

Inspection of Stower Vale Pre-School

Woodville Stour Provost, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5LX

Inspection date: 24 October 2024

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 provide a warm and welcoming environment. They get to know the children well, which helps them to arrive happily and settle quickly into their day at pre-school. Staff build strong attachments with the children. As a result, they feel safe and secure. Staff are kind and gentle in their approach, creating a nurturing and respectful environment. Children's behaviour is good. They play together well, taking turns and sharing easily. They understand the pre-school rules and follow these consistently.

Staff plan a broad and ambitious curriculum that links successfully to children's interests and learning needs. They create many opportunities for outside and physical play, including forest school activities. Children thoroughly enjoy meaningful experiences that develops their confidence and self-esteem and encourages a love of nature. Staff support younger children when climbing the steps to the wooden structure and going down the slide, allowing them to take risks and become confident in their own abilities.

There is a language-rich environment. Staff extend children's vocabulary and support children's language skills well. For example, children identify and mix ingredients to make play dough. Staff introduce new words such as 'sticky' and 'tough' to build on their vocabulary.

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

- The curriculum is well organised. Although it is child-led, there is a clear focus on developing the skills that children need in preparation for school. For example, children manage their own self-care effectively. They put on their coats and get ready for outside play independently. They make choices of whether to play inside or outdoors and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- Staff use books and stories well to build on children's knowledge and understanding. Children listen intently to a story about following rules. They share the rules of the pre-school, showing that they have listened to the story and understand the narrative. They can recognise the emotions on the faces of the characters in the book and share examples of when they might feel happy, angry or scared. The book initiates lots of discussion, and children often look at books on their own or share them with a friend, showing a love for books and stories.
- Staff teach children well to manage their own behaviour. This instils a sense of calm throughout the pre-school and helps children to develop strong friendships. Children work harmoniously together to problem solve and try out their ideas. For example, they use different utensils and try out different methods to rescue an apple from the climbing structure in the garden. They excitedly jump up and

down and celebrate their achievements as they retrieve the apple with some tongs.

- Children begin to recognise numerals from posters and those written on pebbles and shells in the garden. They learn about size and shape. However, staff do not make the most of spontaneous opportunities to encourage children to count and use numbers in their play, for instance, when playing in the sand and water.
- Staff know what children need to learn next and provide some planned and targeted activities to help them achieve this. However, they do not provide this targeted support consistently to help all children meet their key next steps as swiftly as possible. For example, staff do not always show children how to hold and use scissors correctly to build on their fine physical skills.
- There are good partnerships with parents. Effective communication enables parents and staff to share and gain valuable information about the children. Parents praise the staff very highly and comment that they feel well informed about their children's progress.
- Staff's well-being is given a high priority by the provider. Staff are encouraged to access training to develop their skills and knowledge further. As a result, staff feel valued, are highly skilled and the pre-school is well led and managed.
- Staff work well together to reflect on their practice and identify areas for improvement. For example, they have adapted the way in which they plan their curriculum to reduce the amount of written work for staff and to be take their lead from children more routinely. This has had a positive impact on children's engagement and enjoyment.
- The provider did not notify Ofsted of committee changes within the required timescales. However, this has been quickly rectified and there is no impact on children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide more opportunities for children to count and use numbers to further enhance their mathematical knowledge
- provide more targeted support during planned activities to help children achieve their next steps more swiftly.

Setting details

Unique reference number	139377
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10366694
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	21
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Stower Vale Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519787
Telephone number	01747 839942
Date of previous inspection	25 March 2019

Information about this early years setting

Stower Vale Pre-School registered in 1993. The pre-school operates from premises situated in the school grounds of Stower Provost Community School in Woodville, near Gillingham, Dorset. The pre-school opens from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday, during school term times. Four members of staff work with the children. All of whom hold relevant early years qualifications; one at level 6, two at level 3 and one at level 2. The pre-school is in receipt of funding to provide early years education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Michelle Heimsoth

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years foundation stage curriculum.
- 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 spoke to and read emails from parents and took account of their views.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The manager joined the inspector to carry out a joint observation.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and nominated individual about the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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