

Inspection of Stepping Stones Pre-School

Clipston School, High Street, Clipston, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9RU

Inspection date: 27 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at Stepping Stones Pre-School. They separate from their parents at the door and are welcomed in by cheery, friendly staff. Staff are very attentive to children and know their needs extremely well. This helps children to feel secure, form positive relationships with staff and develop a good sense of belonging. The environment is well resourced and children make independent choices about what they want to do while at pre-school. Children enjoy learning, both indoors and outdoors. Staff have high expectations for children's learning. They plan a curriculum to take into account children's interests and their learning needs. All children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are making good progress.

Staff use planned and spontaneous activities to support children to extend their knowledge. For example, children count items in the shop and staff support them to name the things they choose to buy. Other children play with small-world figures on the floor and navigate their cars around the road map. Children learn to share and to take turns with their friends. Children share their ideas and knowledge when they talk to one another and encourage others to join their games. They are developing strong friendships with each other.

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

- The manager has a clear vision for the future of the pre-school and a structured plan for developing the outdoor area. The staff and manager share very positive relationships. Staff have opportunities to attend training, which supports developments in the setting. For example, recent speech and language training has encouraged staff to give children more thinking time when they ask them questions.
- Staff know the local community that the children live in exceptionally well. This helps them to plan to meet the needs of individual children, including those with SEND. Staff develop highly effective relationships with parents and other professionals who may be involved in children's care. This means they can plan and implement specific strategies to support children to make the best possible progress.
- Parents speak very highly of the setting and comment that they would recommend it to other families. They particularly value the face-to-face and online feedback they receive about their children's progress. Parents are confident that their children are making progress and attribute children's communication and social skills to attending the pre-school. Parents share examples of when their children use new words in conversation with them, such as 'chrysalis' when talking about butterflies in the garden at home.
- Staff plan effectively for all children. They understand what children know and

can do and encourage them to learn more. Outdoors, children explored compost and water in a large tray. Staff used replica animals and reptiles to remind children of the creatures they met during a recent visit from a company that introduces children to a range of creatures. Children talked about the 'slithery snake' and the 'slimy snail'. They remember that they were brave because they touched the snake, and staff challenged them to hold the snake's toy spider.

- Children are generally encouraged to be independent. They manage their own dress, putting on aprons and coats, and use the toilet independently. However, sometimes, staff do things for children without thinking, for example wiping a child's nose and cutting their fruit at snack time. This means children do not always learn to do things for themselves.
- Staff encourage children to broaden their knowledge about things that interest them. Children create their own artwork; they draw horses and colour in unicorns. They stick tissue paper on plates to make rainbows. They learn how to mix colours and are enthusiastic about creating new colours. They are proud of their creations, eagerly asking staff to 'come and look', before they store their painting on the drying rack.
- Children are supported to develop mathematical knowledge. They explore the directional arrows on a robot before they programme it to move on the 'Snakes and Ladders' mat. They count confidently and recognise written numbers up to 20. Children are eager to join in and this means that, sometimes, group activities become overcrowded and staff struggle to manage them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a clear awareness of the signs and symptoms of different types of abuse that children can be subjected to, including grooming online and female genital mutilation. They know who to report concerns to about staff or children, and the importance of doing this swiftly. Staff refresh their safeguarding knowledge on a regular basis by taking part in training sessions. This allows staff to protect children from potential harm. The manager follows safer recruitment procedures, carrying out relevant checks on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. The pre-school is safe and secure.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- further develop children's independence skills by consistently allowing them to carry out tasks by themselves
- strengthen the support for staff to focus on developing their teaching practice, specifically around the management of group activities, to an even higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	219879
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10138598
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Pre School Clipston Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP907284
Telephone number	01858 525113
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2016

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School is located in the village of Clipston, in Northamptonshire. It registered in 1993. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications between level 3 and qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Morning sessions are from 8.40am until 11.40am, lunch club is 11.40am until 12.10pm, and afternoon sessions are 12.10pm until 3.10pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Karen Siddons

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the pre-school manager.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together.
- The inspector held a meeting with the pre-school manager. They looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to parents and read comments made by parents about the pre-school during the inspection, and took account of their views.

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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