

Inspection of Stepping Stones Nursery

344 Long Lane, Hillingdon, Uxbridge UB10 9PF

Inspection date: 27 March 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 separate easily from their parents. Staff greet parents as children arrive, quickly exchanging information, as children are eager to start their day. Staff are sensitive and kind to children. They ask children if they would like a cuddle or hold their hand as they enter the setting. Children play freely until they join their peers to participate in circle time activities. During group time, young children happily sway to the tune of familiar songs and rhymes.

Older children hold hands, rocking forwards and backwards to 'Row, row, row, your boat', laughing and giggling as they scream at the end and calling 'again, again' in enjoyment. All children have daily opportunities to listen to stories, requesting favourite books and recalling key events. They anticipate what is going to happen next with their friends.

All children have access to a wide range of resources in the enclosed garden. Staff pride themselves on being able to offer activities, both inside and out. A mud kitchen and shop provide opportunities for role play. Bikes, trikes and a slide enable children to practise using large muscles to develop physical skills in a well-supervised area.

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

- Leaders promote independence as a high focus for children's learning. Staff share how they encourage children to be self-sufficient. For instance, children wash their hands for snacks and meals and put on their coats and hats prior to going outside. However, on occasion, some staff miss opportunities to develop independence, as they wipe children's noses, cut fruit, and serve lunch for children.
- Children enjoy playing the part of a 'shopkeeper'. Customers exchange 'money' for goods after deciding what they would like to buy. Staff ask effective questions to initiate conversations about previous experiences of shopping that children have had. Children explain, 'You buy bread at the bakers, meat at the butchers or you can do a "big shop" at a supermarket.'
- Staff regularly assess their key children's development. They make observations during children's play and upload the information onto an online application. Key workers identify next steps for each child, to support new learning. Staff plan together to ensure they are aware of differentiated learning intentions for children at different stages of development. This supports all children to make the best possible progress.
- Children are well behaved. Staff work well together, and tasks are shared. Staff deployment is mostly good. However, some routine events are not planned well, such as mealtimes for older children. Some children remain waiting to be served

lunch, as others request more food. While their peers are still eating, children leave the table to wash their hands, as they have finished.

- Staff communicate with parents both face to face and via an online application. Photographs, observations, and updates on children's development are regularly uploaded for parents. They are also given information about their child's day on collection. Parents feel very happy with the level of communication they receive. They describe staff as 'caring' and feel their children are safe.
- Staff feel happy and valued by the manager, who is passionate about developing staff practice. Room leaders and managers observe practice to identify areas for development. All staff have regular supervision and access to ongoing professional development through training. Staff are supported to gain further childcare qualifications, and staff retention is good.
- Leaders and managers share how they adapted provision during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families were supported with regular 'keeping in contact' phone calls and home learning packs. Leaders and managers continue to provide home learning packs for pre-school children, as parents enjoy supporting their child's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are very confident to share their knowledge of safeguarding. Staff are very clear on what they would do if they were concerned about a child in their care. Direct, on-the-spot questions, regular discussions and quizzes on safeguarding issues ensure that all staff have up-to-date knowledge. Contact details for advice and how to refer for support are displayed around the setting. Health and safety checks are conducted daily on the building to ensure that equipment is well maintained and all areas are safe and secure for children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- sequence everyday routine activities to support and encourage children's independence
- develop staff teaching skills to make the most of all opportunities to extend children's learning to the highest possible level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY468793
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10280318
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 4
Total number of places	53
Number of children on roll	55
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Academy Childcare Ltd.
Registered person unique reference number	RP910233
Telephone number	01895 238007
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Nursery registered in 2013. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. There are 12 members of staff, five of whom hold relevant early years qualifications at level 2, 3, 4 or 6, and one holds qualified teacher status. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early years education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Bernie Dunne

Inspection activities

- This is the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provision.
- The inspector spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- A leadership and management meeting was held with the inspector.
- A selection of documents was scrutinised by the inspector.
- The inspector spoke to parents to seek their views of the setting.
- Leaders and managers completed a learning walk with the inspector.

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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