

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Stepping Stones Nursery, South Way, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 5EZ

Inspection date: 30 April 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 flourish in this busy, vibrant setting. Staff welcome the children and support them to settle and engage in the exciting activities they have organised. For example, babies explore blocks of ice with flowers frozen inside. Older children persevere as they try threading laces through different-shaped cards. Staff support children to learn about what makes them unique. They create books for children with photos of their family and encourage children to share these with their friends. Children show a real interest in each other's families. This helps children develop a sense of belonging and identity. Children excitedly join in singing with staff who play the guitar. They enthusiastically dance and copy movements to different action songs. Children confidently express themselves.

Children have access to a large, secure outdoor area and free flow between the various spaces. This helps children of all ages to have contact with each other. Staff support babies to gain confidence as they help them to safely negotiate different terrain, such as bridges in the garden. Children show concentration as they balance on stepping stones. This helps to promote their physical development. Children learn about the world around them as they look for bugs and insects in raised planters. Staff support children's understanding and encourage them to expand their knowledge. For instance, staff explain why snails often live in shady, moist areas and why this is important. This helps children gain an understanding of what other living things need to survive.

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

- Overall, children are safe and are making good progress. The management team, and the provider, work together to ensure that staff have the support and training they need to deliver good-quality education for all children. However, at times, members of the management team are less clear about their day-to-day roles and responsibilities. This can delay action being taken to support the smooth running of the setting.
- Staff are passionate and committed in providing children with good-quality learning experiences and know the children very well. They have supervision sessions and receive feedback on their practice. Staff regularly review and discuss the progress children make with managers. Staff attend training sessions to help develop their skills further, such as using basic sign language. This has a positive impact on the progress children make. Staff report they feel valued, and their well-being is supported.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported extremely well and expertly included into the setting. Staff work closely with outside agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are planned for and children with SEND are represented. There are calming sensory rooms

throughout the setting that all children benefit from. Staff recognise the individual needs of children and adapt their practice to support them. For instance, they alter the routine, if necessary, to help children who may struggle at transition times.

- Children develop a deep love of stories and rhymes during their time at the setting. Staff prioritise children's exposure to books and use these to deliver their curriculum. For instance, babies learn about farm animals as they explore books about farms. They concentrate as they lift the flaps in the books and repeat the animal sounds. Older children learn about the life cycle of a butterfly. Staff read 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' book to children, and use different pasta shapes to represent the various stages of the life cycle. This helps children to secure their knowledge.
- Parents report that, despite the setting's size, it still feels intimate with a family approach. Parents know who their child's key person is and report that they work in partnership with other professionals, where necessary, to aid their children's development. Staff provide parents with regular updates about the progress their children make. Parents are invited to open events where they experience activities their children do at the setting, and gain ideas about how they can support their children's learning at home.
- Staff are sensitive and respectful when responding to children's intimate care needs. For example, staff help babies feel comfortable and at ease during nappy changes. They calmly talk to babies throughout, and explain what they are doing at each stage. Staff encourage older children to use the potty or toilet independently and support them if needed.
- Children have lots of opportunities to develop their early understanding of mathematics. For example, older babies learn new concepts, such as size, as they make snakes out of play dough, and staff introduce simple language, such as 'long', 'short', 'big' and 'small'. Staff encourage older children to look for numbers displayed in the environment as they give them directions to follow. This helps prepare children well for their next stage in learning.

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:

- strengthen the arrangements of the management team to clarify roles and responsibilities and support the day-to-day running of the setting.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2660130
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10333070
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	133
Number of children on roll	189
Name of registered person	United Learning Trust
Registered person unique reference number	RP532264
Telephone number	01243 871044
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery has operated since 1992 and re-registered in 2021. The setting operates from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year. There are 40 staff, including the management team and bank staff, of whom 36 hold an appropriate childcare qualification at level 2 or above. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Pippa Clark
Paula Sissons

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager, deputy managers and the early years lead joined the inspectors on a learning walk and talked to the inspectors about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspectors about what they enjoy doing at the setting.
- Staff spoke to the inspectors during the inspection.
- 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 spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.

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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