

# Inspection of Childcare @ Stepping Stones

9a George Street West, LUTON LU1 2BW

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Inspection date: 24 April 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

Staff welcome children warmly into the setting. Children are well settled and are confident to separate from their main carer. Children have established good bonds with the staff team. They seek them out for comfort as they notice a visitor. This demonstrates how safe and secure they feel in the setting. Staff work closely with parents. When children arrive at the setting, parents share information about their child's day so far. This enables staff to adapt their practice to support children.

Children behave well. The setting has clear values, which children follow from a young age. Therefore, children have a good understanding of staff's expectations. For example, children know to tidy away toys before they get something else out to explore. Children create good friendships with each other. Regardless of age, children seek out each other to play with. Children are kind to each other. They take turns with their friends and work together to create different things. For example, children take turns with staff to build a tower out of cotton reels. They delight as the tower gets higher and higher, laughing as it finally falls.

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

- Staff provide children with a language-rich environment. Throughout the day, staff talk to children continuously. They encourage them to engage in conversations. Staff introduce children to a wider vocabulary. This extends their language skills further. For example, while completing activities, staff talk about the children's 'perseverance' as they use trial-and-error methods to achieve what they set out to accomplish.
- The manager and staff team have a clear focus on personal, social and emotional development. Knowledgeable staff understand the importance of creating an environment in which children feel safe and confident. As a result, children are resilient.
- Children are supported to develop healthy, well-balanced lifestyles. Staff talk to children about the different vegetables they can see in the 'home corner'. They discuss whether they are healthy or unhealthy and which ones they have tried. At lunchtime, all children access a healthy, home-cooked meal created by the on-site chef. Each day, children have access to physical activities in the garden. The large space allows children to run around. They manoeuvre around their friends, developing an awareness of space.
- Staff talk regularly to share development information about children who attend the setting. Staff plan activities based on gaps in children's learning. Staff use their knowledge to adapt activities to meet the individual learning needs of each child. This ensures that children make good progress in their learning. However, staff do not always share information with other settings children attend. This means that children do not always receive consistency in their care and learning.

- Children spend long periods of time at activities. As they arrive, they quickly become engrossed in activities, developing a love for learning. However, staff do not always wait for learning to be embedded before moving children's learning on. Therefore, at times, such as when activities are repeated, opportunities for children to revisit what they already know are not used.
- Parents speak very highly of the setting. They discuss how happy their children are when they attend and how quickly they have settled. Parents talk about the support staff have offered them. They appreciate the time taken to share information and activity ideas for them to complete at home.
- The manager supports staff well within the setting. Regular meetings provide staff with opportunities to talk about children and the setting. Staff well-being is a prime focus for the manager. The manager regularly reflects with the staff team about the setting. They discuss what is working well and how they can make adaptations and changes. This creates a real team feel across the setting.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable about safeguarding. They understand and talk confidently about the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to report any concerns they may have. Staff are confident to report any allegations made against staff members and understand the reporting lines outside of the setting. Staff complete regular safeguarding training and use this knowledge within their day-to-day practice. Risk assessments are completed daily to help ensure the safety of all children. The manager ensures the ongoing suitability of all staff members.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

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

- implement effective procedures for sharing information with other providers that children attend
- strengthen the planning of activities to allow children time to embed learning before moving on.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY435517
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10280229
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 11
<b>Total number of places</b>	15
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	25
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Stepping Stones (Luton)
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP528459
<b>Telephone number</b>	07530 425 154
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 September 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Childcare @ Stepping Stones registered in 2008. The setting employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds qualified teacher status. The setting opens Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 9.30am until 3pm.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Lisa Smith

## 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 completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector and manager talked about the education provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation during an activity.
- 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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