

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Totton) Ltd

74 Eling Lane, Totton, Southampton SO40 9GF

Inspection date: 7 October 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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 are happy and confident at the nursery. They are warmly greeted by staff as they arrive, and they settle quickly into the nursery's familiar routines. Children have good relationships with staff and make strong attachments with their key person. Staff know the children in their care very well. They are attentive to their needs and support them well in their choices. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They use effective strategies to promote positive behaviour. For example, they regularly praise and encourage children in all aspects of their play. This helps to promote children's self-esteem and confidence. Children are supported to be independent through exploration and doing things for themselves.

Staff have a good awareness of how children learn. They provide a curriculum that supports the children's curiosity effortlessly. Children are confident to explore and investigate, and, as they do so, staff interweave learning to help them develop a range of skills. For instance, as younger children examine a variety of different-textured materials and objects, staff talk about the feel of these to introduce new words and meaning. All children have opportunities to develop their small physical skills, which supports their muscle development and coordination. Children of all ages delight in exploration as they use scented, flavoured water with the tea set and a variety of tools and objects in the shaving foam and paints.

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

- The setting recently re-registered with Ofsted due to a change to its legal status. This has had no impact on the leadership or smooth running of the nursery. The management team work well together and are clearly passionate and committed in helping all children to thrive. The management team and staff work closely together. They have a clear vision, which helps to drive continual improvements. Furthermore, this has had a positive impact on the outcomes for children.
- Staff are attentive to the children and, overall, they engage purposefully with them. For example, staff talk to children about what they are doing, sing songs and encourage children to listen to stories. This helps children to build on their vocabulary as they hear words used in a variety of ways. However, at times, some staff do not use the correct pronunciation when talking to children, and not all are given time to think and respond to questions asked. This means that, occasionally, children are not fully supported to use their critical thinking skills.
- Effective key-person arrangements are in place to ensure that all children are well supported and their individual needs are met. Additional funding is used effectively to close any gaps in children's learning. Staff promote children's early mathematical skills well. For example, they encourage children to count the blocks they are using to build towers. Children learn about shapes and space as they enjoy threading and dancing with ribbons.

- Children play in a safe and welcoming nursery. Older children are developing skills in how to keep themselves safe as they help staff to risk assess the garden area. Staff teach children the importance of good health. Children are encouraged and supported to follow good hygiene routines, such as wiping their noses and washing their hands before eating.
- Staff benefit from regular team meetings and supervisions. They have access to a good range of training opportunities to help them build on their knowledge and professional development. The management team works well alongside the staff and provides guidance and support as required. However, systems used for the coaching and mentoring of staff practice are not targeted precisely enough to ensure that all staff are following expected procedures as required. Nevertheless, staff explain that they are happy and feel part of an inclusive team.
- Parents speak highly of all staff and the management team. They comment that they receive 'good communication', 'support' and 'guidance' from the team. They say that their children have a 'lovely time' and are 'flourishing at nursery'. Staff have clearly formed good relationships with the parents, and they support them in a variety of ways. For example, parents can access the clothing bank as needed, borrow books from the lending library and take home activity bags that help to support learning at home.

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:

- support staff to strengthen their understanding of how to aid children's early language development and broaden their vocabulary
- develop further the systems for coaching and mentoring staff to raise the quality of education.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2782304
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10364922
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	30
Number of children on roll	65
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Totton) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2782302
Telephone number	023 8086 6763
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery (Totton) Ltd re-registered in February 2024. The provider is based in Eling, Southampton. It is open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. The setting has 12 members of staff. Of these, 11 staff hold qualifications ranging from level 2 to level 4. The nursery provides government funded early education places for children aged from nine months to four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tracy Bartholomew

Inspection activities

- The management team explained the nursery curriculum during a learning walk with the inspector.
- The management team and the inspector completed a joint observation of an activity together and discussed the quality of teaching and learning afterwards.
- The inspector observed activities in the two main base rooms and garden. She talked to staff about the progress that individual children are making and what they want the children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector about the activities they took part in.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The management team showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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