

# Inspection of Stepping Stones

Stanley Peters Junior & Infant School, Lake Lock Road, Stanley, WAKEFIELD, West Yorkshire WF3 4HS

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Inspection date: 28 November 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is good

Children develop strong relationships with the friendly staff at this welcoming nursery. Children settle quickly and are eager to join in with the activities and experiences on offer, such as playing with dough and balancing on a beam.

Children behave well. The manager and staff are positive role models. They take every opportunity to praise children's good behaviour. For instance, children smile broadly as they are praised for remembering to use good manners after receiving their food. Staff support children well as they learn to take turns. Younger children wait their turn as friends have a go at pouring their milk from small jugs. Older children wait for each other to climb a rope ladder in the garden without reminders from staff. However, occasionally, during changeover times of activities, some children have to wait unoccupied, which wastes their valuable learning time.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles, such as the benefits of regular physical exercise and a balanced diet. Staff talk about how to keep their teeth healthy, linking this to healthy food. Children know about good handwashing practices. They tell the inspector they 'rub between their fingers with soap to get the bad germs off,' and say, 'Bad germs can make you poorly.' These positive interactions from staff support children's self-esteem and help prepare them with skills in readiness for school.

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

- The manager and her deputy are eager to enhance the quality of the setting. They have met the action and recommendations from the previous inspection. The manager has put effective systems in place for regular staff supervision sessions, where safeguarding and staff's well-being are discussed. Additionally, the staff team has planned a consistent approach to supporting children's independence. Staff have reviewed the educational programme for outdoor play to provide a richer range of play experiences to further support children's learning and development. This has significantly improved staff interactions with children. As a result, children are more confident and focused on their play and learning.
- The deputy manager is knowledgeable and ensures that staff provide a broad early years programme, with experiences and activities linked to children's interests and themes. Key persons know the children well. They understand what children already know and can do. This helps staff plan successfully for children's learning. Children make good progress from their starting points.
- There is a strong focus on children's communication and language. Children engage in many discussions with staff and their friends. Staff introduce new words to children as they follow their interests. For example, older children

enjoy a winter-themed science experiment and use words such as 'freezing' and 'frozen'. They recognise 'baking powder' and recall words such as 'expanded' and 'exploded' as they describe an exciting chemical reaction. Staff encourage younger children to sing a favourite counting rhyme with five currant buns and then act it out with props in the garden. This is having a positive effect on children's communication and language skills.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. The new special educational needs coordinator is passionate about working closely with children's parents, staff and other professionals to ensure that children get all the support they need. Staff use funding well to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged children and ensure that they are well prepared for school.
- Staff have a very open approach to parents and other partnerships. For instance, they share conversations and practical ideas from activities with children in verbal and digital feedback for parents. This includes ideas for potty training and making marks. This gives parents a good understanding of how to further children's learning at home. Parents are very complimentary about the staff, stating how much progress their child has made since joining. This is particularly the case in their social skills, speech and self-care skills.
- The manager and her deputy show effective leadership. They have worked with the local authority adviser to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. Staff have made good use of supervision sessions and training to provide consistently good teaching. However, occasionally, some staff interactions lack the challenge to support children's learning and development to the highest possible levels.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff attend regular safeguarding training and fully understand the possible signs and symptoms that might indicate that a child is at risk of harm. Staff know how to raise concerns with the designated persons and outside agencies in order to protect children. Through regular discussions and quizzes, staff understand the importance of asking questions, reporting and recording safeguarding concerns, however minor. They are aware of the duty to prevent children from being drawn into situations that put them at risk. Staff confidently describe the procedure they would follow should they have concerns about a colleague's practice or conduct.

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

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

- review the times of routines during the day to ensure children are not left

waiting too long before activities and mealtimes

- continue to strengthen the way in which staff use opportunities during activities to extend and challenge children's learning and development, to raise their practice to the highest possible level.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY479376
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10258604
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	1 to 11
<b>Total number of places</b>	38
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	125
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Dobson, Claire Louise
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP515733
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 835353
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 January 2022

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones registered in 2014 and is located in Stanley, near Wakefield. The nursery operates Monday to Friday, from 7am until 6pm, all year round, except for one week between Christmas and New Year. It provides funded education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery employs 13 members of staff. Of these, one holds a relevant early years qualification at level 4, and nine hold a qualification at level 3. The nursery provides wraparound care for children aged five to 11 years.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Jan Harvey

## Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The deputy manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed activities and staff interactions with children, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that these were having on children's learning. The inspector accompanied the provider and staff on a walk to a local school to collect children for after-school care at the nursery.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector spoke to the provider about the leadership and management of the setting. She provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request, including evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to staff, children and parents and took account of their views.

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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