

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Stepping Stones Day Nursery, Lingley Green Avenue, Lingley Mere Business Park,
Great Sankey, Warrington WA5 3UZ

Inspection date: 15 November 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children excel at this warm and welcoming nursery. Staff purposefully design the provision to promote learning. Children eagerly explore the indoor and outdoor spaces with purpose. They choose from a broad range of resources and activities, becoming quickly engrossed in their learning. Staff offer children opportunities to explore outside of the setting. For example, babies go on walks to the local park and duck pond where they learn about nature and wildlife. Children visit the library where they develop a love of books. Staff help children to develop their physical skills as they build ambitious towers with soft cubes in the sensory room.

Children of all ages challenge themselves and show excellent teamwork. Staff focus on building strong relationships with children as the foundation for their future learning. Babies are confident and expressive. For example, even before learning the words, babies attempt to sing a wide variety of songs. Staff encourage babies enthusiastically, developing their self-esteem and sense of pride. Staff consistently introduce new and challenging words so that pre-school children are articulate and have a wide vocabulary. This supports their communication and language development. Children become expressive communicators. Personal care routines are sensitive and caring.

The curriculum is ambitious for all children. Staff focus on developing children's character as well as building lifelong skills. Activities are meticulously tailored so that every child makes good progress. Staff are skilled teachers. They take advantage of every moment to further children's learning. Staff are quick to support children when conflicts occur so that children learn how to manage disagreements themselves. Children behave well.

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

- Staff plan activities that enable them to skilfully adapt to meet the needs of all children. All staff have a good knowledge of children's unique needs. They understand precisely what children need to learn next. Children make good progress as they move between rooms. For example, at mealtimes, babies drink from open cups, toddlers learn how to use cutlery with great skill and older children show incredible skill in self-serving food. This means that children's knowledge and skills consistently develop.
- Mathematics is thoroughly embedded in everyday teaching and activities. For example, pre-school children calculate whether they have the right amount of biscuits for dessert. Toddlers enthusiastically count as they dunk dinosaurs into buckets of water to clean them. Younger children learn about numbers through songs and books. Children become accomplished mathematicians.
- The nursery provides excellent support for children with special educational

needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The nursery works closely with other organisations, such as the local authority, to make sure that children have all the support they need. They receive praise from these organisations on the exceptional quality of this support. Staff form nurturing relationships with children with SEND. They show a deep understanding of their needs, particularly children who do not communicate verbally. This means that children with SEND thrive and make good progress in all areas of learning.

- Children develop an impressive sense of resilience when they face challenges. For example, staff help pre-school children to practise cutting bananas and cucumbers to develop their skills using a knife and fork. Staff model what to do and offer encouragement when children find it difficult. Children encourage each other and show pride and delight when they all achieve their goal.
- Children develop a broad range of independence skills. For example, children confidently find their own belongings. Toddlers use a mirror to carefully clean their faces after lunch. Children become self-assured and highly skilled.
- Staff teach children to confidently take manageable risks in play. For example, toddlers balance on a small obstacle course, deciding for themselves how much support they need from staff. Pre-school children develop comprehensive physical skills as they complete large obstacle courses. Children cheer for each other, showing genuine support, care and concern for their peers. Children develop positive attitudes and trust in their own abilities.
- Staff take part in training, such as communicating with parents. This helps them to develop their confidence and communication skills. However, leaders do not always effectively evaluate staff training needs. At times, training takes place in response to incidents or concerns. Leaders are not always proactive in developing the staff team. This means that there are some gaps in staff's knowledge and skills.
- Following a recent incident in the setting relating to children's medication, leaders have taken effective action. They have updated the medication policy and procedures to ensure that all children's medication is now clearly labelled. Staff have reviewed the policy and procedures, and the provider has ensured that staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of these.

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:

- develop a robust and proactive programme of training so that staff knowledge

and skills are consistent.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2691233
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10360170
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	120
Number of children on roll	141
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP535314
Telephone number	01925 712683
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery opened in 2022 and is based in Warrington. The nursery operates from Monday to Friday, 7.00am to 6.30pm, all year round, except for bank holidays. The nursery employs 29 members of staff. Of these, two hold a childcare qualification at level 5, 15 at level 3 and four at level 2. The nursery offers funded early education for children from nine months to four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amanda Richards

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff 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.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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