

Stepping Stones Childcare

Unit 14, Westbrook Centre, Westbrook, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 8UG



Inspection date

13 March 2017

Previous inspection date

12 December 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The manager is knowledgeable and has a very good understanding of her role and responsibilities. Very thorough systems are in place to recruit and induct new staff. Staff are supported extremely well in developing their understanding and implementation of the nursery's policies and procedures.
- Staff make very good use of the local environment to extend children's learning. Children regularly visit the local library, shops and an area of forest. They develop an understanding of risk as they participate in local outings. Children have lots of opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Partnerships with other professionals effectively support children's learning and well-being. Staff implement targeted teaching strategies to help children make progress from their starting points.
- Children's behaviour is good. The staff are kind and caring and act as good role models. They encourage positive behaviour and use praise effectively to support children's confidence and self-esteem.
- Parents say staff keep them well informed about what their children are learning. They are invited to meet with their child's key person and also to join in stay-and-play sessions. This contributes to parents' understanding of how to support their child's learning at home.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not always encourage children to continue to develop their home language during play.
- While children make good progress, some planned activities do not precisely identify what they need to learn next.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide further opportunities to help children retain and develop their home language
- identify the precise next steps for each child taking part in planned group activities and promote their learning even further.

Inspection activities

- The inspector looked at children's records, planning documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery. She looked at a range of other documentation, including policies and procedures and the nursery's improvement plan.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector had a tour of the premises and held a meeting with the manager and area manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Val Aspinall

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures. They can identify possible causes for concern and know who to report their concerns to. The environment is safe and secure. The manager has implemented thorough procedures for minimising risks to children. Ongoing methods of managing staff performance help the well qualified and experienced team to continue their professional development. The manager regularly provides staff supervision. Her ongoing action plans accurately identify and monitor areas for improvement. She also monitors children's development on a termly basis, comparing the progress of different groups of children. This helps to identify training needs which benefit children's learning.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff use their observations of children's learning to assess their development and monitor their progress. They plan activities based on seasonal and cultural events or on children's interests. Pre-school children enjoy listening to traditional stories. Staff provide additional resources which help children to extend their learning further. For example, they re-enact the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff. Children visit the woods and create a bridge using branches. Staff help children to problem solve by identifying which branches are long enough to bridge the gap. Children pretend to saw branches. They count them and compare their size. They confidently use measuring tapes and say, 'Look it's bigger'. Toddlers enjoy learning using all of their senses. They sing songs, listen to stories, find animals in soil and experiment with paint.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children settle in well to this welcoming nursery. Parents comment that the key-person relationships are strong and help children to form good attachments to staff. Children show confident, friendly behaviour towards each other and to visitors. They cooperate with each other without prompting. For example, children work out how to carry large, heavy branches between them. The simple daily routine and consistent approach to activities help children to predict what will happen next. Children help to tidy up and wipe the table before lunch. They know to stay within sight of an owl marker hung on a tree in the woods. They eat healthy packed lunches and are developing a love of physical activity as they negotiate slopes, rollers and slides in the soft-play area.

Outcomes for children are good

Children make good progress and show a readiness to start school. Pre-school children confidently talk and express their views and ideas. They listen to instructions and respond positively. Children are learning to become independent. For example, they put on their own shoes and coats and walk sensibly in pairs when they go out for a walk. All children show curiosity and a keenness to explore their surroundings.

Setting details

Unique reference number	315218
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	1064033
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	1 - 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	84
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP535314
Date of previous inspection	12 December 2013
Telephone number	01925 415531

Stepping Stones Childcare was registered in 1992. The nursery employs six members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including two at level 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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