

Inspection of Stanwix Community Pre-School

Church Street, Stanwix, CARLISLE, Cumbria CA3 9DJ

Inspection date: 16 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff place a sharp emphasis on nurturing children's emotional well-being. They provide a bespoke virtual tour and visual information booklet, to help children to gain a sense of what the pre-school is like before they start. The family orientated key-person system contributes towards the positive relationships that are formed between children and staff. Children enjoy their time at this welcoming pre-school. They demonstrate that they feel safe and secure in the care of staff. For instance, children are confident to approach any new visitors as they arrive. They demonstrate their largely positive attitudes when saying polite phrases, such as 'good morning'. Children are beginning to form firm friendships with their peers.

Leaders and staff create an ambitious curriculum that closely links to what children know and enjoy. Younger children engage in pretend play based on their own experiences. They show confidence to ask for help with tasks such as taking their coat off following outdoor play. Older children group objects according to properties, such as colour. They use tools such as scissors competently and safely. Children who speak English as an additional language speak confidently and clearly. They explore colours and how these can be changed when painting. Children listen to well-known stories with increasing attention. They giggle when they look through a pair of binoculars and see staff pretending to be a bear.

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

- Leaders and staff are very strongly connected to the pre-school and have been for many years. The small staff team work together seamlessly. Meaningful engagement takes place with all staff. Staff undergo termly supervision sessions. They have opportunities to discuss their ongoing well-being during regular 'check-ins'. A significant reduction in paperwork is enabling staff to spend more quality time engaging with children.
- The well-qualified staff tune in to what children know and enjoy. They quickly recognise children's interest in dinosaurs and use this knowledge to enhance their learning. For example, children enjoy exploring the marks that dinosaur footprints make in damp sand. They remember what has been taught previously when accurately naming a tyrannosaurus rex. Children welcome the use of props during linked stories. This helps them to remain deeply involved.
- Partnerships with parents are superb. Staff exchange information with parents about every aspect of their children's care, learning and progress. Parents are invited into the pre-school to share information about their specific job roles with children. This quickly supports children to learn about different occupations, such as the role of a vet. The informative open evenings are supporting parents to gain further knowledge of the curriculum and different teaching approaches. This is helping parents to build gradually on their children's skills at home.

- Staff strongly focus on closing any gaps in children's physical development. Information gained from linked training is used well to build on children's skills. For instance, children now engage in a fun warm-up session before exercising and playing outdoors. They learn to move in various ways, such as when mastering different poses during yoga and when using long-handled brushes to sweep up leaves. This is helping to strengthen children's core muscles positively.
- Since the onset of the pandemic, staff are placing a sharper emphasis on supporting children's early language skills. Staff model words accurately for all children to hear and say, aiding their early pronunciation skills. They engage in two-way conversations with children. However, occasionally, particularly during larger group sessions, staff do not challenge children's thinking skills fully. This does not support children to make consistently high rates of progress.
- The proactive staff seek early help and support for children at the earliest opportunity. They work together with parents and other professionals to target children's care and learning needs most successfully. The creation of 'Ginger's Den' is providing more opportunities for all children, including those receiving funded early education, to socialise in smaller groups. This is helping to boost children's confidence to interact and communicate more freely with others.
- Overall, staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They gently remind children to use their 'watching eyes' and 'listening ears' during stories. However, during snack-time routines, staff do not reliably step in to promote the use of good manners. Furthermore, when children are lining up to wash their cups, staff do not swiftly challenge children when they jump ahead in the queue. This does not support children to attain the very highest standards of conduct.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders create a culture of safeguarding across the pre-school. Recruitment and induction procedures are robust and ensure that staff are skilled and suitable for their roles. All staff are highly trained. They have a good knowledge of child protection procedures. Leaders work in close partnership with other agencies to protect children's welfare. They teach children about the 'safe principles' that they need to consider when using the internet. Children demonstrate their awareness of how to manage risks independently. For example, when walking along a row of bricks, they hold out their arms to remain balanced. Staff take steps to prevent the spread of infection. They share information with parents about common childhood illnesses, including the signs and symptoms and any required exclusion periods.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen teaching and challenge children's creative-thinking skills more

consistently during larger group sessions, to build on their communication and language skills more successfully

- support all staff to intervene more reliably during routines, to help children gain a greater understanding of the expectations for behaviour.

Setting details

Unique reference number	317608
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10234530
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	31
Name of registered person	Stanwix Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518424
Telephone number	01228 512630
Date of previous inspection	27 January 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stanwix Community Pre-School registered in 1985 and is run by a management committee. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one member of staff who holds qualified teacher status. The pre-school operates Monday to Friday, from 8.30am to 3.30pm, during term time. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Charlotte Bowe

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 two managers and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the pre-school.
- The joint managers led the inspector on a learning walk to show how the nursery is organised and to share information about their intent for the early years curriculum.
- A planned activity was jointly evaluated by the inspector and one of the managers.
- The inspector held discussions with some of the committee members, the staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection. She held a separate meeting with the joint managers to discuss aspects of leadership and management.
- A sample of documentation was viewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability of staff, a record of staff qualifications and training and some of the policies and procedures.
- The inspector took account of the large number of reviews from parents.

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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