

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Market Lane, Swalwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE16 3ED

Inspection date: 26 April 2023

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| 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 and babies receive a warm welcome on arrival. Staff provide a calm and nurturing environment, which enables children to feel safe and secure. Children and babies settle quickly and demonstrate their strong bonds with staff. Staff know children extremely well and are attentive to their individual needs and parents' preferences. Children are confident to explore and show a positive attitude to their learning.

Children enjoy their time outside in the garden and have good opportunities to exercise in the fresh air. Staff are highly vigilant and teach children the importance of managing risks. For example, older children safely manoeuvre across the balance beams. Children have a can-do attitude and understand their own physical capabilities. Children and babies develop good balance and coordination skills. Babies are challenged effectively to stand, which enhances their core skills and leg muscles in readiness for walking.

Children and babies are developing a love of reading and enjoy a wide range of books and nursery rhymes. They select books independently and listen as staff enthusiastically read stories. Children join in with familiar words and phrases. They thoroughly enjoy using props in their everyday play to bring stories to life. For example, they make connections between the caterpillars they are hatching and the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Babies listen intently and join in with the familiar sounds as staff sing to them.

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

- Staff plan a broad curriculum. They prepare a range of activities inspired by children's interests. Staff interact and model play to extend children's learning and development. They know what children can do and what they need to learn next. At times, some staff do not consistently adapt activities according to children's individual needs to ensure that they all learn as much as possible from them.
- Staff promote children's communication and language skills well. They use good strategies to build on children's vocabulary. Staff model language and introduce new words during their play. For example, as children engage in arts and crafts, staff introduce descriptive language, such as 'tiny', 'big' and 'huge'. However, in some areas of the nursery, the organisation of some group activities means that younger children are not always able to concentrate without distractions.
- Staff are skilful in identifying any emerging needs children might have. They work in close partnership with parents and other professionals. Staff put in place swift and targeted action plans to make sure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.

Managers ensure that any additional funding is used effectively to meet children's needs.

- Behaviour throughout the nursery is good. Staff are positive role models for children and manage behaviour with a consistent approach. This enables children to know and understand what is expected of them. They respond to gentle reminders from staff to share and take turns. Older children understand the impact of their actions on others.
- The manager and her team have a very good understanding of the strengths of the nursery and identify areas for development. Staff have opportunities for regular supervision sessions and are able to access training to improve their practice. Staff comment that their well-being is given high priority by the management team.
- Partnerships with parents are a strength of the nursery. They ensure that parents are valued as partners. From the very start, staff gather a wealth of information to allow them to support children and their families. Parents are kept informed on a daily basis through detailed handovers and a recently updated online app. Parents' comments are extremely positive. They comment on the excellent care and education and say that children make rapid progress. They state that staff go above and beyond for their children and that the education is of a consistently high standard.
- Mathematical language is woven into everyday play. Staff encourage children to practise reciting numbers in order. Opportunities to further develop children's understanding of number are provided as children progress through the nursery. For example, children in the pre-school room are able to identify numbers and are being supported to sequence numbers, using a number line.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers ensure that all staff have a good understanding of the nursery's safeguarding policies and procedures. The provider ensures that she and all her staff team keep their safeguarding knowledge and skills current. Staff can recognise different signs that indicate a child's safety and welfare may be compromised. Staff know who to raise their safeguarding concerns to in the organisation and which external agencies to contact to help keep children safe. Managers review staff's ongoing suitability and are confident of their responsibility to notify the relevant authorities of any allegations against staff. Children are kept safe in the nursery as staff continually risk assess the environment.

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 adapt activities in response to children's learning needs so that

all children achieve as much as possible

- organise group time more effectively to provide younger children with opportunities to concentrate without distractions.

Setting details

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|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number | 311839 |
| Local authority | Gateshead |
| Inspection number | 10280617 |
| Type of provision | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| Registers | Early Years Register |
| Day care type | Full day care |
| Age range of children at time of inspection | 0 to 5 |
| Total number of places | 94 |
| Number of children on roll | 136 |
| Name of registered person | Stepping Stones Day Nursery Partnership |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP903436 |
| Telephone number | 0191 488 9000 |
| Date of previous inspection | 31 August 2017 |

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery registered in 1997 and is located in Swalwell. The nursery employs 23 members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Eileen Grimes

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager, deputy manager and inspector had a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector took account of parents' views through written feedback.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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