

Stockton Stepping Stones

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	200782
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Inspector	Janet Keeling
Setting address	Stockton Primary School, School Street, Stockton, Warwickshire, CV47 8JE
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Stockton Stepping Stones Pre-School opened in the 1970's and is a committee-run group. The group operate from a portacabin classroom which is located within the grounds of Stockton Primary School, Warwickshire. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children from three to under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 26 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting receives funding for early years education. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school opens from 9.00am to 3.00pm on a Monday and Friday and from 9.00am to 12 noon on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, with the option of a lunch club from 12 noon to 1.00pm. The group is open term time only.

The pre-school has procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

There are three permanent members of staff who work directly with the children, of whom, two hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and eager to learn at this very welcoming and child-friendly pre-school group. Staff are highly motivated, work well as a team and have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, consequently, children make good progress in their learning and development. Successful partnerships with parents and other agencies have been established, ensuring that children's individual needs are fully supported. Practice is inclusive, supporting all children to actively participate in activities which meet their individual interests and developmental needs. The pre-school is led by a very motivated and experienced manager who demonstrates a very positive attitude towards continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review and develop the assessment procedures to ensure information gained

through observation is regularly evaluated and used to identify the next steps in children's learning

- review and develop the indoor learning environment to ensure it is organised in a way that fully supports the needs of all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Good priority is given to safeguarding and protecting children. All staff have an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding issues and are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child in their care. Staff are very competent, caring and demonstrate an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Effective procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are in place together with effective procedures for the induction of new staff. Managers and staff have a good understanding of health and safety issues. Risk assessments are completed and cover all aspects of the indoor environment, the outdoor area and outings. Staff are successfully deployed to support the children's individual needs, however, the organisation of the indoor learning environment does not fully support children's learning. Staff routinely verify the identity of all visitors to the pre-school group and have a visitor's book in place. There are also effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children.

The manager and staff are very motivated and passionate about their work, they strive to improve practice at all times. For example, through the introduction of their self-evaluation system they have started to monitor and evaluate the quality and standards of the pre-school practice. Staff have access to ongoing training to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated regularly. All staff have completed paediatric first aid and safeguarding training. Regular staff meetings provide valuable opportunities for staff to discuss planning, any practice issues and to identify any training needs. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been fully addressed and have had a positive impact on outcomes for children in the pre-school group. A positive equality and diversity policy outlines a commitment to promoting inclusive practice, ensuring all children can achieve as well as they can regardless of their background. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to working with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Excellent links have been established with the host school. For example, regular visits to the school take place during the summer term, known as 'Building Bridges' where children are able to meet with the reception school teacher and familiarise themselves with their new learning environment. Consequently, this has a very positive impact on the children's future needs, helping children to settle and feel secure in their new learning environment.

Partnerships with parents are very good. Children benefit from the warm and relaxed relationships that have been established between their parents and the pre-school staff. The staff dedicate time getting to know children and their families, fostering excellent relationships and helping to ensure that children settle quickly and feel secure. Parents are very well informed regarding their children's care and are routinely involved in their child's continuous learning and

development. The daily exchange of information ensures that children's changing needs are consistently met. Parents are kept up to date with information regarding the group through the use of a parents' notice board, regular parents' meetings and newsletters. There are good opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the pre-school. For example, parents are welcome to attend committee meetings, participate in outings and are encouraged to support fundraising events throughout the year. Parents say they are extremely happy with the excellent care and learning opportunities that are provided for their children and that staff are approachable, caring and supportive. Parents also commented on the bright and colourful displays of their children's work around the pre-school room.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children benefit from the staff's comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how to develop learning through play. Children are eager to learn, they are confident and very happy in this welcoming setting. Children have good opportunities to make choices about their own learning as they freely access a wide range of activities and resources both indoors and outdoors. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that result in children being active learners, who are creative and able to think critically. Children respond to challenges with enthusiasm and show good levels of independence, curiosity and imagination. Staff interaction is excellent, staff know the children very well, are aware of their individual learning needs, ask open-ended questions and support children as they play. Children work well independently and with their peers and are keen to share their ideas with the staff. All children are valued and treated with equal concern with any specific requirements being met sensitively through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff have a very good understanding of children's individual learning needs as they observe and record information on a daily basis. All children have a 'learning folder', which contains both photographic and written information of children's learning, achievements and records of children's own work. However, information gained through observation is not regularly evaluated and used to identify next steps in a child's learning. These folders are regularly shared with parents and are available for parents to see at any time.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Children's personal, social and emotional development is successfully supported, children relate well to each other and to adults, and separate happily from their parents and carers. Children are confident, enthusiastic and eager to learn. Children access an excellent range of first hand learning experiences. For example, they plant fruit and vegetables, such as, potatoes and strawberries. They tend the crops each day and watch with delight as they grow. They harvest the potatoes, prepare them for cooking and eat them at snack time with mint and butter. Children are developing a love for books as they freely access a wide range of interesting books in the book corner and enjoy story time. There was enormous excitement as the children listened carefully to the story about 'going on a journey into the jungle' and tried to guess what sounds

they could hear along the way. Children enjoy music as they join in with a range of songs and beat to the rhythm of the music using a range of musical instruments. Children's creativity is fully supported through a range of role play equipment, construction toys and access to a wide range of media, such as, chinks, paint, sand, water and play dough. In the creative area a small group of children chatted happily together as they created beautiful pictures with red paint. They confidently talked about their creations and one child said, 'mine is a house' whilst another child said, 'mine is a monkey'. Children enjoy being in the fresh air and relish the outdoor play opportunities, they explore their natural environment as they 'bug hunt' for mini beasts and listen to the birds. A group of children explored the water play tray, they talked about how different items in the water sank or floated. Children also benefit hugely from planned outings, they enthusiastically buy stamps and post letters at the village post office, visit 'Twycross Zoo' and take regular walks around their local community.

Children behave in a manner that is supportive of their learning, they develop confidence and self-esteem because the staff give regular praise, encouragement and support. Children learn to negotiate, share toys, take turns with equipment and show consideration for each other as they play together and as a result, children's behaviour is very positive. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the wider world through planned activities, discussion with staff and through access to toys that are representative of diversity. Children learn how to stay safe; they regularly engage in emergency evacuation procedures and are gently reminded to use equipment safely. Children are successfully encouraged to develop their own personal hygiene skills, such as, independent toileting and automatically washing their hands before snacks. Children develop a good understanding of healthy eating, they have fresh fruit, cucumber, carrots and wholemeal toast at snack time, access to drinking water throughout the session and complete topic work on healthy living. In addition, children know that exercise is good for them. For example, children relish the outdoor physical play opportunities where they confidently negotiate the climbing frame, skilfully walk across the 'clatter bridge', competently pedal bikes and throw and kick balls. Children also enjoy music and movement sessions, singing and dancing. Children develop a good sense of responsibility as they help to tidy away their cups and plates after snack times, and help put toys away after they have finished playing with them. Children demonstrate that they are acquiring skills that will help them in the future and prepare them for their transition from the pre-school into school.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met