

Inspection of Stepping Stones Community Nursery

Ground Floor, Melbury House, Richborne Terrace, London SW8 1BA

Inspection date: 22 May 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

Children happily separate from parents and carers and they are warmly welcomed into this small, homely and safe nursery. The curriculum is well designed, considering children's interests and stages of development. Children quickly find something that captures their imagination, they play with purpose and show good levels of concentration.

Staff are positive role models for children and, as such, behaviour is good. Sharing and turn taking is reinforced with children beginning to understand the impact their actions can have on others. Children develop strong friendships. They smile and greet each other enthusiastically. Children seek others out to share experiences with. For example, children set up a pretend picnic on the table outside and call for others to join them.

Staff have worked hard since the previous inspection in promoting children's independence. For example, as children come in, they take off their own shoes and put on slippers. Children serve their own breakfast cereals, butter their own toast, and scrape their plates at the end of the meal.

The manager identifies the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on children's learning. Gaps in children's learning are quickly identified and plans put in place to enable all children to make good progress from their starting points.

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

- Staff know children well. Starting points are accurately identified and appropriate next steps put in place. Children show secure foundations of knowledge. They talk about what they have learned previously and how this applies to their current learning. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Overall, children's communication and language skills are well promoted. Children listen to a range of songs, stories and rhymes, hearing a variety of spoken language. Small-group activities use repetition to reinforce key vocabulary. However, questioning can sometimes be ineffective and does not challenge children who have wider vocabularies to fully express their ideas.
- Staff are skilled at following children's interests. In the garden, children find a snail. They are interested in investigating this further, getting magnifying glasses for a better look. Staff pick up on this and ask children if they would like to go on a bug hunt. Children cheer excitedly, following the staff member as they upturn trays and stools to find what lies beneath.
- Children develop positive relationships with caring, attentive staff. Children are offered an abundance of praise and encouragement. They are supported to persevere at tasks they may find difficult and develop skills of resilience as they

succeed where they thought they may not.

- Routine activities, especially for younger children, are not always managed to minimise the amount of time children spend waiting. For example, babies are sat in high chairs before snack has begun to be prepared. They begin to get frustrated as they sit waiting, while older children continue to play around them.
- Staff promote the importance of living healthily to children. Seasonal produce is used to create healthy and nutritionally balanced meals for children. Children enjoy vegetable soup followed by pasta bolognese for lunch. Oral health is promoted with children brushing their teeth before they settle down for their nap. Children have a wide range of opportunities, both inside and outside, to engage in physical play, developing both small and large motor skills.
- Partnership with parents is strong. Parents value how well staff know their children and recognise the progress children have shown since starting. Communication is effective with verbal handovers being given daily, alongside sharing photos of 'wow' moments.
- The diversity of children is celebrated within the nursery. Children are confident and display high levels of self-esteem. Resources allow all children to see themselves positively represented. Children learn about the community around them and what makes them unique. Children learn Spanish alongside English, with even the youngest children communicating using both languages.
- The manager is reflective. She regularly seeks feedback from parents, children, and other staff to continue to enhance the setting. Staff feel well supported within their roles, they have regular opportunities to meet and discuss their own professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures that safeguarding forms an integral part of the induction process for every staff member. As such, all staff confidently demonstrate a secure knowledge of how to keep children safe from harm or abuse. There are clear and robust recording and reporting procedures in place. Staff understand the whistle-blowing procedure should they have concerns about colleagues. Rigorous risk assessments are in place to ensure the setting and any outings taken remain safe, both for children and staff. The manager understands the importance of recording children's attendance and following up on unexplained or repeated patterns of absence.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review how questions are used with children to provide them greater opportunity to use their widening vocabulary and share their ideas and opinions

- look at the way routines are managed to ensure children are not waiting for prolonged periods of time.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY398669
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10280184
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 3
Total number of places	14
Number of children on roll	13
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Community Nursery
Registered person unique reference number	RP529228
Telephone number	0207 820 3800
Date of previous inspection	14 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Community Nursery opened in 2009. It is located in Vauxhall in the London Borough of Lambeth. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.55am to 6pm, all year round, except on public bank holidays. There are nine staff members, including the manager. Five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery accepts funding for free early years education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It is a bilingual nursery.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Natalie OLeary

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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to children, to find out about their time at the nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the nursery.
- 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 joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery 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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