

Inspection of Stepping Stones Nursery School

7 Gayford Road, LONDON W12 9BY

Inspection date: 14 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Stepping Stones Nursery School provides a safe and secure environment for children to flourish in learning and development. Staff and children take safety standards seriously. Children show awareness of safety as they climb and balance on the available equipment and structures. For example, both staff and children discussed fire safety during a campfire activity in Wendell Park.

The quality of interaction between adults and children is exceptional. For example, adults are present at every learning area and engage with children as appropriate. This skilful interaction highly supports children's language acquisition.

Children play collaboratively when building an igloo and butterflies, using recycling bottles and bottle tops. They develop positive attitudes towards each other, which is necessary for further learning. Behaviour at the nursery school is excellent. Staff apply the nursery policy by modelling positive, good behaviour to children. Where children's behaviour falters, adults intervene quickly, managing the situation calmly and with kindness. Consequently, children have very mature attitudes to learning and no learning is disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders review teaching strategies regularly to ensure that children achieve to their best potential. For example, the teachers act as mentors to nursery assistants and apprentices. There are regular teaching review meetings, which ensure high quality of teaching. Individual knowledge and skills of teachers and nursery assistants are used fully to maintain improvement in learning at the nursery school. Leaders, together with parents, have created an inclusive environment where all children have an equal opportunity to be successful, irrespective of their background or abilities. For example, children who speak English as an additional language feel valued and make rapid progress, as leaders encourage parents to come in and read stories in their child's home language to the whole class. Children with English as a home language have the chance to learn about the language and cultures of their peers.

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

- Leaders have successfully maintained the strong teaching and outcomes identified at the previous inspection. Teaching remains strong and very successful, and children achieve very highly. For example, after studying the work of a professional artist, a teacher made excellent use of her own learning by teaching a group of children to practise their splash painting with confidence and skill.
- The leaders' detailed guidance to staff ensures that the quality of teaching always improves. For example, a teacher uses her expert teaching strategies to bring storytelling alive. Children's engagement and concentration are highly active and effective.

- The leaders' passion for children's readiness for school is exceptional. For example, to strengthen the teaching of sounds that letters represent, the leaders have arranged a phonics workshop for parents who are less confident in their knowledge of phonics, to enable them to continue to support their children in phonics at home. This exceptionally supports children's learning, both at the nursery school and at home.
- Recently appointed staff and apprentices receive regular coaching, training and support from the senior management team and work alongside outstanding practitioners.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and stimulating. The nursery school provides the opportunity for children to experience British values in a highly active way. For example, children make decisions on what resources to access in their home rooms, and the able teachers and nursery assistants are close by to support them to learn.
- Teaching across all areas is excellent. Early reading, writing and mathematics are integral to everything that is taught at the nursery school. Expert teachers and nursery assistants have identified different starting points for children in communication and language, and have put in place highly successful strategies which help children make rapid progress.
- Teachers and nursery assistants maintain detailed observations, assessments and planning for children. They plan activities thoughtfully, ensuring that they appeal to children's interests and meet their next learning steps well. Children access a wealth of high-quality outdoor learning activities, including those that promote children's physical, communication and creative development in all seasons.
- The headteacher's inspirational leadership and expertise in the education of early years continue to drive her provision forward. For instance, the headteacher is present in classrooms and has effective strategies to observe and monitor practice. Consequently, high-quality practice is reinforced daily.
- As a result of the excellent working relationship with leaders, parents and other relevant multi-professional teams, the nursery school continues to lead effective joint working and sharing of expertise that benefit children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with health needs. Children make rapid progress and are achieving the best possible outcome.
- The wide-ranging and successful teaching in place ensures that children move to primary school ready to refine their reading skills further.
- The key-person relationship with children is strong. Children have a primary key person who is a nursery assistant and a second key person who is a teacher. This arrangement is highly effective as it ensures continuity of care and learning always.
- Parents' regular appointments with their child's key person, teacher and nursery assistant, and the daily exchange of information between all parties, ensure parents become highly confident in continuing their children's learning at home.
- Well-established routines ensure that children happily leave their parents in the morning without anxiety to meet the headteacher and key persons. Children follow the routines with ease and respond to key persons' instructions promptly. For instance, when the bell rings during activities, children freeze and listen to

instructions from staff. Children know where to line up for routine changes.

- Leaders and staff have a reflective culture at the nursery. Staff are open to new ideas and are willing to share their practice with colleagues in a supportive environment. For example, the headteacher, following the outcome evidence in a five-year research project, separated her pre-school into summer and autumn born, in two different rooms. Consequently, older and younger children's needs are met exceptionally well.
- Parents have very positive views and are extremely pleased to come to the nursery. Some parents expressed regret for not discovering the nursery when they had their older children. For example, leaders organised a workshop where parents were supported with admission procedures into both private and public primary schools. Parents think that leaders have genuine interest in their children's future progression.
- Leaders' evaluation of the provision is rigorous and includes children, parents and staff. Feedback from the views collected go to support continual improvement in delivering accurate, high-quality teaching and learning for children and their families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are aware of issues that might affect children's welfare and how to report concerns. They are confident in their knowledge of the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation against a colleague. There is a robust recruitment system in place. Leaders ensure children are only supervised by people who are suitable to do so. Staff carry out risk assessments both at the nursery and on trips to the local community. They ensure that potential risks are considered and take action to eliminate harm to children. Children are happy at the nursery school. They engage with resources, staff and their peers in a safe and secure environment.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY448901
Local authority	Hammersmith & Fulham
Inspection number	10128517
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	89
Number of children on roll	84
Name of registered person	Dodd, Bryony May
Registered person unique reference number	RP514000
Telephone number	0208 811 1646
Date of previous inspection	14 January 2013

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Nursery School registered in 2012. It is privately owned and operates over three floors of a converted house in the Stamford Brook area of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The premises consist of four classrooms and additional communal rooms for children's use. The ground floor is easily accessible with no steps. There is an enclosed indoor/outdoor area for outdoor play and children are taken to nearby parks on a regular basis. The nursery is open Monday to Friday during term time, from 9.15am until 3pm. There are 24 members of staff, including the headteacher and an office administrator. Most staff have a suitable childcare qualification. This includes teacher qualifications and teachers who specialise in specific lessons, such as French or physical education. The nursery supports children with SEND and children who speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Komla Dartey-Zaffar

Inspection activities

- The headteacher and inspector conducted a learning walk to view the provision and discuss the planning for children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff and looked at children's work.
- The inspector spoke with parents and read written testimonials provided by parents for the purpose of the inspection.
- The inspector looked at the nursery school's policies and staff records.
- The headteacher and inspector conducted a joint observation of an activity and considered how this supports children's learning.
- The inspector observed the children and staff playing at the nursery school and during their visit to Wendell Park.

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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