

# Inspection of Stepping Stones Playgroup

10 Station Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN40 1RE

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Inspection date: 17 November 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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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 playgroup offers a very welcoming, inclusive and homely environment for all children. All families' unique qualities are valued and respected. There is especially good provision for children who are learning English as an additional language, and those who need extra support with their learning. Staff use funding well to make sure teaching is carefully matched to what every child needs. All children make good progress in their learning and development from their individual starting points.

Children are happy and enjoy their time at playgroup. Those who need extra time in settling in are supported to do so. Children behave well. Staff teach children about the impact of their actions on others. They help children to recognise different feelings and emotions. Good strategies are used to enable children to resolve their own simple disputes. For example, children use sand timers while they wait for their turn to share favourite resources.

Staff are ambitious for every child. They equip children well with the skills they need for starting school. For example, the daily routine enables children to become independent, and confident to make their own choices. Children work out solutions to simple problems and learn how to respect each other's similarities and differences.

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

- Children develop a good range of skills to support their future learning. For example, staff support children to communicate clearly and effectively. They encourage children to listen to one another and to follow simple instructions. Staff have worked hard to support children's speaking and listening skills following the COVID-19 pandemic. They recognised that some children were less confident in engaging in discussions with other children and adults. The good-quality teaching now means that from a young age, children convey their needs clearly and build their vocabulary as they hear a greater range of words in stories, conversations and by singing songs and rhymes.
- Parents confirm how much they value the staff. They describe them as 'amazing' and 'incredible'. One parent praised the ethos of the group by saying: 'It's not just a playgroup, it's like a huge family.' Parents are very complimentary about the provision and praise the way in which staff support their children to learn and make them feel welcome.
- Overall, teaching is good. Staff know the children well, and use skilful strategies to support and enrich children's learning. For example, they encourage children to recall what they already know and build on their knowledge and skills. A group of children found a worm at the setting and excitedly worked with staff to

create a home for it. When questioned, the children confidently spoke about what the worm would need to survive, demonstrating the knowledge they had already learnt.

- Younger children make good progress in their learning as they play alongside older, more confident children. They replicate the language they hear and become increasingly confident in taking care of their own needs. For example, at snacktime, two year olds copy the actions of the older children, as they excitedly prepare the table, pour their drinks and hand out the snacks.
- Staff are particularly kind and sensitive towards the children. They respect children's different wishes and always ask permission before undertaking care routines, such as changing children's clothes, helping to wipe noses and carrying out nappy change routines. This indicates the level of kindness staff show to children, and demonstrates how much staff value children's own choices.
- Children's mathematical skills are supported well. Children use numbers as they play and join in excitedly with refrains, such as 'one, two, three go!', as they excitedly roll and race vehicles down slopes. During story sessions, children compare different sizes and use relevant comparative language as they explore the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'.
- Very occasionally, when children use the sports hall, teaching is less purposeful and not planned as well. During these times, some activities lack purpose and relevant challenge, and mean some children quickly become disengaged in their learning.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children's safety and well-being is given the highest priority. Staff fully understand their role in keeping children safe and supervising them closely. They are appropriately trained in safeguarding procedures. Staff fully understand the issues which might cause them concern, particularly when some children may be more vulnerable than others. The hall is safe and secure and good procedures are in place to make sure unauthorised visitors cannot gain access during playgroup hours. Children learn how to be safe as staff give clear examples. For example, they recognise they must be careful as they play to avoid accidents and injuries.

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

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

- ensure teaching is consistently good, particularly when using the sports hall, by planning activities which are purposeful, meaningful and offer children relevant challenge.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	511221
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228308
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	32
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Bexhill Youth and Community Association
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP521725
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 215455
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 December 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Playgroup is managed by a committee and has been established since 1987. It operates from rooms in the Bexhill Youth and Community Centre, in Bexhill, East Sussex. The playgroup is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 3pm, term time only. Funding is accepted for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The group makes provision for children who speak English as an additional language, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A team of four staff work with the children, one of whom is qualified to degree level and two of whom are qualified to level 3.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Jo Caswell

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the playgroup 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 setting.
- The inspector viewed the areas of the premises used by the children and discussed the safety and security arrangements.
- The manager explained how children's learning is planned for and discussed how she monitors the quality and impact of teaching.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they like to do at playgroup.
- Staff talked to the inspector about how they keep children safe and how they monitor the progress children make in their learning and development.
- A small number of parents spoke directly to the inspector and shared their views. The inspector also took account of the written feedback, provided by some parents in preparation for the inspection.

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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