.
- Staff are positive role models in promoting behaviour. Children follow staff's instructions and respond to picture-routine cards. They behave well and play harmoniously together. Children show a strong sense of belonging and ownership to their nursery. For example, they know where to hang their coat and put their shoes. They remind each other to say 'please' and 'thank you' and they enjoy helping as they tidy up the resources.
- Partnerships with parents and the local schools are good. Staff involve parents in children's learning and feed back to them each day, which helps parents to continue children's learning at home. Parents are very enthusiastic in their comments about the staff and nursery. In addition, links with the local school enables the manager to reflect on the provision they offer. For example, they have planned targeted support for developing children's small-physical skills in preparation for early writing. This benefits the children as they are ready for school, when the time comes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding and the procedures to report any concerns they may have about children in their care. They complete regular training to ensure their child protection knowledge remains up to date. Staff can clearly explain what would cause them to be concerned about a child. They are able to share their understanding of wider safeguarding issues, such as county lines. The staff team know where to find the information they need to make a referral to outside agencies. Robust recruitment processes are in place to ensure staff suitability. Children are kept safe as staff remain vigilant and supervise children well.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to review and adapt the environment for babies to maximise their physical development
- support staff to better recognise and make more effective use of adult-led learning opportunities to extend and challenge children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY490202
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10236672
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 8
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	66
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Clay Cross) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP909624
Telephone number	01246863486
Date of previous inspection	25 August 2016

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Clay Cross) Ltd registered in 2015. It is located in Clay Cross, Derbyshire. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 7.30am until 6pm, all year round, except for a week between Christmas and New Year, and bank holidays. There are 10 members of staff. Of these, all hold an early years qualification at level 2 or 3. The nursery receives funding for free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Tracy Hopkins

Inspection activities

- This was the first inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provision.
- The manager and inspector completed a joint observation of another member of staff carrying out an activity with the children.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed their aims for the curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to parents to find out their views of the setting.
- The inspector observed the children and staff, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the quality of teaching.
- A meeting took place with the inspector, manager and deputy manager. Staff qualifications and suitability checks were observed.

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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