

# Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery

99 Church Road, Urmston, Manchester, Lancashire M41 9FJ

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Inspection date:

13 February 2024

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## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision requires improvement**

Managers and staff demonstrate their commitment to meeting children's care and learning needs. However, the nursery's supervision and training programme does not focus closely enough on the detail of individual staff's teaching. This does not help staff to continuously improve their professional skills and knowledge. As a consequence, the curriculum is not sequenced well enough and children do not make the progress that they are capable of. For example, staff give every toddler a knife and fork at lunchtime, but do not ensure or check that children have the skills they need to use them. Some children resort to eating the casserole with their hand, or by using just a fork. This does not encourage toddlers to practise using two hands together. It does not promote their social skills well enough.

That said, children show that they feel safe with the friendly staff and welcome their company. Children play well together and know the expectations for their behaviour. Children spend part of every day outdoors. Toddlers and pre-school children challenge themselves to venture higher and higher up the innovative climbing frame. This promotes their strength, balance and sense of adventure. Children happily gather on a decking platform to listen to stories. They learn that reading is informative and pleasurable. This helps to promote their early literacy.

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

- The well-organised manager meets regularly with staff. She keeps manageable records of what is discussed, for future reference. Staff say that they like working in the nursery and feel happy and supported. However, the manager does not consistently identify weaknesses in the curriculum, or specific areas for development in individual staff's teaching. This means that staff do not know precisely enough what to do to improve their skills. Teaching does not improve quickly enough to ensure that children make consistently good progress.
- The curriculum is not sequenced well enough to build on what each child knows and can do. This is apparent when all of the children in the pre-school room gather to complete the same phonics activity. The younger children do not have enough experience of spoken language to identify the initial sounds of words and link them with written letters. The older and more able children do not gain new knowledge about letter sounds. Children begin the activity enthusiastically but their interest wanes, because their individual learning needs are not met.
- Some teaching is sequenced more effectively. Children sit in small groups to practise using scissors. Staff give them the individual help that they need to take the next step in their learning. Children are visibly proud when they succeed in operating the scissors with one hand and snipping the paper. The positive interactions and outcomes promote children's self-esteem and growing independence.

- The training programme for safeguarding is effective. The manager asks staff 'daily questions' about applying the nursery's policy and procedures. She discusses staff's answers, so that their knowledge continuously develops. Staff know what they must do if they are concerned about a colleague's manner or behaviour towards children. They know the signs that indicate that a child may be subject to abuse or neglect.
- Babies have plenty to see and do. For example, they often set off on outings into the local area. Staff are ready with cuddles and conversation and babies show that they feel ready to explore. Staff notice and provide for what each baby is interested in. This helps to encourage their concentration and exploration. Staff keep records of babies' care routines to share with parents and carers. This helps to promote continuity in children's care and development.
- The manager has focused effectively on improving the nursery's partnership with parents. Parents praise the dedication of the staff and feel welcome in the nursery. They bring in items of interest for children to talk about and play with. They borrow books for children from the nursery's lending library. Parents say that staff provide useful activities that help them to continue children's learning at home. They feel well informed about matters such as accidents and injuries, that children sustain at nursery.

## 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 meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:**

	Due date
implement an effective system for supervising managers and staff, that leads to continuous, measurable improvement in the quality of their practice	05/03/2024
improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements, in order that the curriculum is well sequenced and promotes children's good progress.	05/03/2024

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY318335
<b>Local authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10308191
<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 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	65
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	61
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Stepping Stones Nurseries Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP535314
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 748 0963
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 March 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery registered in 2006 and is located in Urmston. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine members of staff hold qualifications at level 3 and two members of staff hold qualifications at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Susan King

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 nursery.
- The nursery manager and the inspector completed a learning walk of the nursery. They conducted two joint observations of practice.
- Meetings took place between the inspector, the nursery manager and a senior manager.
- The inspector observed activities. She spoke with staff and children.
- Parents spoke with the inspector and she read written feedback about the nursery. The inspector took account of their views.
- Examples of documentation were sampled and reviewed by the inspector. She checked 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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