

Inspection of Stepping Stones Uppingham

Uppingham C of E School, Belgrave Road, Uppingham, Oakham, Rutland LE15 9RT

Inspection date:

25 May 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

Children are happy and relaxed as they come into the setting. They are greeted by their key person, who welcomes them enthusiastically, which helps children to feel safe and secure. Children separate from their parents confidently, as they wave goodbye and join their peers in activities, such as play dough making. Children learn to behave well, and their well-being is given high priority by practitioners. They are considerate of one another. For example, children support each other at lunchtime as they help pour drinks for one another. Children play energetically, and younger children are free to run around confidently and access bicycles independently, supporting their balance and coordination.

Children have access to a wonderful learning environment and benefit from practitioners planning a good-quality curriculum. They independently access a variety of exciting activities and experiences both inside and outside. The natural resources provided by practitioners are engaging, and children embrace these. For example, children access a large growing area outside, where they can access a considerable number of flowers to plant and grow, supporting them to develop their understanding of growth and nature. Children explore the water area alongside practitioners who support their curiosity, as they explore what happens if they use a colander instead of a bucket.

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

- Practitioners regularly observe and assess what children can do and use this information to inform their next steps to build on children's knowledge and skills. They plan an exciting environment to support children's learning, using the inside and outside. Children are eager to engage in the activities on offer, such as joining in a treasure hunt.
- Overall, the practitioners' teaching is good. However, some practitioners continually ask children questions about what they are doing, such as how big and what the colour is. These continual questions do not enhance children's progress or enable them to develop their own thinking.
- Children's good health is promoted by practitioners. They are provided with healthy snacks and lunches, and their individual dietary needs are well supported. Mealtimes are used as an opportunity to talk to the children about what they are doing and what they are eating, which helps them develop an understanding of a healthy diet.
- Children's independence is supported during snack and lunchtime as they are encouraged to pour their own drinks. Practitioners remind children to wipe their noses and encourage them to visit the toilet on their own.
- Children develop a positive attitude to learning. Practitioners support children to develop their storytelling and role-play activities. Children pretend to find an owl

and then head to a bench and pretend to drink tea while re-enacting a familiar story.

- Practitioners know the children well and encourage them to make progress in their learning. For example, when children show interest in writing their names, staff build their confidence as they write their names for them to see and then offer plenty of encouragement as children attempt to copy.
- Practitioners work with other professionals and parents to provide targeted support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children with SEND are supported by attentive practitioners. For example, as they try to clamber out of difficult spaces, they are gently guided by the practitioner's hand. Children play and learn alongside their friends and make good progress in their learning.
- Practitioners support children's communication well. They read stories and talk clearly. During play and conversations, practitioners model language by commenting on what the children are doing. However, practitioners do not always provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning.
- Parents speak highly of the practitioners who work in the setting and say their children are excited to attend. They state they are kept well informed about their children's learning, and their transitions into the setting are particularly well supported.
- The manager has made many positive changes to the setting since it has become part of a trust. The practitioners' continuous professional development is important to the trust, and the team has recently attended some outdoor training that has further enhanced the outdoor space. Children spend a lot of time outside, engaging in the learning opportunities provided.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers ensure that practitioners' safeguarding knowledge is regularly updated, and they attend training from the trust. This helps to ensure that practitioners have a secure understanding of how to keep children safe. The practitioners know the signs and signals of abuse and what to do if they have concerns about another member of staff. They understand the roles of relevant local safeguarding partners and know how to contact them. The manager is aware of children's allergies and ensures that children do not come to any harm during snacks or mealtimes.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support practitioners to build on opportunities for children to develop and use their home language during play and learning

- develop practitioners' questioning skills to enhance and support the children to progress in their learning and provide them with the time to develop their thinking.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY271344
Local authority	Rutland Council
Inspection number	10264213
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Uppingham Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP521731
Telephone number	01572 821879
Date of previous inspection	8 June 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Uppingham registered in 2003 and is located in Uppingham, Rutland. The pre-school employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold relevant qualifications at level 4, one holds a level 3 qualification and one is training. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 7.45am until 6pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It also provides out-of-school care for older children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Fliss Dewsbery

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 and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to practitioners at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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 with the manager, the head and the deputy manager of the setting.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of practitioners working in the setting.

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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