

Stockton Stepping Stones

Stockton Primary School, School Street, Stockton, Warwickshire, CV47 8JE

Inspection date	17/11/2014
Previous inspection date	06/07/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children enjoy learning, behave well and make good progress. This is because the quality of teaching is good and children benefit from a range of well-planned activities both indoors and outside.
- The successful key-person system enhances the relationship with children and their families. As a result, children settle quickly and build positive relationships with staff.
- Staff provide a welcoming, safe and secure environment. They have an effective understanding of safeguarding procedures and ensure that children are kept safe from harm.
- Partnerships with parents are very good. Staff work well with parents to support children and share all aspects of children's learning and development.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always maximise opportunities for children to explore a very broad range of materials that support scientific or mathematical investigation and open-ended exploration.
- The pre-school's links with the adjacent school that children move on to are at an early stage and managers are considering ways to build partnerships that will further support children's smooth transitions into full-time education.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector had a tour of the pre-school with the manager.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning activities indoors and outside.
- The inspector looked at a sample of policies, children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of staff working with the children and the pre-school's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector took account of the views of children, staff and parents spoken to on the day of inspection.

Inspector

Victoria Mulholland

Full report

Information about the setting

Stockton Stepping Stones opened in the 1970's and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a separate building in the grounds of Stockton Primary School in the village of Stockton, Warwickshire, and is managed by a committee. The pre-school serves the village and surrounding areas and is accessible to all children. It operates from one large room and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs two members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and one holds Early Years Professional status. The pre-school opens Mondays from 9am until 3.15pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9am until 12noon and Thursdays from 9am until 1pm, during school term times. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 11 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance provision by giving children further opportunities to explore and investigate a broader range of open-ended materials that support scientific and mathematical discovery

- continue to explore ways to improve links with the adjacent school to strengthen partnership working to prepare children for moving on to full-time education.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff understand how children learn through play and provide a good balance of suitably challenging adult-led and child-initiated activities. The learning environment is bright and welcoming. Resources are accessible to children, in labelled drawers or open boxes, so that children can independently make choices about where they would like to play and what they want to use. Educational programmes are planned to cover the seven areas of learning. Planning is flexible and responds to children's needs and interests. For example, staff involved children in creating a 'builders' role-play area in response to children's interests. As children enthusiastically engage in pretend play, they are well supported in being imaginative. Staff use 'show and tell' times as a strategy to develop children's self-confidence. Children are encouraged to bring in items from home, sometimes linked with a theme or area of learning. For instance, things

that start with the letter sound of the week. Children's listening and attention skills develop as they listen to other children and ask them questions. Their communication skills improve as they answer questions and talk about what they have brought to show everyone. As children play, staff model language and ask questions to encourage children to express their thoughts and ideas. This is most successful when staff use open-ended questions that develop children's ability to think critically and make links between different aspects of their experiences.

Staff provide a wealth of opportunities for children to develop early literacy skills, such as linking sounds to letters and recognising their own names. Early writing skills are also well supported because staff encourage children to paint, draw, write and make marks with a very wide variety of materials and tools. Children enjoy joining in with number songs and rhymes, which supports their understanding of numbers as they count and take away. Staff promote children's understanding of the world. For example, they explore light and dark in the 'dark area' and use a range of technological toys and equipment to support their learning. However, staff do not always provide a very broad range of substances, including water and malleable materials, that offer rich experiences for children to become engrossed in open-ended exploration. This means that opportunities for children to investigate scientific or mathematical concepts are not always maximised. Nevertheless, children do have opportunities to become deeply involved and maintain focus, for instance, as they use a flour and water paste to 'cement' wooden bricks together. Furthermore, the staff are effective in supporting children to acquire the skills that they will need in readiness for their move to school.

Staff regularly observe children and use these observations to clearly identify the next steps for learning. For children new to the pre-school, staff seek information from parents and use this in conjunction with their initial observations to identify a starting point for children's learning. Key persons know the children well. They plan suitably challenging activities and enjoyable experiences that are focused on children's individual needs and are tailored to support their progress. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported because key persons work in partnership with parents. They liaise well with other professionals to secure any additional support that may be needed. Consequently, all children make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

Pre-school staff develop good relationships with children and their families. Staff ensure that parents have very frequent opportunities to look at and add to their own child's learning records. They actively encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning, both within the pre-school and at home. For example, every week children take home books to share with their parents and staff suggest activities that children can do with parents at home. Staff display work from home on a 'home activities' board and also display children's 'wow moments' that parents share about children's achievements and progress at home. Weekly newsletters give parents information about what children have done and about the focus for 'show and tell' activities the following week. Parents are regularly invited to participate in craft sessions with their children. As a result, a consistent approach to children's learning, both at home and in the pre-school, is effectively promoted.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

There is an effective key-person system in the pre-school. As it is a small setting, staff know all the children and their families well. Staff work in partnership with parents and take account of children's individual needs and interests when supporting them to settle in. Consequently, children settle quickly and develop warm, positive attachments with staff. This successfully promotes children's personal, social and emotional development and assists a smooth transition from home to the pre-school. Parents comment that the pre-school is a 'happy, welcoming place'. Staff are purposeful in seeking children's views and providing children with opportunities to give their opinions. As staff respond positively to children's ideas and suggestions, they feel valued and develop confidence, which raises their self-esteem.

Children are encouraged to share responsibility for aspects of their own safety. For example, staff involve them in tidying resources away and wiping tables. Staff routinely include children in making visual checks of the outdoor areas. Children tour the outside space with a member of staff to make sure that there are no potential hazards, such as litter and standing water. This provides opportunities for children to use mark-making skills for a purpose as they tick off the checks and sign their names. Staff practise and teach children about good hygiene. Children learn to wash their hands after messy play and toileting, and before eating. Staff provide healthy snacks, such as yogurt and breadsticks. Children's good health is promoted through their regular access to fresh air and physical exercise and opportunities throughout the day to drink fresh water or milk. Children enjoy listening to stories and joining in with songs and rhymes outside in the sensory garden. Their large muscle skills develop as they use large climbing equipment and push, pull and pedal wheeled vehicles.

Staff are good role models and provide clear guidance for children about what is acceptable behaviour. Staff teach children about sharing and taking turns and reinforce children's positive behaviour with praise and encouragement. As a result, children are happy, behave well and enjoy what they are doing. They learn to play alongside and cooperatively with others. Children have good opportunities to follow their own interests as they choose from the wide range of resources and learning opportunities that staff provide. Staff encourage children to try to do things for themselves, such as putting on, taking off and hanging up their coats. As a result, children are developing independence and personal care skills. This supports them in becoming emotionally well prepared for moving on to school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Effective arrangements are in place to safeguard children and promote their welfare. All staff are trained in safeguarding and paediatric first aid, and managers ensure that this training is refreshed regularly. Staff demonstrate clear understanding of child protection matters. Staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and know what steps to take if they have any concerns about a child. Safer recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Leaders make sure that all required

policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, known to staff and implemented appropriately to ensure the safety of children.

Managers have a good overview of children's learning and development. Key persons know how to plan and tailor activities so that children are supported in achieving their next steps for learning. Managers monitor ongoing assessments and track children's progress. They ensure that all children are making progress across the seven areas of learning throughout the year, in relation to their starting points. Managers and staff quickly identify where children need additional support so that their needs are met and support is obtained from external agencies where appropriate. Effective systems for monitoring staff's performance and professional development enable leaders to ensure good standards in staff's practice. Managers thoroughly and accurately assess and evaluate their provision and regularly provide opportunities for staff, parents and children to share their views. They take these views into account when identifying strengths and priorities for further improvement.

Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. Managers employ a range of strategies to support the sharing of information between the pre-school and parents. For example, parents are invited to stay for an 'open clinic' each week. This is an opportunity to talk with their child's key person, look at their child's 'learning journal' and add their own contributions to it. Key persons complete regular progress reviews and share these with parents, who add their own comments about their child's progress. Managers arrange parents' meetings to share information about the Early Years Foundation Stage. Partnerships with external professionals, such as speech and language therapists and local children's centres, are well established. Managers and staff are committed to working with them to ensure consistency of learning and care for children. Managers are keen to further develop links with the adjacent school that children move on to. The new headteacher attended the recent pre-school craft session to meet with staff, parents and children. Managers have begun working with the headteacher to consider ways to build partnerships and further support children's smooth transitions into full-time education. However, these links are at an early stage and this means that children's transition is not yet fully supported.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	200782
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	875023
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	11
Name of provider	Stockton Stepping Stones Committee
Date of previous inspection	06/07/2010
Telephone number	01926 813789

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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