

Inspection of Stepping Stones Childrens Nursery

38 Crib Street, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9EZ

Inspection date:

24 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are well cared for as they form secure attachments with staff. Children come ready to carry out tasks, helping them feel secure at this welcoming nursery. Children show good levels of independence as they can learn from one another. For example, they talk about the importance of brushing their teeth and how to make them 'all clean'. Children explore mark making using a range of tools. They use big brushes to create 'big strokes' and their fingers to make 'small dots' and excitedly talk about what colours they have been using.

Children extend their communication and language through a range of books. They interact with staff and think of words relating to the letter sound they have been learning. For example, staff support children with the 'p' sound when they talk about using 'pencils' when they draw. Children enjoy exploring outdoors. They speak kindly to one another as they play cooperatively and share resources. Children show a positive attitude towards learning and make good levels of progress. Staff offer children opportunities to build on their interests. For example, children enjoy playing with toy babies, and staff talk about what the babies might need for a day visit to the beach.

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

- Staff support children with embedding good practices and understanding why they are important. For example, children wash their hands and wipe their noses frequently. Staff discuss with children about 'catching their coughs' and discarding the tissues that they use. They take turns to self-serve their food and understand when food is 'hot' and what they can do next.
- Parents are happy with the settling-in process and how children make good transitions during this period. They talk about the progress their children make and how discussions with staff are detailed. Parents receive development reviews, which highlight the positive experiences their children have in their learning.
- Staff provide activities for children in the curriculum to support their interests in learning. For example, children like to learn about balloons and filling them with air to become 'bigger in size'. This extends into the interest in the colours they can choose for their balloons. However, staff do not effectively support all children in moving on in their learning to maximise their engagement levels.
- The manager supports the special educational needs coordinator role effectively. She is proactive in working together with children and their families to support children's learning. She works in partnership with professionals to ensure delays in children's development are identified, and targeted intervention is made with a focus on communication and language.
- Staff give children opportunities to revisit activities and interact with others to

enhance their learning. Children make transitions in their routine. However, while staff understand what is happening next, they do not always prepare for these transitions in good time. For example, staff transitioning children from morning to afternoon sessions results in children waiting for long periods.

- Staff know the children well and recognise how they can be supported to develop their learning further. Children have opportunities to visit quieter spaces. This gives them opportunities to be supported with their emotions and regulate their feelings. For example, staff support children with calm voices and discussions to positively manage their behaviour and what is expected of them.
- The manager places high value on staff and working together to support a clear vision for the nursery. Time is taken to develop staff and have discussions about how to plan a curriculum for children to make the best progress possible. Staff are supported with their understanding of child development and signposted to relevant research and information to support their ideas and participation in discussions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Staff understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and/or neglect and undertake regular training. The manager places priority on the welfare of children and how staff can receive the knowledge and skills to implement policies and processes. Staff understand how to respond to any concerns they may have and how to raise these within the setting or to other professionals. The manager carries out effective employment processes to ensure all adults working with children are 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:

- support staff to better support all children in moving on in their learning to maximise their levels of engagement during activities
- offer better support to children during periods of transition in the daily routine and minimise waiting times.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127965
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10276223
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 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	McCall, Susan Andrea
Registered person unique reference number	RP906341
Telephone number	01920 469 698
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Childrens Nursery registered in 1992. It operates from a listed building in the centre of Ware, Hertfordshire. The nursery is open all year round, from 7.30am until 6pm. Morning sessions run from 8.15am until 1.15pm and afternoon sessions from 1pm until 6pm. Children can attend a variety of sessions. The nursery employs seven members of staff. Six staff hold an early years qualification at level 3 and one holds a qualification at level 2. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Courtney McAllister

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 management team and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the early years curriculum and the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took into account their views
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager of a group activity.
- The manager showed the inspector relevant documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff and their paediatric first-aid certificates.

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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