

Inspection of Stepping Stones Montessori Childcare Limited

The Old School House, Village Road, Waverton, CHESTER CH3 7QN

Inspection date: 14 December 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 are welcomed into the nursery by friendly staff. They are happy to see familiar faces and have developed strong attachments. Staff are very responsive to children's emotional needs. For example, babies crawl to staff for cuddles and reassurance and older children eagerly invite staff into their play. These warm and nurturing interactions from staff help support children in feeling safe and secure.

The staff team have worked together to plan and deliver an ambitious curriculum to help support children's confidence, independence and social skills. They help children acquire life-long skills. For example, in the baby room, children independently explore with sensory baskets and use soft play equipment to climb on and crawl through. Staff in the toddler room help extend children's imagination and support their ideas of what they need. Children make telescopes from tubes and confidently approach the inspector and explain they are going outside to search for sharks. Staff sit with children in pre-school and look at pictures. They test out their understanding of what has happened in the story. Children are engaged, contribute to storytelling and show a great love of stories and books.

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

- The manager continually reviews and evaluates what is working well and identifies future developments. She observes staff practice and supervision meetings take place. Staff attend meetings, share ideas and access regular training. This helps staff develop their knowledge further and contributes to children making good progress in their learning.
- Staff have a good understanding of what they want children to learn. They follow children's interests and plan exciting activities that children are eager to be involved in. However, occasionally, staff do not successfully carry out what they have identified they want children to learn next. This means some children do not always benefit from being able to learn as much as possible.
- Staff set out clear expectations and provide consistent instructions to children. Children are kind to their friends and respectful of others. Staff remind children of being polite and using their manners. This helps them to gain a greater awareness of positive behaviour.
- Overall, staff support children's communication and language well. They take interest in what older children have to say and ask them questions that prompt children to expand on their thoughts. However, the curriculum is not consistently implemented as well with younger children. Staff do not always support children in their growing vocabulary. Furthermore, on occasion, staff do not successfully capture children's attention to help them listen attentively and respond to what they hear.
- Staff give children the time to explore and try things out for themselves. For

example, children practise using scissors to cut paper. Staff encourage them to keep trying and offer support. Children proudly shout 'I did it' when they succeed in their attempts. This helps support children to have a 'can-do' attitude, increases their determination and perseverance.

- Staff ensure that parents are continually updated about things that their children do and learn at the nursery. They share development reports and include parents in decisions about their children's learning. Parents praise the staff for the wonderful learning opportunities that children have. They display appreciation for being so involved in their children's learning.
- Staff support children's understanding of their local community. This includes regular visits to the nearby farm, where they speak to farmers and gain a greater understanding of their job role. Furthermore, children plant, grow and pick their own vegetables. They are involved with decisions of the meals that they eat at the nursery. The cook asks children for their feedback on how they think the food tastes. This further promotes children's understanding of growing produce and leading a healthy lifestyle.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The management team and staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard children. They speak about the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow to raise concerns. The management team follow a stringent recruitment process. This helps to ensure that staff are suitable in their roles. Staff help children to understand how they can keep themselves safe. For example, they encourage children to be aware of the dangers of cars as they walk across the car park. Regular risk assessments are carried out by staff to help ensure that the nursery is safe and any potential hazards or dangers are minimised.

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 strengthen the implementation of the curriculum, to reflect the identified learning intention for the children taking part and to further support their next steps in learning
- strengthen the implementation of the curriculum for communication and language that promotes consistent quality across all age groups of children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY415263
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10308322
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	58
Number of children on roll	47
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Montessori Childcare Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP902476
Telephone number	01244 332 270
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2018

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Montessori Childcare Limited registered in 2010. It is located in Waverton, Cheshire. The nursery employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens from 8am until 6pm, Monday to Friday for 51 weeks per year, excluding bank holidays. They also offer before- and after-school and a holiday club.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kellie Lever

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 manager and the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The manager, provider and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed how the manager implements the curriculum.
- The inspector spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- 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 with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and provider. She reviewed relevant documentation and 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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