

# Stepping Stones Nurseries (Peterhead) Ltd

## Day Care of Children

65 King Street  
Peterhead  
AB42 1QJ

Telephone: 01779 481 344

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 March 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Stepping Stones Nurseries  
(Peterhead) Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2004939139

**Service no:**  
CS2004056929

## About the service

The service is provided by Stepping Stones Nurseries (Peterhead) Ltd. It has been registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 36 children aged from 0 to those not yet attending primary school, of which a maximum of 8 will be children under two years of age.

The nursery is accommodated in a former residential property in the centre of Peterhead. The layout consists of a small baby room and a toddler room on the ground floor. There are a further two playrooms on the first floor for children over three years. An outdoor play area is available at the rear of the property.

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 15 March 2022 and 16 March 2022. One inspector carried out the inspection. To inform our evaluations we undertook two focused site visits to the service as part of this inspection. In addition, we used telephone calls and emails to engage with the manager, staff and parents as part of the scrutiny process. We also assessed relevant documents we requested from the manager. Feedback was given to the manager and provider on 22 March 2022 via Microsoft Teams.

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration Key Question 5 - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator in Theme 1 Quality Care and Support.

## What people told us

We asked the manager to circulate an email to all parents and carers asking for their feedback. We received nine responses to the email during the inspection and one after feedback was given.

All parents said they were happy with the care provided to their child. Some parents told us that the communication could be improved and others that it was excellent or outstanding. We looked at this under the management and leadership theme. Further comments from parents are included in this report.

## Self assessment

The service was not asked to complete a self assessment prior to the inspection.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

## Quality of care and support

## Findings from the inspection

We evaluated the quality of care and support as good, where strengths had a positive effect on the outcomes for children and these outweighed areas for improvement.

Most children were confident in the routines of the service such as handwashing and where to put their belongings. This familiarity helped children to feel settled in the nursery. Staff offered new children reassurance and comfort, supporting their attachments with key staff members. Parents told us that "staff know the children very well" and "staff are always very welcoming to my child".

Staff had collected a range of information about children's needs and circumstances from parents. The information was reviewed and updated at least every six months or when there were changes. This meant that it was up to date and relevant for children. Staff used this information to help them identify and meet children's individual needs. Where strategies were in place to support children's health or wellbeing these were used consistently by all staff.

Staff's good knowledge of children's achievements, interests and preferences helped children to feel valued and accepted. Learning journals, which were overall of good quality, were used to record children's achievements and plan for their development. We discussed how consistent, good observations and planning for children's development could be achieved by carrying out regular audits.

In the baby room good links between home and the nursery supported continuity of care routines such as sleep and mealtimes. There was less evidence of this sharing of quality information in other rooms. While some parents said information regarding children's achievements and progress was "great" others said that it was lacking detail to help them know how their child was developing. We discussed the importance of a consistent quality of communication between the nursery and parents with the manager and provider under the theme of management and leadership.

Staff had good knowledge and understanding of their role in safeguarding children and promoting their wellbeing. Regular training and a detailed policy provided staff with appropriate guidance to which staff could refer. Chronologies were used by the service but these included records of children's developmental milestones as well as significant life events. Staff should develop their understanding and use of these documents. This will ensure that they are used to support the recognition of times when children or families need further support.

Meals and snacks were served in the play rooms and these were generally relaxed and unhurried experiences for children. However, experiences could be improved by staff sitting and interacting with the children, promoting their communication and independence. During feedback, the manager and provider discussed their plans to incorporate this improvement into planned changes for mealtimes.

Appropriate infection prevention and control procedures were in place to support a safe environment for children and staff. For example, staff regularly cleaned resources and encouraged effective handwashing practices.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

We made an evaluation of good for the quality of the environment. We found that strengths, which will have a positive impact on the outcomes for children, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The nursery was accommodated in a residential style building which provided a welcoming and homely environment. Decorations included some of the children's work as well as photos of their activities. This supported the children to feel valued and included.

Children's safety was promoted by a secure entry system to the premises. Attention was paid to safety, cleanliness and good hygiene practices contributing towards keeping children safe and well.

Children accessed the local community play areas and green spaces most days, supporting them to feel part of their community. There was daily access to the garden area at planned times. Here, children were able to engage in physical play as well as the chance to use loose part resources such as twigs, tyres, logs and sensory play with sand and water. These activities supported the children to problem-solve and investigate.

Good use was made of the available space indoors. Staff were able to tell us how recent improvements had increased the area available to children and the opportunities for sensory play. We suggested that they evaluate the benefit of these changes to promote children's engagement and positive experiences. This will support them to build on the improvements and continue to promote activities reflecting children's interests and development needs. Feedback from parents indicated that they were happy with the environment and activities offered to children. One parent commented "...is always coming home having done new activities from dress up to walks, dancing to arts and crafts...". In some rooms we suggested that children could have more independent access to resources and more open ended resources. This would support them in leading their own play and developing their interests. Although there were some natural resources in all of the rooms these were limited and we suggested that further introduction of these type of resources would improve children's experiences.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

We found the quality of staffing to be good. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Children were cared for by enthusiastic staff who created a positive and warm atmosphere. Those children who were settled in the service were relaxed with staff and confident in asking them for support or inviting them into their games.

Staff interactions with children were kind and nurturing, supporting children to feel included and confident. However, at busy times such as when serving meals, staff sometimes missed opportunities to respond to children fully. We suggested that observations and evaluations of these times by room leads or manager would support the identification of areas that could be improved.

Established staff worked well as teams within the individual rooms. They provided positive role models for the children through their interactions with each other and children. One parent told us "staff have worked hard to build a relationship with my child and go above and beyond to meet their needs".

Staff were safely recruited and held appropriate Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC) registration. An induction process was in place to support new staff to understand their role. We suggested that referring to the National Induction Resource may provide further support and a chance to reflect on their knowledge. This would support staff to evaluate their learning and identify further training needs as well as promote awareness of best practice guidance.

Regular staff support and supervision was in place and this was used to identify training needs. Staff had attended core training such as child protection, first aid and infection prevention and control. They confidently discussed their learning from training with us. Staff were, however, less confident in their use of best practice documents to positively influence their practice. Use of these documents would help staff to reflect and evaluate their practice and enable them to care and support children based on the most recent research and guidance.

### Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

### Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

## Quality of management and leadership

## Findings from the inspection

We found the quality of management and leadership to be adequate, although there were a number of strengths these only just outweighed the areas for improvement.

Staff told us that they felt the manager and provider were supportive and approachable. There were some opportunities for staff to take on leadership roles within their rooms and on individual projects. This supported staff to feel valued and to extend their professional development.

The manager had a good understanding of the training needs of staff and what training they had attended. There was less knowledge of how the training had impacted on staff practice and therefore on experiences and outcomes for children. Establishing an effective system of evaluation including observation of staff practice would support the manager to measure the positive impact of any training.

An improvement plan was in place for the service as a whole and for individual rooms. Areas for improvement had been identified from the last Care Inspectorate inspection and from feedback from the local authority early years quality assurance team. The manager and provider should work to establish an internal auditing and evaluation system which will inform improvements going forward. **(See recommendation 1.)**

Use was made of social media and messaging services to supplement the face to face communication at handover times. However, the impact of this was variable with some parents telling us that communication was very good and others saying it was very poor. One parent said "Excellent communication usually via email but all messages are posted on Facebook. If I ever have to email the nursery I receive a reply within the hour" while another stated "I do feel there is a huge lack of communication with the nursery but I am unsure if this has come about due to covid. However, I don't have any concerns around the care of my child or their learning which can clearly be seen".

Some parents told us they were unaware of their child's personal plan or achievements and others that they received very detailed feedback about their child's experiences. During the inspection we observed that staff in rooms provided information to the staff member whose role it was to answer the door to parents. The content and detail of this varied with different staff members. We fed back a summary of parental comments and our observations to the manager and provider. They agreed to review the communication system to ensure all parents are receiving information in an appropriate format and have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements: 0**

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations: 1**

1. In order for children to experience high quality care, the provider should establish and maintain an evidence based system to audit, self-evaluate and assess the quality of the service. From this assessment, they should identify priorities for improvement, the impact on children's care and experiences and how these improvements will be achieved.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

**Grade:** 3 - adequate

## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

#### Recommendation 1

The manager and staff in partnership with parents should ensure that all children with an identified need have in place a detailed personal plan that sets out how children's health, learning or development will be supported. This should be implemented, reviewed and evaluated at a minimum of six monthly intervals.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs and wishes will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15)

It is also necessary to comply with The Social care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Service) Regulations 2011, Regulation 5 Personal Plans.

**This recommendation was made on 12 August 2019.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

Personal plans were in place for each child. Where children had an identified need, further information was in place to support the child's health and wellbeing. Plans were reviewed at least every six months or when circumstances changed. This recommendation has been met.

#### Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the service develops further positive and restorative strategies in behaviour management to support children in a sensitive and caring manner so that they learn to regulate their own behaviour.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: 'I am supported to manage my relationships with my friends in a way that suits my wellbeing.' (HSCS 2.18) and 'I am enabled to resolve conflict, agree rules and build positive relationships with other people as much as I can.' (HSCS 2.15)

**This recommendation was made on 12 August 2019.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

We saw that staff supported children to share and take turns. Discussion with staff showed consistent approaches to promoting positive behaviour and for children who needed extra support to regulate their emotions. This recommendation has been met.

### Recommendation 3

The manager and staff in partnership with parents should ensure that the information held regarding children's medical conditions and the administration of any medication required is detailed enough to fully support children's care. Any medication held for children must be in the original packaging, labelled with the child's name and in date.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources.' (HSCS 4.27)

**This recommendation was made on 12 August 2019.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

Medical plans were in place for any child receiving medication. These were detailed enough to support child's health and wellbeing. This recommendation has been met.

### Recommendation 4

The manager and staff should further develop profiles of children's learning to ensure they clearly record children's progress in their learning and development and contain relevant next steps that inform future planning.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me.' (HSCS 1.27)

**This recommendation was made on 12 August 2019.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

Each child had a learning journey in place which recorded their achievements and, in most cases, relevant next steps to support children's progression. This recommendation has been met.

### Recommendation 5

The manager should take a stronger lead and develop distributed leadership in auditing and monitoring the work of the nursery to ensure all take more responsibility for improving their own practice.



This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19)

This recommendation was made on 12 August 2019.

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

There was some distributed leadership in place with staff taking leadership roles in their rooms and in individual projects. However, a robust and effective system of auditing and monitoring needs to be in place to support evaluation. This recommendation has not been met and is restated in the report.

### Recommendation 6

The manager should ensure that the available space within the nursery is fully utilised to accommodate the children and take account of the space standards in Space to Grow.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience a service that is the right size for me.' (HSCS 5.5) and 'I have enough physical space to meet my needs or wishes.' (HSCS 5.20)

This recommendation was made on 12 August 2019.

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

There had been improvements made in most of the rooms to support more space available for children to play. There were plans in place to further develop this and these should be continued. This recommendation has been met.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
28 May 2019	Unannounced	Care and support Environment 3 - Adequate Not assessed

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
27 Sep 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
27 Jan 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
22 Jan 2016	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
2 Oct 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
1 Nov 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
20 Sep 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
22 Sep 2011	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
9 Nov 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	3 - Adequate

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 3 - Adequate
29 Sep 2008	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good

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