

Inspection of Stepping Stones (Bracken Leas School)

Bracken Leas Primary School, Magdalen Meadows, Brackley, Northamptonshire
NN13 6LF

Inspection date: 7 September 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 | Not applicable |

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy and safe. They thrive in this warm and friendly setting. Children clearly enjoy attending, as they confidently separate from their parents and carers on arrival after only attending for a short time. Children are quick to settle into the activities provided and are comfortable around the staff. Children that are a little more reserved stay close to an adult and use them as a base for exploring the environment when they are comfortable to do so.

Staff support children to interact with others and develop their confidence in social situations. Children play together purposefully and show great consideration towards their friends. For example, children take turns to play a shopping game. They listen, waiting for their turn, and celebrate their achievements by smiling when they get something right.

Children have extensive opportunities to be active learners, both indoors and outdoors. Managers and staff have developed an outdoor environment that engages and excites children. Children learn about the natural world during regular forest-school activities. They develop their physical skills by being able to run, climb and balance on obstacle courses that they design themselves.

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

- Children's behaviour is good. Staff know children well and incorporate strategies to help support children to take turns. When issues arise, staff calmly discuss feelings and support children to resolve issues for themselves. For instance, newer children are reminded of the rules of the setting and are encouraged to talk about how they are feeling. Staff help children to understand about keeping safe. During morning group time, children are reminded about potential risks of talking to strangers.
- The staff have a good understanding of how children learn. Activities are well planned and reflect all areas of learning. Children in the garden pretend to shop for vegetables in a greengrocers. In most of these activities, children engage well. Staff share rich vocabulary and use questions to extend children's learning, introducing paper and creating a recipe about how to make a cake using vegetables. However, this is not consistent, and sometimes children are not given the appropriate amount of time to respond to questions during conversations. This means that opportunities are missed to develop children's speech and language skills and share their own ideas.
- Transitions for new children are well thought through. Staff who previously worked with the children at the provider's other setting are able to come and visit to support them. This has a positive impact on children settling quickly. Children see their peers from the other setting during forest-school sessions.

This allows children and staff to build positive relationships. The setting also has good links with the school, which helps when older children move on. Children in the school wave to, and recognise, the staff as they walk across the grounds.

- Partnerships with parents are very positive. Staff provide regular updates on children's development, including suggestions for support at home. Parents comment that their children settle well and 'come on in leaps and bounds'. Staff talk with parents about when children might need extra help to learn. They make sure that support and teaching helps all children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make the best progress possible.
- Staff say that they are highly valued and respected. Management recognises the importance of staff well-being, ensuring that everyone is offered support. Management place a high priority on ensuring staff are listened to and that their input is valued through regular meetings across the sites. They ensure there is time built in for all staff to be able to reflect on their practice, particularly for those who are in childcare training, and encourage staff to develop their professional skills where possible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager provides regular supervision to ensure all adults working with children understand their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children. The systems in place are extremely effective, and all adults fully understand the policies and procedures for raising concerns about a child in their care. Staff can identify signs and symptoms of abuse, including signs that children may be at risk from extreme views or behaviours. Risk assessments are rigorous, and staff are deployed effectively to keep children safe from harm.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure high-quality interactions are securely embedded across the setting and children are given opportunities to share their ideas, especially those with speech and language difficulties.

Setting details

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number | 2546264 |
| Local authority | West Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10215571 |
| 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 | 3 to 3 |
| Total number of places | 24 |
| Number of children on roll | 22 |
| Name of registered person | Stepping Stones Pre-School (Brackley) |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP907771 |
| Telephone number | 01280706553 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones (Bracken Leas School) opened in July 2019. This setting is available to children aged three and four years. The setting is run by the manager of Stepping Stones Pre-school, which is adjoined to the school site. The setting receives funding for three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amy Clarkson

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed activities, both indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact these have on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss and understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector had discussions with staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector took account of parents' views through verbal and written feedback.
- The inspector had discussions with the room leader during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including the safeguarding procedures and evidence of the suitability of staff.

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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