

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Stepping Stones, Halfpenny Lane, Pontefract WF8 4DA

Inspection date:

12 December 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

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children feel settled and secure at this setting. The well-planned environment considers children's current interests and supports their learning. For example, children show an interest in the change in seasons. Staff create a 'winter area' inside where children can practise skills such as putting on their own hats and gloves. Outside, children continue learning about cold weather. Staff model rubbing ice between their hands for children to watch it melt. Children are consistently engaged in the activities that staff provide. They are given opportunities to become independent learners. Children access resources that challenge their thinking and enable them to practise new skills. For example, children use scissors to cut around images of body parts that they have coloured in. They then independently use a tape dispenser to stick the body parts together to create a person. Younger, less-confident children are given time to become familiar with new activities, such as playing with ice. They are then encouraged and supported to join in by the nurturing staff team. This helps all children to have the confidence to enjoy new experiences.

All children are consistently exposed to language-rich activities. Songs and rhymes are used to calm children. Staff recognise when children are interested in books and cuddle them as they read together. Toddlers repeat familiar phrases in songs that they know. Staff encourage the use of new language. For example, they introduce the word 'decay' during a discussion around the importance of oral hygiene and 'dumper truck' when exploring vehicles with toddlers. Children's communication skills are consistently high across the setting because of this.

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

- Children behave superbly at this setting. They like to sit in a creative space and talk to their friends. Children listen intently to what others are saying. They show an interest and respect for others' thoughts and ideas. Staff encourage children to be proud of their achievements. For example, they take photos of children's work to show their parents. Younger children say, 'I did it!' when successfully pouring ice from a truck. Staff celebrate with them by clapping. This helps children to feel valued.
- Children access the outdoor provision regularly throughout the day. They practise balancing on logs in the garden. Staff help toddlers to climb steps up to a slide. Pre-school children bounce on space hoppers and manage the space safely. Staff plan the outdoor area to support children of all ages to develop their physical abilities.
- Managers evaluate the teaching in the setting. They have a clear vision for what they hope children will achieve by the time they go to school. This is communicated to staff, who express that they feel well supported in their roles.

There are opportunities for staff to attend additional training to maintain good progress for children, such as training on developing their outdoor area. Managers use staff meetings to collate ideas and evaluate the space. For example, a separate area was made for children to practise riding bicycles. This supported other children to play without being interrupted and give children the space to improve their balancing skills.

- Staff place a focus on supporting children to lead healthy lifestyles. Children brush their teeth and explain to visitors they do this for 'two minutes'. Staff discuss the importance of eating fruit and vegetables. Children name 'broccoli' and 'carrots' as their favourites. Before mealtimes, staff ask children why it is important to wash their hands. Children respond to remove the 'germs'. Children show a strong understanding of why hygiene routines are essential in staying healthy.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make excellent progress. The enthusiastic special educational needs coordinator works alongside various outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists. She ensures that strategies have a positive impact on children's development. These are assessed with parents and key persons, and modified if needed.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Staff invite parents into the setting regularly to discuss their child's development and next steps in learning. They send ideas for activities to parents to continue their children's learning at home. Parents describe the staff team as 'amazing' and say that their children 'surprise' them with the knowledge which they have gained.
- Staff create strong links with the community. They take children to visit a charity that provides support for former coal miners. This gives children the opportunity to learn about the history of their local area. Children visit the local library to explore new reading resources. Staff take children pumpkin picking. This helps to develop their understanding of how to grow their own foods. Children use this knowledge to grow herbs in the outdoor area. They are encouraged to pick the herbs to use in their meals at the setting.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children are kept safe at this setting. Staff make sure that doors have multiple locks and high handles. They use safety gates to block the stairs. Staff understand how to report a concern about a child or a colleague. They know where to find contact numbers to make referrals anonymously. Staff can recognise signs and symptoms of different types of abuse. They have a strong knowledge of safeguarding issues, such as female genital mutilation and radicalisation. Managers plan a robust recruitment procedure to ensure the suitability of staff. This is then regularly checked during supervision sessions to ensure their ongoing suitability.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY496475
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10263955
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 11
Total number of places	88
Number of children on roll	143
Name of registered person	Fairburn Childcare Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP901732
Telephone number	01977 703279
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery re-registered in 2016 and is located in Pontefract. The nursery employs 19 members of childcare staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two staff who hold early years professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for one week in August and one week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.30am until 5.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Abby Clarkson

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 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 talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection 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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