

Inspection of Stepping Stones (Grange) Ltd

Normacot Grange Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 7AW

Inspection date: 13 December 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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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

Children enjoy the time they spend in this calm and welcoming environment. They are greeted on arrival by friendly staff, who provide support to help them settle quickly into the routines of the day. Children are happy and confident and build close relationships with staff and their friends. Staff are caring towards children and treat them with respect and kindness. Children's personal needs are dealt with sensitively. Staff sing and talk to children during nappy changing times, which helps them to feel secure.

Children make good progress in their learning. They are able to make choices about what they want to play with and sometimes become engrossed in their play. For example, older children concentrate as they mix red and green paint together to make brown, which they use to paint a picture of a reindeer. Younger children manoeuvre cars to roll them down the garage ramp, and sort and match different coloured dinosaurs. Children behave well.

Children learn about customs and cultures that are different to their own. Parents are invited to share information about festivals that children celebrate at home and bring food for children to taste. Staff learn words in children's home language to ensure children who speak English as an additional language are well supported and are fully included.

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

- Managers work as a close and cohesive team. They are enthusiastic and have a clear vision for the future. However, they have not been in post for a sustained period of time. Although they have started to make significant changes that will benefit children, these have not yet had time to be fully embedded into practice. That said, managers meticulously evaluate any changes to identify the impact they have on the quality of the provision.
- Staff are enthusiastic and passionate about providing care and learning for the children. Staff are totally committed, passionate and enthusiastic about their roles. They are proud that they are helping children to develop, and enthusiastically celebrate children's success. Staff say they feel supported by managers and their ideas are valued.
- Managers value and encourage staff's professional development. They have introduced more regular supervision meetings and are beginning to monitor staff practice to help them identify any potential training needs.
- Children learn skills that prepare them for the next stage of their learning and the eventual move on to school. Staff have introduced a school ready folder with activities to help children prepare for school, such as games to help them put on their own coats and shoes. The newly appointed pre-school leader has

introduced sitting times to help children to learn to sit and listen. Although staff work in partnership with the on-site school, they do not consistently share information with other school's children move on to or attend, to ensure consistency in children's care and learning.

- Children learn how to behave, and unwanted behaviour is dealt with very well. For example, when children do not want to share, staff introduce a 'special timer' and explain that when the sand goes to the bottom it is someone else's turn. Staff introduce sharing and turn-taking games and read books to children to reinforce the importance of being kind to their friends.
- Children generally enjoy the activities on offer. However, staff occasionally lack a little direction because the new planning system is not embedded fully. Consequently, activities are not always planned or organised well enough, or extended to ensure all children consistently benefit from high-quality learning experiences. In addition, some resources are well worn and do not always evoke children's excitement or interest.
- Children's communication and language is supported well. Staff continually talk to the children and encourage them to respond. Children enjoy listening to stories. Younger children point to the pictures in books and older children join in with familiar phrases.
- Parent partnerships are strong. There are good systems in place for sharing information with parents about what children are learning and how parents can continue this at home. Parents speak highly of staff and the quality of care and learning provided. They say they feel included in their child's learning.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive exceptionally good support. Staff work closely with outside agencies to ensure children receive the support and/or funding that they need to help them make the best progress they are capable of.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff's understanding of safeguarding is exceptionally strong. All staff know the different types of abuse and understand the signs that may indicate that a child is being abused or neglected. They know the procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child or a member of staff. Managers continually check staff's safeguarding knowledge through questions. The premises are safe and secure. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that everyone working with the children is safe and suitable.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- embed further the current changes that are being implemented, to ensure practice continues to improve
- develop closer partnerships with all schools children move on to or attend, to promote consistency in children's care and learning
- review the resources on offer, to ensure that all children benefit from high-quality learning experiences.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY396390
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10233749
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	1 to 9
Total number of places	54
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones (Grange) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP526822
Telephone number	01782461990
Date of previous inspection	3 March 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones (Grange) Ltd registered in 2009. The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including one who holds level 5. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery also offers before- and after-school care. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Rebecca Johnson

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 managers and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the managers.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The managers showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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