

# Inspection of Stepping Stones Pre-School York

Hurst Hall, 1Border Road, Strensall, York, North Yorkshire YO32 5SR

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Inspection date: 8 September 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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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 are very happy and settled at this friendly and welcoming setting. Children form strong bonds with staff, who are responsive, respectful, caring and kind. Staff support children's personal, social and emotional development well. They encourage children to share and take turns as they explore with paint and dough. They support new children to settle quickly. For example, staff put toy diggers into the sandpit ready for a child's first day, after learning from parents that these are their favourite toys. Children are busy engaged in their activities and play cooperatively with their friends. Staff praise and encourage them. They invite children to put star-shaped stickers onto a display to recognise and celebrate their achievements. This helps build children's confidence and self-esteem.

Staff provide good support for children's growing independence. They teach them to wash their hands, chop their fruit at snack time and pour their own drinks. Staff know children well. They have fun together and obviously enjoy each other's company. Staff plan exciting experiences for children that they know will interest them and extend their learning. For example, children plant sunflowers and learn about the life cycle of a butterfly first-hand.

Staff are good role models for children. They use a variety of strategies to help children to understand behavioural expectations. Children's behaviour is good.

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

- Staff provide strong support for children's physical development. Children develop their flexibility and coordination as they build pretend castles from large blocks. They build strength and spatial awareness as they push scooters and ride pedal bikes in the enclosed garden.
- Children develop their smaller muscles and learn different ways to use their hands as they explore with mud, sand and dough. Children benefit from daily fresh air and exercise. Staff talk to them about the impact that healthy drinks can have on their bodies.
- Overall, staff plan strong support for children's developing communication and language skills. They share stories with children and support them to join in with songs and rhymes. However, staff do not always introduce and model more detailed and descriptive language to children as they play.
- Children listen well to staff and are ready to learn. They concentrate and listen attentively as staff clap out the number of syllables in their names. Staff repeat words back to children. This helps to show children that their contributions are valued and understood.
- There is a strong focus on early literacy. For instance, children help to choose a book of the month. Staff use story sacks to help make storytelling interactive

and use books as starting points for activities.

- Children learn about life outside the pre-school through outings and visitors to the setting. For example, staff plan trips to the park, library and post office. They arrange nature walks and football sessions for the children to enjoy.
- Staff provide good support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Managers understand the importance of working with other professionals in education and health to create a consistent approach to support for children.
- Staff use children's interests to help plan activities that support children to learn new skills. For example, managers spend additional funding the setting receives on resources to help develop children's understanding of technology. This is as a result of children showing an interest in this area.
- Parents speak highly of the setting. They praise the staff, who they say are very friendly, supportive and approachable. Parents praise the activities on offer and the systems in place for communication. They say that their children are very happy and love coming to the setting.
- Managers provide strong support for their staff in terms of continuous professional development and well-being. They hold half-termly meetings with staff where they discuss training needs and evaluate together children's progress and future support.
- Managers are positive about the continuous improvement of the setting. The experienced team of staff work very well together. They work hard to provide a quality service for families and a home-from-home experience for the children in their care.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff know what might concern them about a child in terms of safeguarding. They know who to contact and the processes to follow to help keep children safe. Managers have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. This includes all aspects of safeguarding. Staff complete training in safeguarding and first aid. They keep their knowledge up to date. Staff support children to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they encourage children to tidy away and to sweep up sand around the sand tray in order to keep areas clean and safe.

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

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

- introduce and model more detailed and descriptive language to children as they play.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	321529
<b>Local authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	10305591
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	40
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	40
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Strensall Station Playgroup Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP518349
<b>Telephone number</b>	01904 442 826 07472342309
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 February 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School York registered in August 2000. It operates from Strensall, near York. The setting is open from 8am until 4pm, Monday to Friday, term time only. There are seven members of childcare staff employed at the setting. The manager holds an appropriate qualification at level 4, and five staff hold appropriate qualifications at level 3. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Julie Foers

## 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 discussed with the inspector how the setting organises and plans the curriculum and experiences for children. The inspector viewed the inside and outside space used by the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and assessed the impact on children's learning. The manager and the inspector evaluated an activity together.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the setting's documents. This included evidence of training and the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with the managers and staff. She took into account the views of parents.

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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