

Inspection of Stepping Stones Childcare (Cornwall)

12-14 Wesley Place, Mt Charles, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4QA

Inspection date:

10 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children are confident, happy and enjoy their time at the setting. Children have opportunities to be independent. For example, they self-register with name tags when they enter the nursery. At snack time, the children collect their crockery and serve themselves snacks using tongs and spoons. Staff encourage them to put their rubbish in the bin and clear away afterwards.

Children have lots of interesting activities to engage in, and they concentrate well. Inside, children develop physical and social skills on a large castle structure. They have free access to a creative area where they can independently paint, draw and make marks. Outside, children enjoy playing with ride-on cars and building bricks. They also participate in pouring and squeezing in a water tray. This water activity also includes toy sea animals, to help children explore the wider world and nature. Music and singing are available for the children to enjoy, inside and outside. Some children enjoy singing 'Row, row, row your boat' while playing in the water play area. There are instruments on a rug that the children enjoy playing.

The children develop creativity in the role-play area. This is currently set up as a fire station. There is a salt-dough play area where some children make pretend birthday cakes. They are happy to share their achievements and celebrate each other's successes. However, managers do not oversee the key-person system successfully to ensure that staff know key information about their children. This has an impact on whether children receive the correct input from staff.

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

- Leadership and management support staff well in their training and development. However, not all staff are clear on what their key child's learning and development needs are. As a result, suitable learning and development opportunities are missed.
- Children develop good relationships with staff and feel comfortable. Staff know most of the children well. However, the key-person system has only recently restarted after the holidays. Some staff are not confident in their knowledge of their key children. Opportunities for relevant teaching and support are sometimes missed.
- Staff support children to eat healthy snacks, such as hummus and fruit. Staff talk with children and parents about healthy food choices. Personal hygiene is well supported. Children learn about the importance of brushing their teeth.
- Children are well supported in developing their language and communication. Staff encourage children to have conversations and give children time to think and respond. Staff explain activities clearly and support children to learn new vocabulary. The pre-school has an extensive book reading area, and staff read

to the children often. Staff use sign language and teach this to the children who are non-verbal.

- Children develop friendships with their peers, and behaviour is consistently positive. They support their friends and help each other to overcome difficulty. For example, one group of children enjoyed making strawberry tea together. Children helped each other to pour the liquid and collect it into small cups.
- Children are happy to help clear away toys. Staff manage transitions well with a bell sound, which lets the children know that playtime will be over soon. Overall, children know what is expected of them. However, there is some confusion over snack time, which starts at the same time as outside play. Children who have only recently put their coat on and gone outside to play are asked to come in and have a snack. Additionally, staff choose who will go for their snack first. Opportunities for free choice and independence are missed, and the system is not clear to the children.
- Staff support the children's mathematical development. Children learn to count, sequence, match and recognise symbols. For example, children enjoy playing a pirate-treasure counting game and a tiger-and-number puzzle. Staff support children to retain knowledge with a prior-learning area. They independently explore some of the activities from the previous week and remember what they learned.
- Staff support children's knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live. Staff teach children about respect and kindness and develop their understanding of equality and diversity. They explore cultural and religious celebrations with the children and encourage children to discuss the various images from around the world that are on the walls of the pre-school. Staff teach children about nature while they care for and feed the fish in the outside area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers follow a rigorous and effective recruitment procedure. Staff inductions are thorough. New staff feel confident in their working environment, and staff feel well supported. Managers conduct regular appraisals and suitability checks. Managers provide staff with training and have access to good-quality professional development. Managers have created suitable safeguarding arrangements. Staff know what is expected of them with regards to safeguarding. They know how to spot the signs of possible abuse and are confident in how to put safeguarding policies into practice.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure managers oversee the key-person system to guarantee that children receive the correct targeted input from staff to enhance learning and development
- reorganise arrangements during snack time to enable confidence and independence.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY489995
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10238823
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 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	33
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Childcare (Cornwall) CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP534601
Telephone number	01726 74493
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Childcare (Cornwall), Mount Charles, in St Austell, Cornwall re-registered in 2015. It is one of two settings run by Stepping Stones and is a charitable incorporated organisation run by trustees. The setting is open on weekdays, during term time, from 8.20am to 3.20pm. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are 14 members of staff. Of these, two members of staff hold a qualification at level 4, nine members of staff have a level 3 qualification, one member of staff holds an early years degree, one holds a level 2 qualification, and one member of staff is unqualified.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Victoria Jones

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 inspector spoke with the staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the room leader.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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