

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery and Pre-School

152 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 4JA

Inspection date: 28 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children experience an inspirational indoor and outdoor learning environment at this outstanding nursery. They build strong and positive relationships with staff who are extremely responsive to children's individual needs. Children display high levels of self-motivation and commitment to learning. They take ownership of their own learning as they are given opportunities to consider what they want to learn next. Children get actively involved in the suggestions they make, such as designing and setting up an outdoor construction area. Children make rapid progress in their development.

Children's curiosity is ignited by the rich and varied activities on offer. They especially enjoy being outdoors and explore the many opportunities with enthusiasm. For example, younger children show their impressive aiming skills as they kick a ball back and forth. They demonstrate great turn-taking skills as staff and other children join in. Children persevere and show pride in their achievements.

Staff expertly encourage children to extend their learning further. For example, they join in with toddlers counting buckets and spades. Staff skilfully pause at certain points to give children the opportunity to name the next number in the sequence. Older children demonstrate they can correctly say the number of objects in a small pile without counting them. They are encouraged to move on to simple addition problems, such as adding together the number of boys and girls attending that day.

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

- The inspirational manager and deputy manager lead outstanding practice by example. They have excellent procedures in place to ensure staff continually enhance their existing knowledge and skills for children's benefit. For instance, the special educational needs coordinator and manager work closely with parents and external professionals. They plan and monitor targeted teaching strategies to support the progress of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children with SEND make the best possible progress from their starting points, in line with their peers.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced and carefully planned to match children's needs. Staff skilfully and consistently implement the curriculum across the nursery. For example, children's self-care skills are excellent and developed from the outset. Babies and toddlers persevere at putting on their own coats and shoes before going out in the garden. Pre-school children master using a fork and knife correctly at lunchtime.
- Staff are instrumental in supporting children's communication and language

development. They cleverly incorporate new words into their daily plans, which children then apply in context. For instance, younger children listen intently to staff's instructions, correctly placing a toy spider on different parts of their body. They giggle when the toy spider is on their nose and say, 'It is tickly.' Older children use appropriate language to describe the position of different countries on a globe in relation to Britain. They quickly pinpoint the countries as they recognise some letters in the name, showing their impressive early reading skills.

- Children demonstrate excellent behaviour. Staff help them to understand their feelings and the impact of their actions on others. Older children demonstrate they are able to manage minor disputes themselves. For instance, they readily use a sand timer to ensure all children have a fair turn playing with their favourite toys. Children play cooperatively and extend their own learning, such as when they make up real-life scenarios to solve problems. They consider ways to rescue a toy cat stuck up in a 'tree'. Children collaboratively devise a plan to extend a toy fire engine's ladder. They challenge themselves further by raising the toy cat even higher.
- Children's home languages and cultural backgrounds are highly valued and shared at the nursery. For example, staff approach parents from different cultures for ideas to raise children's awareness of the diverse world we live in. Parents provide songs in their home language, such as Welsh songs. In this way, children are able to make comparisons between their own home languages and those of others. This has proved extremely successful, as children's awareness of different faiths and beliefs is increased.
- Parents are extremely complimentary of the education and care their children receive. They describe how they are included in all decisions made about their children's learning and development. Parents comment on the secure and nurturing relationships their children have with staff. They say their children are fully prepared for the next stage in their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff fully understand their responsibility to protect children from harm. They provide regular updates to keep staff's knowledge current. Leaders and staff have an extensive knowledge of the potential risks associated with different types of abuse, including exposure to extremist views and behaviours. They have strong procedures in place to help to manage safeguarding. This includes robust safer recruitment processes, how to report concerns about a child's welfare and the management of allegations. Staff teach children how to keep safe, including how to identify hazards and what steps to take to reduce risks. This helps to equip children with the knowledge and skills to help keep themselves safe.

Setting details

Unique reference number	148626
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10280832
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	50
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	Kingsclere Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP900875
Telephone number	0118 932 8117
Date of previous inspection	30 August 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery and Pre-School registered in 1992 and is situated in Finchampstead, Berkshire. It is open Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 6pm, all year round. The nursery accepts funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are eight staff working with the children, six of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications at level 3 or above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sonia Panchal

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the nursery and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed what they want children to learn.
- Children and staff spoke to the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Parents shared their verbal and written views of the setting with the inspector.
- 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 manager.

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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