

Inspection of Stepping Stones

Blossomgate, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2AJ

Inspection date: 10 February 2023

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

Lively, interesting and purposeful activities filtrate the rooms, giving a sense of joy and happiness for the children and staff at this nursery. Children are settled and happy attending and have built strong attachments with their key workers and other staff. Children are focused and engaged in carefully planned activities built around their interests and next steps.

Joyful songs are heard throughout the day and children's faces light up during group singing sessions. Babies learn about jungle animals, exploring different textures through making animal footprints in play dough. Children experience moments of awe and wonder, such as while using shakers and playing with glittery water in the baby room. This effectively supports the development of children's emotional well-being.

Children's behaviour is good. They enjoy receiving stickers and praise in recognition of this. Clear routines and boundaries help children to feel safe and secure. Children understand the importance of taking turns and sharing, which is reinforced throughout their play. Children develop their independence from an early age and so children have the confidence to do things themselves. Parents are happy with the nursery and acknowledge the progress their children make.

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

- Stories are used effectively to help children develop their skills across different areas of learning. For example, through the story 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', children make bridges using a variety of materials. Staff use positional language, such as 'under' and 'on top'. Staff use repetitive story language such as 'trip, trap, trip, trap, who's that trip trapping over my bridge?', thus, helping develop children's communication and language skills. Children develop their imaginative skills outside pretending they are the characters in the story. Learning is enjoyable and so children are engaged and make good progress.
- Managers and staff have a clear understanding of the key curriculum focus in all rooms, ensuring learning is discreetly weaved through activities. Children lead their own learning and staff dip in to extend and challenge when appropriate. Staff are aware of children's next steps, ensuring every child reaches their full potential.
- Children are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop their large-muscle skills while playing outdoors. The wide range of resources on offer enables them to develop their climbing, sliding, rolling and riding skills. Similarly, there is a well-thought-out range of activities planned for children to develop their small-muscle skills, cutting being a particular favourite. Making marks by using balls, paints, chalk and trucks are all used as tools to encourage more

reluctant mark makers to have a go.

- Opportunities for children to broaden their knowledge of their local community and the wider world are effectively planned. For example, children visit a local market and are able to pay for items. Postcards from around the world frequently arrive through the post and this is used as a stimulus to learn more about other countries, such as discussions about what animals live there and its national flag.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's independence skills. Staff encourage children to put their own coats on and wash their hands. However, the guidance and support provided to children to help develop their personal care skills are inconsistent. For example, sometimes, babies do not wash their hands after being changed or before they have lunch.
- Children with special educational and/or disabilities are well supported. Staff are quick to spot the signs of children not meeting relevant milestones. These children make good progress from their starting points as staff know how best to support them. Parents are kept well informed of their progress and are happy with their learning and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff are confident talking about the signs and indicators of abuse. They are clear on the steps they would take if they suspected a child is at risk of harm. They have a good understanding of local authority procedures and of wider safeguarding issues, such as county lines and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff demonstrated they have a clear understanding of the actions they should take if they have concerns about a member of staff. The manager ensures staff have up-to-date safeguarding knowledge in their termly staff meetings. Robust recruitment practices ensure that suitable people are employed.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure staff provide consistent early messages to support young children in the development of their own personal care.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY221441
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10262944
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 10
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	40
Name of registered person	Blakey, Jayne Nadine
Registered person unique reference number	RP910001
Telephone number	01765 692402
Date of previous inspection	11 April 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones registered in 2002 and is located in Ripon, North Yorkshire. It opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The setting employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. There is one apprentice working at level 2. The out-of-school club caters for children aged four to 10 years. Sessions are from 7.30am until 9am and 3pm until 6pm during term time and from 7.30am until 6pm during school holidays. The nursery provides funded early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jen Lyons

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 viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on the 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 into account their views.
- 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 an activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager 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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