

# Inspection of Derwent Stepping Stones

Derwent Stepping Stones, St. Marks Road, DERBY DE21 6AH

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Inspection date: 11 January 2024

<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**

Leaders and staff take the time to find out about the children who attend nursery, and their families. They learn about what the children enjoy, what they can do and if parents have any concerns, so that they can prepare to welcome the children into the nursery. Children settle in well. Staff know what helps to comfort each individual child if they become upset during the day, which creates a supportive and secure environment for children. For example, staff use children's interests, such as trains, to distract them when they become upset. Staff are so engaging that children soon become engrossed in play. Staff continuously assess risks as children play, and help children to follow simple rules to keep themselves and others safe, such as using 'walking feet' indoors.

Staff create an interesting and inviting environment to spark children's curiosity. Children are busy all day as they explore what is available. They are interested in newly introduced resources, but also return to more familiar activities, such as reading books, which they talk to staff about. Children take delight in creating models with recycled boxes and choosing the texture of play dough when they are making it. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assisted by knowledgeable staff to join in and achieve through carefully planned next steps.

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

- Leaders have developed a curriculum that is based around the children and their life experiences. It is designed to build children's confidence and their understanding of their uniqueness. Leaders expect staff to focus on the skills and knowledge they want children to develop. Staff understand the curriculum and leaders' expectations. They skilfully adapt the resources on offer to capture children's interest and support the children's identified learning and development.
- Staff are knowledgeable and skilled. They have support to complete professional qualifications, but also have training that is relevant to the needs of the children. For example, staff received training on children's communication and language development. They understand the importance of this. They make sure children can see their mouth as they speak and repeat words to children, for example saying, 'bang, bang,' as children hit a box with a tube. Children are beginning to recognise the power of communication, for example as they make known their preferences for whom they want to sit next to at lunchtime.
- Leaders and managers know the community the nursery serves extremely well. They actively support families struggling with the cost of living and give support to children who otherwise would not benefit from attending the nursery. Leaders are acutely aware of safeguarding concerns in the local area, such as county lines. They make sure that staff are well trained and able to identify any

concerning indicators of any type of abuse or harm.

- Children are known very well by the manager and staff. Their individual circumstances and needs are swiftly identified, and strategies are put in place to provide them with support. Children are promptly referred to other agencies, such as speech and language therapy services. The manager ensures that children have assessments completed and receive any specialist support they need.
- Leaders and managers have worked hard to find an effective way to engage with parents. They are gradually introducing an app for parents and staff to use on a daily basis to share information, pictures and ideas. Parents who have access to this app use it. Staff work with parents to share information. They also provide advice to support parents, for example with how to approach toilet training. They do not, however, routinely tell parents about what their child's next steps in learning are, leaving parents who would like to follow on with this at home unable to.
- Staff help children to understand what is acceptable behaviour in nursery, to prepare them for life in wider society. When children display unacceptable behaviours, such as taking a toy from another child, staff address it sensitively. Staff who work with the older children talk to them about how their actions might affect the other children. Younger children do not have the same support to develop their understanding, as staff address the behaviour but do not explore the potential consequences of their actions with the younger children.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

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

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

- increase the information shared with all parents to include children's next steps in learning
- provide staff with strategies to help them to develop younger children's understanding of how their actions and behaviour affect other people.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY330097
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	10325998
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 9
<b>Total number of places</b>	128
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	81
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Derwent Stepping Stones Nursery and Community Training Centre
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP906919
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 372245
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 August 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Derwent Stepping Stones registered in 2006 and is situated in purpose-built premises. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of YMCA Derbyshire and is managed by an independent committee. The nursery employs 23 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 7, one at level 5, six at level 4, nine at level 3 and three at level 2. The nursery is open from 7.30am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. The nursery provides early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children in receipt of nursery education grant and early years pupil premium.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspectors

Joanne Smith

Christy Dave

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspectors viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and inspectors completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to and communicated with the inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- One inspector spoke to the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the nursery.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspectors carried out two joint observations of group activities, one with the manager and one with the deputy manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspectors.

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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