

Inspection of East the Water Stepping Stones Pre School

Avon Road, BIDEFORD, Devon EX39 4BL

Inspection date: 25 May 2023

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

Children settle quickly into the pre-school on arrival. They enjoy choosing from the wide range of resources available. Parents comment on how welcoming the staff are. The warm relationships formed between staff and children help children to feel secure. Parents value the way that staff communicate with them about their children's learning. Together, they share information at drop-off and collection times.

Children are able to choose to play freely inside and outside. Younger children play in their own outdoor space, learning to balance as they explore spinning toys. They play alongside their friends and enjoy taking turns as they pair up on a rocking boat. Older children are curious about using magnifying glasses outside to search for insects. They play games together on a large pirate ship in the garden and practise climbing, sliding and making up imaginative games together.

Staff encourage younger children to have creative ideas as they use play dough. They join in with the children, introducing new ideas, such as rolling and stretching the dough. Children become interested in colours as they paint and experiment with different tools such as sponge rollers. Older children show persistence as they learn to use scissors safely and practise their cutting skills to decorate shapes. Staff praise children and encourage their ideas, for example as children describe adding 'googly eyes' to their pictures.

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

- Staff work very well together as a team. Communication between staff is effective and they are clear about their roles. Staff routinely discuss children's progress together in order to plan effectively. The manager provides access to online professional development training so that staff can keep their knowledge updated. Information is shared with parents via electronic systems. The manager invites teachers from the schools that children will be moving on to into the pre-school to get to know the children. Staff also communicate with other settings that the children attend.
- Staff work together with parents and other professionals to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They assess children's learning and have a clear understanding of what children need to learn next. They support parents with children's learning at home, for example using strategies to help children begin to use a potty. Staff ensure all children can learn in a group by providing some children with a 'fidget toy' to support their concentration. Staff interact with children, but managers do not always ensure that all staff are confident with strategies to support children's communication development further. For example, while some staff make use of signing and visual resources,

these are not used consistently by all staff.

- Children understand the routines of the setting. They sing a 'tidy-up' song together and learn about the importance of being safe in the sun by applying sun cream before going outside. Staff provide healthy fruit snacks, which children choose. At times, however, staff do not plan effectively for children to develop their independence further. For example, staff do not always enable children to help prepare snacks, pour their own drinks or water the plants in the garden to aid their self-help skills.
- Staff praise children for persevering as they count and throw beanbags into baskets outside, supporting their mathematical development. Younger children develop mathematical ideas and coordination as they pour and fill containers with bubbly water. Staff encourage children to notice changes that happen as they grow plants in the outdoor area. This helps them to understand about growing fresh foods to eat and what plants need to grow. Staff introduce the children to the names of vegetables, such as 'radish' and 'spring onions'. Children show delight as they see these growing.
- Younger children learn to join in with action songs as staff sing with them in a small group. Older children join in with enthusiasm with their favourite rhymes, such as 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'. Children learn to listen carefully to the books that staff regularly read to them. They join in as they become familiar with the story. Younger children practise handling chalks to make marks. Staff help older children to learn about the initial sounds of words, in preparation for early reading and writing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures that all staff attend training to support their understanding of how to keep children safe from harm. Staff are able to identify the signs to be aware of that might suggest children could be at risk. They are vigilant about any accidents or injuries to children at the setting or from home and have effective systems in place to record these. Staff provide a safe environment for children. They ensure that older children learn to ride bikes safely to avoid collisions. Staff supervise younger children closely while playing with water to prevent them from coming to any harm.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- use effective strategies consistently to support all children's communication skills even further
- provide more opportunities for children to develop their independence.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY443628
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10280241
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	1 to 5
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	67
Name of registered person	East-the-Water Stepping Stones Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP904841
Telephone number	01237475562
Date of previous inspection	28 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

East the Water Stepping Stones Pre School registered in 2012. The pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee. It operates from a separate building in the grounds of the Pollyfield Community Centre in Bideford, Devon. It is open from 8am until 4pm on Monday to Friday, during term time only. The pre-school employs 13 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are completing apprenticeships. The pre-school receives funding for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Stephanie Wright

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The deputy manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection about what they liked to do at pre-school.
- The inspector carried out joint observations during the inspection, alongside the manager.
- The inspector spoke to staff and parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector surveyed documentation during the inspection, including staff suitability checks.

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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