

Inspection of Stepping Stones Preschool (Brackley)

Springfield Way, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 6JJ

Inspection date:

25 August 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

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children arrive happy and keen to begin their day in this friendly and inviting setting. They are warmly welcomed by attentive staff, who ensure that detailed handovers are taken so that the needs of the children can be precisely met. Children have exceptionally strong bonds with staff, which enables them to feel safe and secure.

Children are familiar with routines as they gather on the carpet together. They are nurtured and encouraged to contribute to the group as they allocate helper roles, such as 'room buddies' and 'snack monitors', at the start of the day. Children have a strong voice and follow their own lines of enquiry. They discover musical instruments and request music to be played. Staff quickly facilitate this and children delight as they move their bodies to the music and play their instruments.

Children are inquisitive and highly engaged in the well-designed experiences they take part in. For example, children make predictions about where apples come from and learn how they can plant the seeds from inside to grow more apples. Children display a mature respect for their peers and adults as they listen to each other's ideas, demonstrating impeccable manners and behaviour.

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

- The success of the pre-school is driven by the dedication and expertise of the management team. A skilled staff team assists the management team, showing enthusiasm and pride in its work. Staff are extremely well supported, with robust monitoring of practice to ensure they can confidently deliver high-quality teaching. Staff are encouraged to build on knowledge they are interested in, which helps to shape a vibrant and stimulating curriculum. This helps to ensure that children have the most positive outcomes.
- Staff work extremely hard to ensure that children receive the same high-quality care at the holiday club as in term time. The key-person system is well embedded, which ensures all staff have in-depth understanding of children's next steps and what is required to support children in their learning and development. As a result, children make exceptional progress.
- Plenty of time and consideration is taken to support children and families as they transition through the pre-school. All interactions are well thought out, fluid and sensitively meet the needs of the child. Staff expertly plan experiences that build on children's knowledge and skills for future learning. Staff work closely with local schools to prepare children with the right skills to successfully begin their next stage of education.
- Leaders are extremely aware of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Exceptional consideration has been given to ensure that no child is left behind.

Staff have received further training and adapted teaching to support children's speech and language development. For example, they have introduced 'chatter groups', where children hear and absorb a wealth of new words. Staff frequently use songs, rhymes and stories to engage children. Children learn from clear speech and repetition of sounds. This builds on their vocabulary and, as a result, they become highly confident communicators.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well nurtured. Excellent monitoring of children's progress means that swift interventions are put in place if there is a concern about a child's development. The dedicated special educational needs coordinator has well-established relationships with a wide range of external professionals. This allows a cohesive approach to children's learning experiences. She has an excellent overview of the needs of these children. She shares knowledge and strategies with staff and funding is sharply focused to enable every child to make the best possible progress.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Parents keenly share their positive views, commenting that their experience has been 'nothing less than outstanding'. Staff work closely with parents, keeping them up to date with their child's progress. Parents' evenings and open days allow parents to feel fully involved in the care of their child and ideas are shared to expertly support children's learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the pre-school. Staff are extremely confident in their knowledge of the signs and types of abuse and how to respond to safeguarding situations. Training provided for staff is highly effective and helps to maintain knowledge and commitment towards the protection of children.

Children are kept safe as staff remain vigilant and supervise children especially well. They ensure that children of different ages play safely together. Children instinctively know how to use equipment such as scissors safely. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are followed to ensure staff working with children are suitable.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY366925 |
| Local authority | West Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10138606 |
| Type of provision | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| Registers | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| Day care type | Sessional day care |
| Age range of children at time of inspection | 2 to 11 |
| Total number of places | 68 |
| Number of children on roll | 160 |
| Name of registered person | Stepping Stones Pre-School (Brackley) |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP907771 |
| Telephone number | 01280706553 |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 October 2015 |

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Preschool (Brackley) was first established in 1969 and re-registered in 2008 to offer a full-time provision. The pre-school employs 20 members of childcare staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from level 3 to level 6. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Emily Woodhead

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting 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 setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk. She talked to the inspector about the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors. She discussed children's progress with staff.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation. This included evidence of staff suitability, staff training record and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of written feedback provided.

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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