

Inspection of Stone Cross Independent Pre-School

Stone Cross School, Adur Drive, Stone Cross, Pevensey, East Sussex BN24 5EF

Inspection date: 26 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children flourish in this pre-school that is highly valued by families and very much a part of the local community. Children arrive eager and full of energy to start their day. The exceptionally knowledgeable manager and her skilled staff team pride themselves on knowing each child incredibly well. They use this information to deliver a well-sequenced and exciting curriculum that ignites children's thirst for learning.

The staff team is highly ambitious and truly values the uniqueness of every child who attends. The manager recognises the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's language and physical skills. She implements research and initiatives in the pre-school to counter the impact. This provides children with an abundance of rich-learning opportunities both in the setting and on local visits in the community.

Children demonstrate that they make significant progress in their learning and development. They show high levels of engagement and concentration as they recall what they remember from poems and stories. Staff champion children and offer encouragement for them to have opportunities to talk about their ideas. Children reflect and explain their understanding of the different literature texts that are shared with them. Thus, extending their range of vocabulary to a very high level.

Staff understand the importance of helping children make connections in their learning. For example, staff set up teapots, cups, teabags and tongs for children to continue their imaginative play that is linked to the story 'The Tiger Who came to Tea'. Furthermore, children also develop fine manipulative physical skills as they pour 'tea' and use tongs to pick up pretend sugar cubes. Staff explain this helps develop children's dexterity and muscle control in their hands ready for future handwriting skills.

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

- The manager and her team take steps to ensure that all children are very well prepared for their next stages of education. All staff evaluate the impact of their teaching, which provides an insight into the progress children make over time. This, in turn, helps them plan educational programmes that build on what children already know, remember and can do.
- Staff provide a multitude of activities and experiences to support children to develop a wide range of physical skills. They make the most of being on a school site and regularly use the running track to encourage children to keep physically active. Staff talk to children about the impact physical exercise has on their

bodies. Children comment how they notice their hearts beat faster after they engage in warm-up exercises outdoors. This helps children learn about aspects that contribute towards healthy lifestyles.

- Staff work tirelessly to ensure that children with developmental delays make outstanding progress. They work closely with families and external professionals to continuously work on specific strategies and champion children to do their very best. Children with physical delays show tremendous resilience and concentration as they demonstrate mastering the outdoor obstacle course. Children beam with pride when they show that they can balance, jump and crawl across the varied resources to complete the course.
- Staff provide sensitive support to children to help them learn expected behaviour at the pre-school. Children show that they are developing an understanding of how their actions can impact on others. For example, they comment they should move to another area to continue building with the toy bricks, so as not to hurt their friends. This is because they noticed bricks can tumble and accidentally hit others. This shows that children are developing empathy towards their friends and adjust their play accordingly.
- Staff provide a 'creation station' to encourage children to self-select from a range of mixed media to express themselves creatively. Children engage in process art and enjoy using watercolours to paint and talk about their ideas. Staff use this opportunity to engage children in discussion about their work. This helps children learn that adults value their ideas and contributions.
- Staff regularly set challenges for children to develop their problem-solving skills. For instance, children discuss how they can overcome only having six foam arrows when seven children want to play. Children explain to the adult how two children can join together to share a foam arrow, so everyone can join in. This contributes towards helping children to learn how to negotiate and collaborate with others to develop social skills.
- Parents hold the pre-school in high regard. They comment that staff create a real sense of community for the children and their families. Parents explain the pre-school contributes significantly to the progress that they notice their children make. Furthermore, parents can borrow books from the setting to further support and embed learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	109525
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10312163
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 4
Total number of places	25
Number of children on roll	36
Name of registered person	Stone Cross Independent Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP905906
Telephone number	01323 740 149
Date of previous inspection	23 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

Stone Cross Independent Pre-School registered in 1999. It operates from within Stone Cross Primary School in Stone Cross, East Sussex. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of whom, five hold relevant qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term-time only. Sessions are from 8am to 3pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Sherrie Nyss

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 inspector conducted a learning walk with the manager to establish the priorities for the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and daily routines to assess the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at suitable times during the inspection.
- A joint observation was completed and discussed with the manager.
- The inspector tracked children to establish what it is like for a child at the pre-school.
- The inspector held a discussion with the nominated individual and the managers in relation to the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of suitability and vetting checks, first-aid certificates and staff personnel files.

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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