**SELF EVALUATION FORM 2019/2020**

**STEPPING STONES SCHOOL**

**YOUNG FOUNDATIONS**

**AUTHOR: EMMA GILLIN – HEAD OF EDUCATION AUGUST 2020**

**FINAL VERSION- SIA APPROVED**

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| **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS** |
| **We judge Overall Effectiveness as Outstanding.****Evidence:*** **309 Unit Achievements this academic year – highest ever outcomes despite the lockdown.**
* **All Young people safe and well and accessing school & distance learning throughout COVID lockdown**
* **Full School roll in this academic year**
* **Huge successful ‘CAMP COVID’ with excellent feedback**
* **Outstanding training opportunities for staff this year – allowing further understanding and empathy for our young people**
* **Outstanding Overall attendance – 91.9% July 2020**
* **Community links – more diverse – PCSOs, NCS, Anesis Homeless Charity, Bike Hire, Alpaca Farm, local Snooker Hall, SnowDome etc to embed the School into local Community**
* **Partnership working with Two Rivers Special School – resulting in to further referrals and places within Stepping Stones.**
* **Head approached to be part of Staffordshire Local Management Group to help schools problem solve, escalate and strategy advice for their own young people.**
* **KS2/3 Development to offer a broader curriculum to our younger cohort**
* **Excellent feedback from stakeholders and parents**
* **Excellent progress of each young person from starting point. – see Then, Now, Next and Personal Centred Education Plan.**
* **Excellent development of HSB to be able to offer a wider inclusive cohort of need.**
* **Excellent Risk Management – low incidents**
* **Safety Plans written to ensure further understanding and risk for all**
* **Additional Policies to Improve Risk Management and lower risk (Acceptable Usage etc)**
* **Robust Induction – allowed young people to settle and feel safe quicker**
* **Young People grouped by need, not age or stage.**
* **I Can Tree – still having positive impacts for young people allowing them to celebrate the smallest step**
* **Effective RAG rating to monitor progress per lesson and empower learning, highlight barriers to learning and identify patterns for change or monitoring**
* **MY DAY forms to reflect the three I’s and identify strengths and areas for Development – informs Reward system**
* **Personalised Reward System – to give young people an aim and motivation**
* **Robust tutorial system with well-being tracking**
* **High levels of support has allowed young people to feel safe, secure and be able to have support at all times when needed.(Student Voice, Tutorials)**
* **Personalised Risk Assessments for COVID and Distance Learning**
* **Creative Zoom lessons – to include the Band, Thematic Presentations and to promote independent learning (up skill).**
* **SOWs reflecting the Three I’s so staff keep focussed on the purpose**
* **Introduction of new subjects to include DIY Skills, Bike Maintenance, and Cooking on a Budget, Drama and Health & Social Care has allowed young people to ‘trial’ different career options whilst securing qualifications.**
* **New commissioning by Staffordshire Local Authority – more referrals**
* **100% Health & Safety Compliance**
* **Highly successful Distance Learning Package through start of lockdown to include daily wellbeing checks**
* **Well-being and Worry Boxes introduced and active to allow staff and young people to have their voice confidentially.**
* **Thematic teaching programme to allow for specific subject targeting (LGBT, SRE, SMSC, Black Lives Matter, Protected Characteristics, Mental Health Awareness, tutorials) which enhanced standard curriculum at the time of solitude and when Mental Health may dip due to circumstances).**
* **Rich and varied curriculum listening to the needs and wants of the young people to compliment the core. – This has led to high achievements and outcomes.**
* **Lesson visits – supportive and overall good.**
* **Outstanding SIA support. Visits termly, reports forwarded with actions and re-visited regularly. Telephone support at all times, and additional support for Head if required.**
* **Access to Clinicians – Psychiatrist and Forensic Psychologist for further guidance for LAC children.**
* **Head attendance at LAC Reviews, EHCP Reviews, PEPs, MDT meetings, Regional Meetings, Operations Meetings monthly.**
* **Outstanding information sharing between services and professionals to allow structured and robust risk, planning and safe lessons.**
* **Excellent use of Educational Psychologist to guide, inform and advise for each young person on presentation, progress and wellbeing.**
* **WOW wall to celebrate stretch and challenge of a young person. This displayed Safeguarding Level 1 Certificates, Cookery lessons, outstanding attendance, kindness and Closing the Gap achievements.**
* **Reformed Functional Skills – staff now cleared, trained and ready to deliver new Reformed Functional Skills in September 2020.**
* **Excellent EV Moderation visit. Excellent report – now has recommended Direct Claim Status due the high level of quality delivered qualifications.**
* **Excellent levels of staff conduct. One cause for concern, no disciplinary action this year.**
* **Low staff turnover – 75% retained throughout year.**
* **Introduction of Keyworkers for each young person in school. Allowing responsibility, accountability and a point of contact for each child.**
* **Intervention logs – kept on young people who were struggling. This allowed us to demonstrate all interventions, share with Clinicians and use data to be able to explore further input.**
* **All staff have access to all young person’s background to allow for more intensive planning, recognising further support areas are in place for sensitive areas. This has reduced incidents and to allow key working in the home to support the work in school.**
* **Introductions of Options this year has allowed young people to choose vocational areas of study, gain qualifications and explore their future career paths.**
* **Closing the Gap has been a favourite with staff and young people this year. It had an excellent impact for some young people who have secured their levels and now moved to higher levels in English and Maths. It has been delivered creatively and in a way on a 1:1basis with a whole school involvement. Young people have stated they were not embarrassed of what they couldn’t do as no peers would know. It has also been the most positive feedback lesson from staff in their appraisals as they have been able to develop their own resources, use their ideas and implement this with each young person. It has impacted on all.**
* **Using OCN Accreditation has been positive again this year. As their units are so wide and diverse, it allows you to blend into all areas and then personalise further. We have excellent relationships with our Business Manager and it was a pleasure to see them guest speak at last years Prom about our young people’s achievements.**
* **Introduction of lunch time activities have had a positive impact on behaviour, social skills and fun. Reading Club has allowed young people to access different books and books have been ordered in to suit. Young people have also asked to take books home to read where previously they would not have done in school. Walking Club allowed one young man to build positive male role model relationship and open up about his eating habits, anxieties etc. This was then addressed through walking communication and improvements were seen.**
* **Games Club – Bingo, Connect 4, Monopoly and Stop the Bus became firm lunchtime favourites. It built relationships between staff and peers, and increased social skills. Young people asked for this daily as they enjoyed it so much.**
* **Camp COVID – Food Tasting. Linking food and culture to our thematic teaching allowed young people to taste, try and rate food from other countries. We also had themed food weeks to include – Budget Meals, Slow Cooker Meals, and Takeaways, Vegetarian etc so young people could taste and try simple foods. After each meal, an evaluation would take place where adjectives were embedded into learning to extend their vocabulary.**
* **Total young people educated by Stepping Stones this year = 20**
* **Consisted of = 10 day pupils**
* **Consisted of = 10 LAC (Young Foundations)**

**IMPACT****Positive External Destinations**

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| **Initials** | **LAC/DAY** | **COURSE/DESTINATION** | **DATE** |
| NC | LAC/DAY | Adult Education – Health and Social Care | Sept 2020 |
| OC | LAC | Health & Social Care Level 1 – Bishop Auckland College | Sept 2020 |
| JH | LAC | Redcar College – Foundation Learning | Sept 2020 |
| HM | DAY | Waiting Outcome |  |
| TRW | LAC | NWHC – Hair and Beauty Level 1 | Sept 2020 |
| AG | Day | Home Education | 3/4/20 |
| RG | LAC | Placement Move/Home Tuition | 20/9/19 |
| JK | LAC | Coventry College – Level 1 Science | 8/6/20 |
|  |  | **Total Percentage** | **40%** |

**Remaining at Stepping Stones for further year**

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| **Initials** | **LAC/DAY** | **Local Authority** | **Destination and Commissioned** |
| RB | LAC | Stoke on Trent LA | Stepping Stones |
| LM | LAC | Bromley LA | Stepping Stones |
| RW | DAY | Coventry LA | Stepping Stones |
| DC | DAY | Warwickshire LA | Stepping Stones |
| MV | DAY | Staffordshire LA | Stepping Stones |
| TB | DAY | Coventry LA | Stepping Stones |
| TPG | DAY | Warwickshire LA | Stepping Stones |
| MaC | DAY | Staffordshire LA | Stepping Stones |
|  |  | **Total Percentage** | **40%** |

**Other Leavers 19/20 - Destination**

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| **Leavers Initials** | **LAC/DAY** | **Destination** | **Date** |
| MC | Day | Hospitalisation | 19/3/20 |
| LR | LAC | Hospitalisation/Placement Move | 2/3/20 |
| EG | LAC | Hospitalisation/Placement Move | 24/1/20 |
| DP | Day | NEET – Prospects Referral | 20/7/20 |
|  |  | **Total Percentage** | **20%** |

* **Summary = 80% Positive destinations.**
* **Out of Education Prior to Stepping Stones longer than 6 months = 50%**
* **Young People registered with Stepping Stones 2018/19 and remained for further year 2019/20 = 35%**

**‘Stepping Stones educates some of the most vulnerable young people across the UK with severe Mental Health issues and Complex Needs. To see the young people succeed in a safe, inspiring environment, building futures through their education, is the most rewarding experience we can have. We are proud of all young people and their achievements however big or small and we always continue to promote their successes’.** |
| **Areas for Improvement:*** **Further premises to be able to reach more vulnerable young people to include Key Stage 2 and a Post 16 Provision**
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| **QUALITY OF EDUCATION (CURRICULUM)** |
| **We judge the Quality of Education as Outstanding and evidence meeting the criteria for both Good and Outstanding securely and consistently:** **Evidence:*** All subject areas have impact and implementation recognised and embedded in their schemes, lessons and delivery. All embedded across the whole curriculum
* All ‘My Day’ forms reflect Intent, impact and implementation and young people understand what it means, recognise what they have learned, knowledge gained and helps with retaining achievements.
* All staff work to a common theme and share the same aim, understanding, empathy and goal for each young person. Curriculum is bespoke yet broad, balanced and has a good range of depth also. This avoids ‘mixed messages’ to young people and can work with boundaries and expectations.
* All YP are baselined and considered holistically. Initially, trust is formed and relationships built. This allows for resilience and a safe place identified before putting pressurised demands of tests. This approach allows truer results to reflect levels and anxiety. Head leads on assessments and assesses prior to meeting, by gathering information from all parties, speaking to the young person prior to moving in or starting. Head then produces a ‘bullet point’ Protective/Risk Factors to inform staff before meeting a new young person to reduce unknown areas. Teachers are informally assessing from the start and when we have received prior information, this is considered also.
* The aim of the curriculum is to form trusting relationships and environment, identify gaps, close or narrow these gaps, build resilience, stretch and challenge (in all ways – academic, social, emotional, environmental), re-motivate, re-engage, re-inspire and show they can achieve and succeed in their journey.
* All SOW are in place for each subject. They show the three I’s as standardised and are reflected in the sequencing and delivery of the curriculum. Curriculums are recognising ‘spiky profiles’ allowing differentiation and are bespoke to address this.
* All work is 100% internally verified after delivery to ensure high quality work and expectations. All unit workbooks are pre-Iv’d also to ensure teaching is relevant, high standard, creative and embraces interests, learning styles, stretch & challenge opportunities and now pre and post learning quizzes to measure long term memory retention and prior knowledge and understanding. This gives excellent starting point information. End of term quizzes to highlight long term memory knowledge with fun outcomes for achievement to be in place in September.
* Pupils work is consistently high to reflect each individuals starting point. This maybe from stretch & challenge to be able to engage in a classroom setting, to accepting a different environment, being with a peer, to learning skills and retaining learning in a different way. All pupil work is marked through the ‘two stars and a wish’ marking system and feedback is given at the end of each lesson to capture learning objectives, stretch & challenge opportunities, impact and positive praise. Expectations are high and individual’s self-esteem and motivation rewarded through the Stepping Stones Reward system. Pupils report they enjoy (Student Voice) achieving and gaining qualifications. Their distance travelled, smaller steps are captured through ‘I Can’ Trees and this adds motivation and pride. Closing the Gap sessions give opportunities to build learning that has been previously missed or not retained. This is baselined using BKSB, prior achievement and teacher assessment. Teaching on a 1:1 basis in Maths and English around unsecured prior learning to be addressed with minimal embarrassment, low demand and in safe learning space has given positive results. Young people are being reassessed once a programme of targeted learning has been delivered and teacher confident young person will achieve. This then allows a young person to move to the next area or level confidently. Teaching and Learning auditing takes place in the form of lesson visits, reflective supervision, Teacher feedback, TA feedback, tutorials, student voice, SIA input, Educational Psychologist Q&A. Parent and stakeholder feedback collated and points (positive and negative) taken on board. Weekly strategy meetings are held with SLT to monitor progress, auditing, outcomes and achievements (holistic and academic). ‘My Day’ daily tracking is shared with stakeholders on daily basis to allow all to share in the progress, outcomes and achievement.
* Pupils (all) have been out of education settings for a considerable time. This is mainly due to their vulnerability, mental health, complex needs or/and social needs. Therefore, most (90%) have not come from a positive education starting point. Stepping Stones prides itself in having high expectations, aspirations and dreams for each of the young people who access our education. Bespoke, differentiated education programmes are designed to allow all young people to be able to access our education. This varies from outreach at home, Valley House Nurture Hub, Community learning, infill to College programmes and Mortimer House. This allows each young person’s worries and anxieties to be addressed to reduce stress around learning. By offering such a range of ways of education, we have engaged young people, built self-confidence, and encouraged qualification achievement, which in turn has built positive next steps. Outcomes of 309 unit qualifications to include Functional Skills and Open College Network accreditation shows the impact of positive learning this year. Six young people have left us to return to schools, mainstream and special, home tutoring, College, 6th Form and Adult Education. Three young people unfortunately returned to hospital due to their mental health being compromised and being too unwell at present to be back in the community. Others have had opportunities to undertake volunteering opportunities (Cheeky Chimps Nursery, Foodbank), fundraising (Anesis Homeless Charity – Xmas Fayre) and look at future career paths and gain employability skills enhances their future options. Pathways from home learning to then being able to access our main site encourages independence and life skills. It builds resilience around peer friendships, environments and allows access to a broader curriculum with further qualifications and embeds social skills and tolerance. Each young person recognises their journey through the tree system. One parent feedback from a potential school place visit stated ‘The lovely details like the ‘I Can Tree’ were so thoughtful and the individual timetables looked very interesting’. This highlights their starting points, their goals and their ‘smallest’ of achievements. Only one young person has joined the School with prior achievement. This was gained in a Tier 4 service previously.

**GOOD** **Intent*** Our curriculum is well thought through, challenging and broad. It encompasses areas of growth, career, skills, vocational and Independence alongside the core. We change, adapt and review regularly to ensure it offers a good level of impact to our young people and their lives. We look at the impact of education for the ‘whole child’ and not just academic areas. Most of our children are either looked after, on Child Protection plans or have extremely disadvantaged backgrounds. This is in addition to their Mental Health and Educational needs. We are constantly looking to improve or offer further areas as the needs of the child change. All our subjects are inclusive, risk enabled, socially, culturally, spiritually and morally designed, with British Values underpinning all we do. By allowing fluidity, it allows for us to offer ‘Education around the Child’ approach and drives the positive results and outcomes we achieve.
* Our curriculum is planned and considers the outside offers. For example, a young person who wanted to access Health & Social through College, had the course scaled down to offer no qualifications this year. As this would have been a negative move, SS decided we had the vocational skillset to deliver H & S at Level 1 and Level 2. This was approved by our exam board, and has been delivered this year. This has also included a volunteering programme at a Nursery to embed her learning, experiences and put into real life practice skills gained. This will give her a solid basis to re-apply to College next year to continue her studies. All Schemes of Work are monitored, pre-checked and approved by our Teaching and Learning Lead. Employability is strong and all career paths taken into account when delivering this subject to be able to tailor delivery around this. We work in conjunction with Virtual Schools, stakeholders and young person to listen to the pathway plans regarding home, education and future careers. We draw on the local authority networks to provide independent careers advice, work with Prospects whilst keeping impartial The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of the young people and Stepping Stones will ‘buy in’ areas that we don’t currently offer if a young person has a desire to learn something new and different. We have done this previously through Japanese lessons, or Narrow boating etc. We have an excellent partnership with two Agencies which we use regularly and understands our offer and needs as a School. This enables a headhunting exercise for specific targeted areas of teaching and a good match for our learners. All staff are employed on long term basis as this is beneficial to our young people when building relationships and trust.
* Pupils study the whole curriculum. This needs to be done with thought in some areas ie. RE. For our young people, stand-alone subjects such as this is not well received. Therefore, to be able to get this across, it is delivered and streamlined into other areas and subjects such as SMSC, Prevent Awareness, PSHE, Faith visits, Wellbeing and celebrating religious events. We normally (COVID Impacted) hold Cultural Days every 6 weeks to encourage young people to think, research and celebrate other faiths, cultures and ways of life. Languages are also embedded into this through audio, video and books to expand learning and knowledge. With the demand from local authorities to be able to reach younger learners this year, work has been developing around the Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure where our qualifications and outcomes are our usual focus, we are now identifying areas in the Key stage 3 and also at times, Key stage 2 which have gaps for our young people which we can now apply through lessons and assessment.

**Implementation*** All staff have extensive SEN experience and excellent subject knowledge. Core teachers are well matched to their area of expertise and subjects they enjoy to deliver. This is evident in their delivery. It also allows for further growth of subjects in the curriculum where new staff bring new areas and subjects to offer. Vocational tutors (unqualified) are peered with an SEN Teacher in class and for mentoring to maximise educational and learning experiences. This gives a ‘win win’ for each child to gain vocational/life skills but teaching and learning is also paramount leading to retained knowledge and qualifications.
* Teachers present their work in a clear unitised or creative way. All workbooks are pre-Iv’d to proofread and offer advice, coaching etc if needed. Teachers engage in discussion in all their areas and quite regularly, cross curricular areas of mapping in each other subject when opportunities have arose. Regular quizzes, competitions and question and answer, confirm learning and knowledge gained. Feedback at the end of each piece of work, unit or assessment is given verbally and written. Feedback on each lesson is recorded on the ‘My Day’ for the young person to see how they have done and reflect. Daily reflection gives an opportunity to reflect on the overall day, to include positive feedback, things they have enjoyed or not enjoyed and what skills they have gained. All staff are involved in reflection and then this is fed into the school handover to staff at the end of the day.
* With regular team meetings and strategy meetings, areas that young people have been working on is shared amongst the team. The team is encouraged to think ‘outside the box’ and think how they can embed those skills into their lesson. It is an excellent time to share good practice and share positive impacts and creativity regularly between the team. A curriculum map for maths, English and science is within each teacher and TA folder to allow for subjects to give examples of how they are embedding the core and how they may be able to revisit to check understanding in their own lessons at a later date. End of term quizzes and assessments capture knowledge retained.
* Assessment is in many forms. From observation, Q & A, written, quizzes, pre-quizzes, prior learning, base lines, self-checklist, RAG rating prior knowledge (KS3/KS2). Assessment tools are useful, but staff also differentiate assessment for each learner as their preferred way. Staff report they enjoy being creative and having the freedom to assess in individual ways. This is recorded in written feedback.
* Barriers to learning are discussed for each young person and shared throughout staff team. This regularly reviewed through staff meetings, handover and debrief and strategy time. These barriers may be shared with Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist and Forensic Psychologist for guidance. Strategies and interventions are discussed with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure practice is robust, effective and reviewed.
* Majority of resources used by teachers and TAs are bespoke and may have a generic purpose but are then personalised for each young person and their areas of interest. For example, follow instructions OCN qualification can be blended around all areas of life and work. If we have a young person who is interested in animals, these instructions will blend around this area of interest ie: Follow Instructions to groom. Whereas, another young person may be interested in cookery, and therefore follow Instructions by following a recipe. This gives an immediate interest for each young person, personalises the learning, makes it relevant and captures enthusiasm as they are doing tasks they enjoy. One young person had a fascination with phones. He had been out of education two years. All his work from maths to English etc was based around phone activities. Closing the Gap is an exceptional way of demonstrating this, where game consoles where used to embed, teach and retain the subject of ‘time’. This had a huge impact allowing the young person to then undertake assessment, secure this subject area, close gaps and then move up a level in his Maths through achievement and self-confidence. Classrooms and corridors display constant reminders of good/excellent work, positive memories and WOW wall displays areas of outstanding achievement for each young person. The tutorial room displays positive quotes and rewards gained and working towards. The school itself, portrays a warm, welcoming feel which is not daunting for a young person or their family. It is sympathetically decorated to display work, information and memories without too much fuss for our sensory learners. Staff and young people wear the school t-shirt to show a sense of belonging and unitedness
* All young people are baselined to allow staff to be able to gauge areas of strength and development. For most of our young people, re-engaging into education is their biggest initial fear and barrier. Once relationships are established and trust starts to form, stretch and challenge can be embedded further and new boundaries and benchmarks can be applied. The introduction of ‘Closing the Gap’ this year has given targeted intervention in a safe space to explore areas identified by baselining. Targeted, fun activities help re embed this missed/absent learning which in turn has driven positive results. One young learner was taught time using ‘Mario Karting’. He gained confidence, evidenced his progress, was reassessed and has now moved up a level in maths. Each subject will push demand in all forms to build resilience and recognition of ‘I Can Do’ mentality emerges. Teaching and Learning lead with the Head will ensure the curriculum is appropriate, broad, balanced and has impact towards the learning and retention. Curriculums can change and amend, dependent of need of child, their journey, career path and their wishes. This is carefully planned and rigorously thought through prior to change to ensure this is the correct pathway for this child at this point.
* This year a Reading Club has been introduced to capture further reading opportunities. Young people have been involved in wanting this and now we have a lunchtime book club. This has members who want to read more and have quiet time to be able to do so. Books can also be taken home if required.
* Younger children will have opportunities through their subjects to practise their phonics and closing the Gap will give a 1:1 targeted approach if needed. All subject areas to include vocational, embed maths and English at every opportunity to allow maximum input.
* All teachers and TA’s have a high education level and this is shown in their work. They are well qualified in their field and explore understanding of language, meaning and vocabulary at every opportunity.
* End of Year Prom is a huge way to celebrate a young person’s success and journey whilst at Stepping Stones. The School loves to showcase the results (distance travelled and academic) of young people who face so many barriers in life and learning. This promotes the ‘I Can’ attitude and it celebrated with staff, students, parents, carers, our exam board, stakeholders and external agencies. This is the best event of the year.

\*Please note – due to COVID this event has been postponed until Xmas 2020. However, an on -site celebration took place instead. |
| **Areas for Development*** **More pre-post quizzes and end of term quizzes embedded as standardised**
* **Pre IV Audit Form created – more user friendly**
* **Further development of KS2/3 curriculum to ensure fully in place for younger pupils as KS3 pupils increasingly requiring a place. Also further staff training in relation to the teaching of KS3 curriculum and understanding of how pupils learn; expectations of their previous KS2 learning and outcomes: ensuring breadth and depth and an awareness of requirements for pupils potentially moving back into mainstream. Booked for 27/8/20.**
* **Refinement of assessment for KS3 linked to curriculum development.**
* **SOWs standardised to include SMSC, British Values, SRE and the Three I’s.**
* **Capturing Opportunities to be embraced in lessons and evidenced to show further learning opportunities.**
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| **BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES** |
| **We judge Behaviour and Attitudes as Outstanding and evidence meeting the criteria for both Good and Outstanding securely and consistently:** **Evidence:*** All young people maintain they feel safe in school. Attendance currently 91.9% (July 2020) shows the impact of a consistently safe environment. School is recognised by stakeholders, parents, staff and young people as being ‘like home’ and has a warm, positive feel to it. Wall displays promote positivity and achievement, from the Well- being board, to Rewards Board, WOW board and activity displays showing how proud we are of the things we all do. Head of Education promotes ‘open door’ policy for young people and staff. Head regularly mixes with young people and staff to show she is interested in everyone and each person and child matters. Head Teacher Awards have been issued to young people for outstanding helpfulness, work, achievement or just kindness. Each young person is encouraged to recognise everyone is on their own journey, will have good and bad days, but each lesson/day is a fresh start. Conversations regarding others are ‘shut down’ immediately to avoid confrontations, emotions and negativity. Instead, kindness is encouraged with positive reinforcement of being on the receiving end. Small class sizes allow for young people to feel much supported and not to be overwhelmed. This calmness then keeps incidents to the minimum. All staff in handover and debrief and in meetings, are encouraged regularly to read the young person’s files. This then has allowed empathy and understanding to be enforced and allows a teacher to be able to be sensitive around areas which may cause triggers. Incidents in Stepping Stones School are extremely low and very rare. If a young person is struggling, it is normally internalised. Staff are excellent at assessing risk, ‘tool checking’ through lessons and de-escalation. Foundations For Safer Care keep everyone safe, and promotes de-escalation as its most effective measure, and safe hold as a last resort.
* When young people join, they are assigned a keyworker. This person will help a young person settle in, help settle into the routines and expectations of behaviour in school. We encourage young people to produce Communication Passports which allow others to recognise areas of anxiety, positivity and strategies. Some young people are happy to share with their peers as this also helps peers understand. This year, this has been really successful and teachers also have commented in their Reflective Supervision they have also found it really useful. Young people who struggle to verbalise, find this method easier for others to understand them.
* Attendance was maintained very high (91.9%) despite COVID affecting everyone. Daily wellbeing checks, register marks, DfE and Local Authority Register reporting were compliant and active at all times. Daily well- being checks (telephone and visit) through COVID took place to ensure well-being, safety and safeguarding. Parents commented **‘It was nice to talk to staff every day, even for me feeling so lonely through COVID although I know you were checking on my son’.** As a transition school, our main aim is to be able to move a young person on to a positive destination, therefore attendance figures are paramount for us to positively report to the next Provider. Young people are constantly reminded of this. However, we find young people want to come to school (COVID feedback) and love the normality of school life. If a young person struggles due to poor sleep patterns, we have a second intake time of 11am and lunch as natural breaks. This was brought in to allow lessons to flow calmly without interruptions. It also allowed the arriving young person to join in at an appropriate time without missing the start of a lesson. This has then reduced incidents, anxieties and allowed smoother lessons for all including staff.
* Each morning and night we hold handover and debrief. This is done for risk management, amendment of lesson or subject if needed, discussion and handover from the homes of any relevant information needed for the day. It helps us be ready for the young person attending school, shows strong communication between staff, management and homes. This then gives the same message to the young person avoiding miscommunication or to keep boundary setting.
* All young people and staff show upmost respect for each other. Staff are known by their first names and respect is reinforced at every opportunity. For a young person to feel it is ok to have light-heartedness/positive attitudes with staff, is a positive social and emotional achievement. Boundaries are reminded, but confidence to be able to enjoy staff’s company is paramount to enjoying and achieving in education. Young people state ‘they enjoy laughing with staff’ and feel safe to do so. (Student Voice)
* This year the introduction of the ‘Student Worry Box’ has been utilised as another way to state feelings without having to verbalise it. This has resulted in a purchase for a weighted blanket, further rewards and also an opportunity to discuss in Student Voice if, for safety or other reasons, we also will need to say no. For example, one young person wanted a hot water bottle when ill in school. We had to explain the dangers of this and why we would not be able to facilitate that item. Once explained, the young person understood.
* This year has seen the introduction of the ‘My Day’ forms. This captures the three I’s, Learning Objectives, Stretch and Challenge, Behaviours, Achievement and is RAG rated. Young people all start with Green as positive start to the lesson, but may descend through the traffic light system if not meeting the above expectations. This has a very positive affect on our young people, as they don’t like to achieve anything but Green! This is then fed into a spreadsheet for staff and young people to identify patterns. This may be a subject, teacher or lesson that seems to be regularly problematic, therefore gives the school a chance to investigate patterns and therefore address.
* 1:1 tutorials are timetabled weekly. More often if needed. Again, this allows reasons to be explored and changes made if necessary.
* Raffle Tickets (Bronze, Silver, and Gold) can be earned. Young people choose their own rewards to make it personalised and more focussed. Each young person is aware how they achieve these.
* Tailoring curriculum around areas of interests can promote positive attitudes and behaviours. All young people are aware they need to accomplish subjects not so favourable to gain in subjects they wish to do. This builds resilience for the outside world.
* Positive praise and continual reminders that we care, are interested and proud has had such good results. Many of our young people have not received positive comments and at times, they find this difficult. However, the WOW wall captures their achievements (in all areas) and the I CAN TREE supports this. Young people enjoy putting their leaves on and seeing it grow.
* Stepping Stones has had two accusations of bullying this year. We held restorative justice between two peers immediately following this as they were both struggling with their peer relationships but following the action, no further complaints were made. This is evidenced through the tutorial system. Additional relationship education was input for one young person also to allow time and space to explore what is a positive relationship. RIVO reporting system informs Directors, Regional Directors and stakeholders immediately.
* All young people have covered E-safety as part of their curriculum this year. This embeds the importance of using the Internet and social media. Occasionally in school, it has been brought to our attention that friendships have fallen out over social media. Therefore, through Camp Covid – another thematic week was introduced to reinforce. All young people and staff signed an Acceptable Usage Agreement and whilst distance learning, parents were asked to sign and agree also whilst we were providing laptops and dongles in the home.
* No young person has been excluded from Stepping Stones as per policy supports this as the ultimate last resort and will only be considered with a return plan in place. One young person was struggling with her mental health and aggression, and after an incident, a discussion with Coventry SEND Lead, ECHP Co-ordinator, parent etc, was agreed to take the demand of education away on site for one week whilst completing Independent study at home. This had a positive effect, work was completed and a safe return to school followed. All parties were pleased this was an alternative to exclusion and had not left a negative mark on her education file.
* The school promotes ‘consequences’ to actions. This involves a tutorial, restorative justice, staff informing and each day a new start. The consequences may vary from letter writing, apology, strategies to say kind words to others, peer to peer mediation. This works well within Stepping Stones as our young people recognise others and their vulnerabilities. They are reminded each has their own starting point, journey, goal, culture, beliefs etc and this is to be respected. Most of our young people have suffered previously through excessive bullying, peer on peer abuse, anxiety, worry, racism etc and have empathy for each other and their feelings. We also deliver qualifications around feelings and emotions, relationships, safety and resilience to reinforce our message. We have had no reports of discriminative or prejudicial behaviour.
* The school has positive quotes on the walls, safe spaces, quiet areas, worry boxes (staff and students) and very positive relationships with young people. There are always staff available to have a discussion with, confide in and listened to. This is evident in the small amount of incidents with such a highly vulnerable cohort.
* All staff employed at Stepping Stones hold our vision, values and culture. A piece of work completed by the Head of Education based on Daniel Coyle’s Culture Code is found through the school (and at the end of this report) and highlights how this is embedded in Stepping Stones. I strongly believe all staff use these skills in school every day and is evident in the relationships built between all.
* Parents’ feedback (Stakeholder Survey, emails, PEPs, LACs) have stated their child’sbehaviour and attitudes outside of school have improved dramatically. They attribute this to the work the school undertake to reinforce positivity. This is regularly reported the change in the behaviours at home are positive.
* The school consistently want the best for all our young people. We promote their well-being, the progression and their strengths at every opportunity. We work with the local community to allow our young people to be accepted in and outside of school. We work with the local PCSOs, local businesses and sports facilities to promote excellent behaviours and this has allowed (before lockdown) for us to utilise the local community to use facilities such as the SnowDome, parks, cafes and town centre. When local Police visited, they were very impressed they did not know we had been in the area for two years, and asked us to remain like that as the behaviours were excellent from the school.
* We recognise every young person is at a different stage. We also recognise ‘stage not age’ may be a barrier and therefore all education, approach and strategies are personalised for each young person. However, the expectations are high, fairness is paramount and risk taking and responsibility will lie with each young person. This has to be evident for the success of moving on in their education pathway to external opportunities.
* Strategies are implemented with each young person. This may be from strategy cards, time out, a quick walk, listen to music, tutorials, choice of activity (maximum 3) redirection, sensory cloths, sensory toys or playing music. This can be personalised for each young person. Behaviours will not disrupt lessons and each young person redirected from the room if de-escalation ineffective at that time.
* All young people state ‘they feel safe in school’. They can all identify who to go to if they were upset, someone had upset them or they heard something that offended them. Unit qualifications and thematic teaching has allowed further opportunities to deliver Anti-bullying Week, Cultural Week, SMSC week, Black Lives Matter Week etc. Presentations have also been produced as part of a distance learning (through COVID) to reinforce the long term memory, thoughts and feelings.
* When accessing student files from previous schools and as part of the assessment, regularly negative comments are written by previous schools to include exclusions, bad language, violence, threatening behaviour towards others and violence to staff. At Stepping Stones this year, incidents have been minimal and mainly self-injurious. This has occurred following unsettled times at home, education demand, parental absence and uncertainty of moving from home. No incidents have been intentional to hurt staff or other peers deliberately leading for further feelings of safety for young people and staff.
* Lunch Clubs to include Reading Club, Walking Club, Music Club and Games Club has reduced unstructured times. We have also shortened the lunch breaks to allow less time for anxiety to grow. This has again, had a positive impact on all.
* Peers show much empathy for each other and dislike to see another young person upset. Peer Mentors were introduced for this role and was voted in using Democracy in Student Voice. This role boosts confidence of our Peer Mentors, gives them a purpose and helps other young people settle when they are new or struggling.
* All of our young people were previously out of education (except returners) this year and all didn’t have a positive previous schooling experience. Some of our young people cannot yet discuss their previous experiences without becoming upset. Attendance is extremely high (91.9%) and throughout COVID, students reported missing school (well-being checks). Distance Learning, Group Zoom lessons and Virtual Band were formed to allow peers to see each other, know staff were still there alongside their other academic input. Young people were ringing the Teacher Helpline to access help with their studies and the daily well-being checks became hour long conversations with students for a chat and catch up!
* Young people enjoy the variety offered at Stepping Stones. They are free to try and gain new skills whilst closing Gaps in main academic areas. This allows them to succeed in an area without failing to try. Young people are always asking for other opportunities or learning outings. This has been particularly hard this year with the lack of facilities we could access, but they have stored ideas and we will revisit when lockdown ends.
* In October, we shared a Mental Health Awareness Day in school. This was an opportunity for all to celebrate Mental Health and to show it does not define us. Some young people chose to write their stories and share along with staff who felt comfortable to do so. Some just listened. This was extremely moving, and each and every person felt it was a pivotal moment in Stepping Stones School. Young people realised staff have their own journeys and likewise. Everyone showed upmost respect for each other and all agreed it was a day to be remembered.
* Taking into account the starting point of all our young people, their behaviours, attitudes and confidence have grown immensely and they behave consistently well. Young people take part in musical performances, congratulating each other’s targets, recognising outcomes, singing in public, supporting each other successes, engaging in conversations with outside Guest Speakers, fundraising, seeing young people secure College places, School places and making friendships outside of their own lives, is inspirational.
* Young people participate in working with Kervin Julien – Anesis Homeless Charity. They listen to the story of homelessness, put their own stories on hold, and focus on raising better lives for others through fundraising. They recognise each other’s times of trauma, anxiety and give support not judgement. They have grown in resilience, empowered and look forward to their future in education.
* As a School, I have no concern in taking our young people into the Community, embracing new experiences safe in the knowledge that their behaviours, attitudes and with robust risk assessments, we can risk enable not disable and restrict. This is an imperative part of their life skills and future development.
* At the end of each day, Reflection takes place. This allows time to reflect on the day, look at areas to improve but also celebrate outcomes (personal & academic) achieved that day. This allows young people to leave school positively.
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| **Areas for Improvement:*** **Consider next steps: Working with younger pupils –Yr 7/8 to promote school ethos and expectations and enable them to learn from role models? – Peer Mentor Scheme**
* **Support younger pupils to self -manage their behaviour**
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| **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT** |
| **We judge Personal Development as Outstanding and evidence meeting the criteria for both Good and Outstanding securely and consistently:** **Evidence:*** Stepping Stones School prides itself on its exceptional personalised, holistic approach to looking at the whole young person not just education. Stepping Stones ethos is to help a young person grow, you need to factor in all parts of a person’s life to maximise success. This is evident in the broad, personalised curriculum which offers subjects driven by young people’s key learning and interests. These include options (chosen wherever possible by young people), vocational, Preparation for Adulthood and academic. Our new brochure produced recently showcases this. However, all subjects are considered, and Stepping Stones will promote and seek further opportunities and staffing wherever possible. Thematic teaching allows opportunities to re-embed subjects again such as e-safety, SRE, SMSC, PSHE, Culture Weeks, Life-skills and Preparing for Adulthood for a more rounded learning experience. Tiniest of steps are captured through the ‘I CAN’ Tree, to celebrate such basic skills such as tying shoelaces, managing to stay in a room with other peers, being kind, completing a lovely piece of work or good attendance. All these skills are just as important and young people enjoy adding leaves to showcase their achievements.
* Student Voice is another opportunity to be able to talk freely, discuss topics of interest, learn from others and share ideas. This has been particularly successful when discussing Democracy (electing Peer Mentors), SMSC (British Values/Racism in Cultures – Brown Eye/Blue Eye experiment – Jane Elliot) had a profound effect on the young people and is still being discussed weeks later. It is also a time to discuss feelings in school, respecting each other, build confidence with social skills and explore society expectations as a responsible citizen. This has been a good way to link to community figures (PCSCOs, NCS, and Anesis Homeless Charity) and bring new unfamiliar figures/status in a positive approach to alleviate fears and misconceptions and build relationships and trust. Prior to the PCSO Knife Amnesty visit, young people stated ‘I hate Police’ but afterwards, they then agreed they had better respect for someone doing a very intense job.
* Community visits and utilising local facilities have also added breadth to the offer. Visits to Snow Dome, Rock Climbing, local walks, Bike Hire, Tamworth Castle, local town centres, Function Rooms, Hoar Park Farm, local cafes (ordering and budgeting), (Plans to visit a range of Places of Worship – postponed due to COVID), visiting and feeding lambs on site, Christmas Meal – Snooker Hall and Lucky Tails Alpaca Farm.
* Vocational subjects this year have been extended to include more purposeful options to compliment Preparing to Adulthood. These have included DIY Skills, Health and Safety, Wallpaper hanging, Domestic Skills, Gardening, Bike Maintenance, Independence Skills, Cooking on a Budget, Food Hygiene, Budgeting, Making Timber products, Landscaping etc. This has allowed our young people to prepare for independent living, gain qualifications in these areas and be more self-sufficient.
* All young people study a qualification (level/age permitting 14+) in Prevent Awareness. This is offered at a differentiated in house level for those who are too young or too low level to make this subject inclusive and relevant to all. This is then embedded again in British Values and cross curricular at all opportunities (such as Student Voice, SMSC, PSHE). This gives a greater understanding of Radicalisation and the impact. Again, Safeguarding Level 1 has been achieved by 3 young people studying Health & Social Care and again, underpinned cross curricular to ensure all young people’s understanding.
* Worry boxes have been introduced this year to allow young people to voice their concerns in a different way. This gives young people to record their worries if they do not feel able to voice them. This has led to us finding young people may have things on their mind but do not know how to tell us. This strategy has helped us identify worries, act upon them, and signpost to the correct support. It has also made the team more aware in handovers, so they are more prepared and to switch to a more low demand pressure if needed. Tutorials will also follow this up to make sure the issue is resolved. Staff also have their own worry box which works in the same way.
* This year we have evidenced cross mapping of certain aspects of Independent Standards April 2019. Protected Characteristics, Maths, English, Science, SRE/LGBT and e-safety are all evidenced and mapped across the curriculum. This will now be an action to embed into all Schemes of Work as further evidence when is has been discussed, learned or taught.
* This year we have had an Agency Teacher using a wheelchair. This initially caused anxieties in some of our young people but once discussed, a unanimous level of respect as to how you can achieve anything regardless of circumstances were felt amongst the young people and reported to staff.
* Culture Days and the introduction of My World gave opportunities to explore different cultures, religions, languages and traditions. Young people took part in this virtually and face and face and again, opened up conversations and discussions with regards to respecting others.
* All young people are involved in all areas of schooling, regardless of age, levels, gender, race, religion or belief. Young people are ‘grouped’ by need not age or stage. This allows for peer mentoring opportunities, increased confidence and differentiated age experiences to be shared. The work in the group is differentiated and no young person is made to feel disadvantaged.
* Closing the Gap was introduced this year to address ‘areas for development’ identified from the diagnostic results of baselining. This is the sessions that are taught on a 1:1 basis purely to avoid embarrassment, build confidence and upskill in a safe environment. This has had excellent results and at least three young people have moved up a complete level in their baselining through this intervention (pre COVID). When young people were taught on site, the environment was not as conducive to learning and social distancing meant barriers to our approach. Closing the Gap was still delivered, but I feel impact was less in increasing young people’s levels due to restrictions.
* Therapeutic lessons are on the curriculum to allow young people to express themselves in different ways. In Music this year, four young people used lyric writing to communicate their thoughts and feelings. This was then passed on to Clinical Teams in MDT and Care Management meetings as a tool to explore further. In Yoga, time was given in the timetable for young people to engage in Yoga sessions if they wish to allow time for relaxation, stress management and mindfulness.
* Every LAC young person has time to talk with their Psychologist. This is identified as paramount in their wellbeing and needs to be recognised as a safe place to share their thoughts, feelings and current worries. Occasionally school subjects may be of a sensitive nature, therefore advice is sought from all the clinical teams helps inform our delivery.
* Every young person’s EHCP in Stepping Stones is overseen in an advisory capacity to make sure all targets, outcomes and needs are being met. Bi-monthly meetings with our Educational Psychologist allows time for the Head and team to meet, discuss, advise and inform practice for the very best outcomes. This has been very useful in times of presentations which may have changed and working with local authorities to make sure the information for each young person is correct, accurate and forward thinking.
* Unit accreditation boosts confidence and installs a better ‘I CAN’ attitude to learning. Most of our young people have no prior achievement, believe they cannot succeed, or gain qualifications. To see that they can achieve, the assessment is the main form of assessment rather than exam conditions, reduces their anxieties of failing. They are naturally completing the work without realising the impact this has. It is only when they see the achievement, receive the praise and are awarded their Raffle tickets, do they realise what they have done. Some young people enjoy the race for the most outcomes, others are just happy to see they can achieve (tutorials).
* Mental Health Awareness Day (Oct 19) had a huge impact on staff and young people. Biscuits were decorated, stories written and shared, A – Z Alphabet of Mental Health conditions, Reward chart stickers if they asked after others wellbeing, Mental Health quiz. We discussed strategies to use, what we find helpful and how this makes us feel better. Everyone agreed, staff and students, that it was an emotional day, but lots of fun and understanding. It was probably the biggest impact day and subject we hosted this year.
* Not only do we offer thematic teaching and OCN qualifications (See COVID 19 Steps) we also make sure we cover topics through Guest Speakers (PCSOs – PC Trow – Knife Amnesty, Gang Culture and Personal Safety, NCS and Homeless Charities). We planned to contact further Guest Speakers – Haven Women’s Refuge, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Staffordshire Women’s Aid, Young Minds, Faith visits, Foodbank etc until COVID lockdown commenced. This will now be planned for next year. These are contacts and trips we have visited prior and have been a huge success. E-safety is embedded in our school across all curriculums to allow acceptable usage and understanding dangers of the Internet.
* Due to restricted Sports facilities on site, we have to outsource this locally. We have used the local Snooker Hall Function Room this year to deliver sports such as Yoga, Healthy Lifestyles, Circuits, Dodge ball and other activities. We have accessed the Snow Dome for Rock Climbing, Parks and Bike Hire for Walking and cycling, local community for walks, boxing and Martial Arts. This has been a challenge as this is not the ideal solution and creates additional work in risk managing every environment individually. The plan for next academic year and once lockdown is reduced, we can contact local gyms such as Polesworth to see if we can access their facilities on a weekly basis.
* This year, we have introduced more lunch clubs to alleviate boredom and reduce anxieties. These have been Book Club, Walking Club, Games Club and Social Games (Bingo/Connect 4). These embed core skills really well, stretch and challenge, push resilience in peer socialisation and challenge and also make the environment fun.
* We have this year delivered SRE week. This has incorporated the statutory LGBT content (in readiness for September 2020). This has been differentiated at not only levels, age but also appropriateness for prior understanding. Due to the nature of our young people, this has been delivered sensitively and with guidance. As all staff are encouraged to read all file information on each young person, they are very aware of the trauma related for some. Therefore, extra caution was taken.
* Employability is one of our leading subjects and all young people, regardless of age receive this. As part of the Pathway Plan, it is imperative young person have a voice around their feelings and wishes, but also encouraged to look at their future career pathway. We stay impartial, and depending on the route for the young person with regard to their living arrangements (we house young people from all over the UK), we work in conjunction with Virtual Schools, parents, carers, young people, local authorities to support in whatever plan may be pursued. PEPs and EHCP Reviews lend ideally to these regular discussions to allow plans to form.
* This year our Work Experience/Volunteering programme has been hindered by COVID. One of our young persons had just started Cheeky Monkeys Nursery as part of her volunteering. Unfortunately her Mental Health declined and COVID was present so this opportunity had to be postponed. We have however, made links with local businesses (Bike Hire, Tamworth Castle, Local Café and Hairdressers) to build banks of opportunities ready for when we can restart.
* We offer unit qualification in ‘Making Choices’ to emphasise decision making and allowing reflection of the impact of right and wrong choices.
* This year, we initiated a new qualification ‘Level 1 – Wellbeing’. This was to allow deeper thinking into their own wellbeing and compliments PSHE Units. We have claimed 26 unit outcomes from this qualification for our young people.
* We offer an Understanding Relationships qualification to recognise positive relationships and how these are formed. Most of our young people do not have positive role models and may have witnessed poor relationships. This then impacts on their own perception of positive relationships with others. Stepping Stones is continually addressing this topic cross curriculum to demonstrate positive outcomes (social & emotional).
* Stepping Stones works hard with parents, carers and our local Children’s homes to make all aware of extra-curricular activities that young people can access and each meeting, enrichment activities are discussed to add value to learning and wellbeing.

(Alpaca details, Trampoline Parks, BMX trial parks, Yoga lessons)* For some of our young people, certain subjects may be rejected due to the complexity, deepness or misunderstanding around the topic. Therefore, the Stepping Stones rationale is to embed cross curricular and evidence through young person’s work and Schemes, its delivery. Religious Education, MFL and SRE are areas that can cause anxiety. To naturally embed and embrace these areas, makes the opportunities far more productive that to ‘force’ learning on a young person. For this reason, these subjects have been well received and some in depth, constructive discussions have been held (JH – RE Teacher), presentations produced and work displayed ‘My World’.
* All young people are helped to gain resilience. This may be through a simple game of Monopoly, to being sat in a classroom with others, to managing sensory stimulation etc. Young people are encouraged to ‘feel safe’ to be able to express themselves to others, gain trust of adults and peers, show tolerance of others, gain their voice (whilst being respectful) and growing in their personalities. This is evident in their changes to their characters, and the feedback we receive from parents, carers and stakeholders (see Thankyou book, End of Year evaluation).
* The school has their own Support Lead. She is also DDSL. She undertakes 1:1 tutorials, rewards, overall safety plans, Medication Reviews, Safeguarding, PEP Meetings (with support), Parent Liaison and any other duties required. She maximises TA support and disseminates it where and when needed additionally.
* Children are all support on the ratios required. Some are 2:1, 1:1 some independent. This is the ratio we are aiming for in readiness for external education provision.
* As a school, we do not offer lunches due to the environment. However, through Camp COVID we introduced ‘food sampling’. This fell in line with Cultural Week initially, but as a team we decided to then incorporate this into every day. This again had a theme such as; vegetarian week, store cupboard week, slow cooker week, takeaway week etc. This also ensured all our young people had something warm to accompany their lunches from home. It also added from a safeguarding perspective, to ensure each child was receiving some food/snacks whilst in school. The young people completed an evaluation daily, identified adjectives to describe taste, texture etc, gave feedback on the dish and all absolutely loved us doing it! We have had to remind parents and students this was a temporary infill, and unfortunately will be only offer once a week in the new academic year. (Feedback sheets).
* Throughout lockdown we escalated our wellbeing checks to daily. We spoke with parents, carers, stakeholders (Wellbeing forms) we completed ‘eyes on’ checks every 10 days where necessary and liaised with Social Workers, Family Support Workers etc to establish their checks. We had a Telephone Helpline for young people, sent ‘We miss you’ cards with relevant contact details on and to let all young people know we were thinking of them. We bought thankyou cards and chocolates to parents to thank them for their support throughout. We issued distance learning packages, zoom lessons, PPE, face to face and identified specific needs if necessary. We issued laptops, dongles (for those with no internet), guitars and keyboards for the virtual band and resources to include games, books, workbooks, unit qualifications and cameras to capture memories for their memory books.
* We encouraged independent study and used this opportunity to produce Presentations completed at home. We added Maths, English into these as a focus and gave the young person the independence to try learning without face to face support. These sessions were then backed with zoom oversight to guide and help completion. Young people ‘had a go’ independently and at lease produced some presentations which was excellent. Most of our young people require a high level of support in class, so this built their resilience, independence and study skill set.
* British Values is continually referred to in school. This may be present in all lessons, whether relevant to the subject or not. We refer to this as ‘capturing opportunities’ where if an opportunity arises, the topic is not dismissed as not relevant to the discussion by encouraged to explore before returning to the focus.
* Young people respect each other. They show empathy for each other. They respect each other’ journey, situation and pathway. This is evident in group discussions, times of incidents, and genuine concern for each other. Young people care for staff and likewise, this is seen through the strong trustful relationships evident in school. The impact means young people can talk to staff and each other if needed, this then reduces incidents and helps overcome worries. Staff are very good at reading body language in each young person, so they may intervene or de-escalate before it becomes heightened. This is reflected in our level of incidents. The Peer Mentor scheme this year has added another level of support between peers and has helped younger ones settle. Young people report they enjoy school and don’t like to see each other upset. If a young person is struggling, we would remove others or the young person from the vicinity, view or environment as to not distress others or the young person more. This works well and young people are always reminded everyone is on their own journey and have their own good and bad days. This then makes them reflect on their own journeys which helps them to process yet feel safe.
* Young people speak positively about school to their carers, parents and stakeholders. It is reported in PEPs, ECHP Reviews and general meetings young people enjoy school. Attendance also exceptionally high for those previously non-attenders/school refusers and therefore this shows young people want to be there. Through COVID, young people stated they missed us and school and likewise. Staff missed our young people and they were never far from their thoughts. Young people really wanted school to return to ‘normal’ throughout COVID and we were conscious we had to plan this not only for safety of all, but to be able to recreate ‘fun’ school in a different, purposeful, unique learning way so not to disappoint. Camp COVID was introduced for this purpose.
* Pupils welcome new intakes and work hard to make them feel part of us. Stepping Stones is referred to as our ‘own little family’ where everyone cares and wants the best for each young person. This is evident to see and is often commented on by visitors to the school. Stepping Stones is a place to belong and not just a school. Working as a team, young people and staff are united which then gives safety, happiness and opportunities.
* We have never been in a situation where we could not take a young person into the community due to increase behaviour risk. We have prided ourselves on the manners, approach and respectful way our young people behave in the community and this is praised and rewarded which shows it has been noted. Staffing levels are always paramount in planning to make sure if a young person did find it too much, we can adapt the activity to include all.
* Pupils take care of their surroundings and take pride in it. The school is not under constant repair where it feels like staff don’t care or take pride too. Very rarely have any incidents resulted in damage to property and again, we and young people don’t want to belong in an environment which is depressive and broken. All H & S is fully compliant, repairs required are actioned quickly, Independent Standards are adhered to and young people take part in landscaping the back garden, building bug hotels, planting and re-gravelling the areas. This shows pride and a want to have nice surroundings. (It’s also an opportunity to embed more qualifications and vocational learning!)
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| **Areas for Development*** **Independent Standards – Cross Ref into SOW (Protected Characteristics etc)**
* **ECDL ICT Qualification**
* **Closing the Gap Further Resource building**
* **More Planned specific Guest Speakers**
* **Find Sports facility to use permanently**
* **Update new SRE Policy**
* **Update Consent Form with amalgamated information**
* **End of Year Evaluation**
* **Review of themes covered to meet needs of younger pupils- KS3 Yr 7/8 in line with curriculum development for KS3**
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| **LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT** |
| **We judge Leadership and Management as Outstanding and evidence meeting the criteria for both Good and Outstanding securely and consistently:** Evidence:* Leadership in Stepping Stones School is a product of passion, empathy and high expectations and outcomes for all young people. The Head drives high standards and installs an ‘I CAN’ attitude amongst staff and young people. The school recognises poor self-esteem, the fear of failure or past experiences can hinder progress but the School constantly encourages all to move forward, keep trying and how learning and progress can be made in all different ways. The smallest steps are recognised and celebrated and to schools ethos is to empower and to strive to succeed. The School works in collaboration with Governance, Stakeholders, Young People, Local Authorities, Clinicians and outside external agencies to offer a ‘holistic, whole child’ approach. This drives results, outcomes and empathy for each individual’s situation. The Head offers an ‘open door’ policy to encourage staff, young people and others to come in and talk wherever possible. This is evident in the feedback from staff in meetings, appraisals and Reflective Supervision. The Head knows each young person individually and is actively seen in school and engaging whenever she can. The Head prides herself on the relationships she holds with young people, their parents and carers. All parents/Carers know the Head personally and this helps reassures fears and anxieties when a young person first joins school. Stakeholder feedback states ‘we are approachable’. The Head is actively involved in the Curriculum Offer, the Accreditation and the bespoke offer for each young person to make sure it is diverse, broad and relevant. The Head will use her connections and links gained through 20 years of teaching to open doors and opportunities to young people to broaden their experiences (Narrow boating, Fundraising, Guest Speakers etc). The Head visits lessons, inspects quality delivering, checks learning and participates in lessons at times to observe, and also not to be a stranger to young people. The Head insists on 100% IV process to ensure quality and this is evident in the EV report. The Head prides herself on the ‘creative’ out the box type of thinking and encourages her staff to use their initiative to empower their lessons and delivery styles by ‘doing it different’. This is a novel way of working for new staff, who are normally given an agenda to follow. The Heads thought process, is this is not personalised if she has told you what and how to do it. Staff contribute great ideas and this is evident in ‘Closing the Gap’ where each Teacher and TA have the responsibility of using their imagination to drive results. Once a young person has progressed or engaged well, this empowers both staff and students. This year, we have also ‘backed’ Vocational Tutors with qualified Teachers rather than TAs to maximise impact. This has given the young person the best experience by having to learn a vocational skill, but ensuring maximum quality teaching is delivered. It has also stretched and challenged staff in learning new skills from each other.
* Teachers wherever possible, are matched to deliver the subjects of their specialism, strength and areas of interest. This year we have delivered Drama which is a new one following a recruitment of a Drama Teacher. This has been a huge success, great feedback and young people have secured qualifications in Level 1 Award in Performing Arts.
* Training is paramount in our School to keep up to date with the new diagnoses, new presentations and compliance. All staff have been trained in various Mental Health conditions (internally & externally), have a Drs Surgery Clinic with our SEN Educational Psychologist on a monthly basis to be able to ask open questions to clarify understanding. External Training has also been undertaken for compliance to include Food Management, Health & Safety, Fire Marshalling, First Aid at School, Medication Administration etc. Other training undertaken due to the nature of the young people we have to include Diabetes training, Epilepsy training, Harmful Sexualised Behaviours, Early Help etc. Leadership have undertaken Designated Safeguarding Level 4, Fabricated Induced Illness and Safer Recruitment. All staff have access to Staffordshire Safeguarding Board training, and have undertaken 2 courses through lockdown of their choice through the lockdown period. This has enhanced their CPD. Every August, the School hold Stepping Stones Training week to include Director- Mental Health and the Traumatised Mind, EHCP Sen Consultancy training, Safeguarding, Prevent and Schools Improvement Advisor Ofsted Training. Quality Curriculum Strategy meetings weekly maintain high standards for the benefit of young people and give a time to staff to share new ideas/reflect on their practice and reinforce the direction of each young person and the School. Internal Verification takes place in these weekly meetings which is used as a learning tool for new staff and standardisation practice. Students also undertake some courses that the staff have completed if we feel it is relevant, appropriate and enhancing to their learning. For example, three young people studying Health & Social Care, studied and passed their Safeguarding Level 1, which is needed in their chosen career. All young people are encouraged to undertake the Governments on line Prevent Awareness as part of their British Values.
* The School only uses long term Agency staff. This is due to relationship building with young people being key to their learning. The Head is in partnership with two Agencies whom match staff very well. Most Agency staff will undertake 12 week contract when, if successful, allows Temp to Perm contracts within the Company. The Head finds this a good way to trial new staff, ensure consistency, remove quickly any one that does not enhance a young person’s experience, meet demand as cleared in advance and therefore, when a young person is referred, personalised education can be offered more quickly. It also allows flexibility in subjects, as this attracts specific subject Teachers to complement our offer for each young person.
* Every day, the School staff team engages in a handover and debrief at the end. This is led by Management to ensure consistency, risk management is shared (to allow for timetabling change if necessary), RIVO Incidents discussed, boundary setting and expectations through the day from young people and staff. Our Care homes sends handovers, so we can prepare before the young people arrive and are ready with structure beforehand. This is also imperative to confirm everyone’s roles and responsibilities, who they are supporting, additional duties etc to allow for clear vision and calmness to the school environment. At the end of the day, debrief is an opportunity to share experiences, reflect on practice and presentations, amend, adjust if needed and plan accordingly for the next day. This has been a very useful exercise as reported by staff so we can collaboratively work in unison to avoid miscommunication.
* The Head personally deals with all referrals. Therefore, this allows parents/carers to meet the Head herself to alleviate any worries, gather information and ensure they know who to contact. They become aware of her vision for the school and all the young people in it. She encourages feedback, positive and negative to allow the school to grow further and learn. Stakeholder evaluation forms are issued and returned, to inform future practice and all parents have access to the Head’s work mobile if they needed it. The School encourages local community to know who we are, our aim and purpose. Positive links with neighbours and the community have helped develop partnership working, acceptance of all and tolerance. If a parent feels a subject is too sensitive, school will explore the reasons and whilst working with our clinical teams, find a way to deliver in a more sensitive way. Staff are very aware of young people’s history, and therefore, generally have thought ahead of how this needs addressing. They can then reassure any concerns.
* Head this year has introduced a ‘Staff Wellbeing Box’. This allows for staff to be able to write their worries and this is then checked by the Head on a regular basis. Even though the Head has an open door policy, some staff may prefer this manner. Once received, the Head can then meet and signpost support in the appropriate way ie. Workload, stress, personal issues, training etc. The Head has a range of support networks for staff to be able to signpost. These include Teaching & Learning Lead, Clinicians, Educational Psychologist, Reflective Supervision meeting, Occupational Health or just a good chat! Appraisals take place each year (or as needed) as another opportunity to discuss, share and redirect. New this year is Reflective Supervision. This has been used during the COVID 19 lockdown where staff were concerned regarding returning to work. During these discussions, School Risk Assessments were shared and this helped with worries. This process can be used for many reasons, from accountability, welfare, workload, worries, training opportunities, Performance Management etc.
* Stepping Stones School prides itself on no exclusions, no off rolling (unless Local Authority request) and high expectations for all young people. The School are excellent at finding solutions to young people’s barriers and are very experienced in doing so. Due to high levels of trust and positive relationships from Head to young people, solutions and compromises can usually be found. RAG rating lessons encourages self-motivation, positive praise and ownership for learning. This drives positivity for encouraging good day reports and young people love to receive all Greens! However, the purpose for our RAG rating is to also establish patterns. By recording a month etc you can identify areas of concern, lessons not performing, or times. This allows for exploration with the young person to identify the issue and find a solution together. Many of our young people struggle on Fridays, due to the structure not being as robust outside of school. This allows us to work with parents to ensure structure plays an important part in their lives continually.
* At Stepping Stones, our mantra is ‘every lesson is a fresh lesson’. Therefore, if a lesson has not been so successful, we move on and start afresh. This works well to not dwell on negativity and helps with positive Mental Health. It also reinforces that we can make positive changes and move on building resilience.
* All Governance, Leadership and staff are aware of their requirements, commitments and the ethos of the School and to young people. Every minute needs to count in each young person’s life, and every opportunity captured, educated and purposeful. All work in partnership to challenge, support and explore the practice behind Stepping Stones and this is done in a robust manner (see Governance minutes).
* This year the Head and SLT have undertaken auditing on areas to include; Independent School Standards, KSCIE 2019, Safeguarding, Curriculum Plan, Ofsted 2019, School Development Plan and E-Safety. This has ensured that we have been transparent in our areas for development and this allows us to take action to prioritise and rectify. All these audits have been shared with Governance and our Schools Improvement Advisor to be aware and accountable.
* All Independent School Standards 2019 are now 100% compliant and all actions closed. All other audits are being actioned and are ongoing.
* Leadership within the school is robust and effective. Fairness is installed throughout and expectations high but inclusive. Supportive leadership leads to long term staff with little turnover. Head takes her responsibilities very seriously and continually drives standards whilst never losing sight of why Stepping Stones exists and its purpose. The School approach is inclusive to all – all levels are involved in Closing the Gap, Staff Meetings, Teacher/TA Forums etc to make sure everyone’s voice matters.
* The Proprietor is an active member of the Governance team. He regularly visits the school to monitor progress, compliance and statutory duty. Quality reports are shared monthly with the Proprietor and other stakeholders for their feedback. Head Teacher Reports are shared also with Governance to ensure all areas are addressed and met. Constructive challenging is evident through Governance to ensure Head can justify her actions and those of the school. Safeguarding Single Central Register is checked regularly by Directors and Schools Improvement and all Governance this year have undertaken Safeguarding for Governance training as well as Prevent Awareness. This ensures they are aware of their responsibilities also.
* This year, the Head has instrumented partnership working with Sensory Support (Visually Impaired young person), SALT intervention – EHCP requirement, Diabetes Nurse (team training – Type 1 Diabetic) and Paediatric Nurse (young person – brain tumour), School Nurses and CAMHS. This is in addition to our usual Clinical support (Education Psychologist, Psychiatrist, and Forensic Psychologist). All these additional interventions are due to the nature and need of our diverse cohort this year. This has allowed further understanding, medication awareness, presentations and training for all staff. This has been a very positive impact for meeting young people’s needs this year and has had such a positive impact in being able to achieve in school.
* Only one young person has attended off site provision previously in place before on roll. This enhances our bespoke offer and can benefit a young person if providers work together. This was through Coventry City Council Work Related Learning provision, at Moor Farm Stables. Head met with Lead and formed a further partnership to be able to ‘buy into’ their provision moving forward. Had COVID not happened, this provision may have suited other young people in our care as we were in discussions for a Health & Social Care provision at the time. This has now been put on hold for next academic year. All compliance was met, robust checks were made and it was a successful working partnership for all.
* Governance has moved positively forward this year. Governance is made up of the Proprietor, Operational Director, Two Care Home Managers, Regional Manager, Parent Governor, School Improvement Advisor (Chair), Independent Educational Psychologist, Head and Support Lead. Termly meetings take place and Headship Report shared prior to meeting. First meeting was face to face, second by Virtual meeting. This allowed seamless thinking between Education and Care, constructive challenge to be explored and accountability to be upheld. Audits have been shared, young people’s achievements, outcomes and destinations discussed. Health & Safety, Staffing, Safeguarding and operational targets met. Strategic reports are discussed, accountability, vision and future pathways collectively thought about and continual re-assessment of direction managed and progressed. Financial discussions are explored at Management Operations meetings monthly along with HR, H & S (Companywide), reports on Schools and Services.
* Safeguarding is paramount in Stepping Stones. All staff undertake an online Safeguarding training and additionally, attend an in house one also. All staff are enhanced DBS cleared to work within the School and visitors chaperoned at all times. Robust Risk Assessments, internal and external alarms are on the premises, Signing in and Out registers kept. Visual Intercom to be able to vet visitors before allowing on site. Protocols in place for only certain staff members to meet and greet. Head is Level 4 DSL, Support Lead Level 4 DDSL. Safeguarding reporting systems are strong and have the ‘Green Form’ reporting (Safeguarding), ‘Yellow Form’ Whistleblowing, and recently ‘Pink’ Harmful Sexualised Behaviour’ reporting form. We also have Personal Risk Assessments for each young person (to ensure they are included in all we do), a Safety Plan and activity risk assessments. We follow all GDPR recommendations and make sure all information is locked away in Heads office. Head & Support Lead are Safer Recruitment trained to Level 2 and interviewing, personnel checks are robust. RIVO reporting system is used to record incidents, this is also reportable to relevant stakeholders and Directors for further information sharing. All staff receive an induction book and have to sign a copy of Part 1 – KCSIE 2019 before starting with young people. New staff are never left on their own initially with young people and a TA is present at all times. Throughout COVID – wellbeing checks were being made daily (see wellbeing reports- enhanced over this time to ensure safety, wellbeing and emotional concerns were monitored). Feedback from parents stated they felt really supported by Stepping Stones through lockdown – much more than most of the other schools their other children attended.
* To maximise the success for each young person, staff are subject to information sharing on each young person’s life, experiences, schooling and wellbeing. This can lead to transference for staff, as emotionally this can be quite daunting. Therefore, procedures are in place to allow space to process and be able to manage this. Staff wellbeing, training, Dr Anwar’s forum, discussions with Clinicians (1:1 if required), reflective supervision, appraisals and an open door policy, enhances the times to allow for ‘offloading’. This keeps staff focussed, empathic but with a sense of pride to make a difference to our very, very vulnerable young people. To understand their lives, give immense drive to help a young person succeed. Staff read case files to gather further understanding and recognising the ‘whole child’ focus. This can drive subject delivery in a very sensitive way whilst educating myths and misconceptions young people have. Occasionally sensitive subjects will be identified and may be delivered by a different Teacher due to a young person having a higher level of trust with a particular staff member. This is overseen by the Head and ensured that all parties are in agreement and feel comfortable to do so.
* Training is highly present in Stepping Stones. The staff office wall is covered in certification (to the point of running out of room!) this empowers staff, shows their own progress and successes whilst underpinning their purpose. Staff forums, meetings, handover and debrief are other forms of training, where knowledge, opinions and views can be shared in a constructive way to find solutions. This informs our curriculum delivery at times, and allows us to move through the curriculum differently if we feel we need to address an issue more urgently. Staff are empowered to make that decision in their teaching as long as it is justifiable structured.
* This year, through staff training, exercises where undertaken to see what works well and what needs Improving through different eyes. Therefore, Teachers came together in a group, as did TAs, to brainstorm their experiences of Stepping Stones. We then came back together and the results were great. It was the first time that each other considered how the other impacted on each other and their views. Overall, it was positive but there were areas to improve. We then brainstormed solutions, and implemented them. A presentation was then produced with what we did. It was a very productive exercise which all staff felt worthwhile. It was good to see how we had also, as a group moved forward with the actions for the benefit of all.
* Reflective supervision has worked really well this year. This process has been used through COVID to alleviate fears returning to work, performance management reasons, worries, return to work interviews and concerns. Staff have stated they have found it useful to have time with the Head to discuss these issues and feel an action plan to rectify has made it more directional. Peer Mentoring from Teaching and Learning lead has been given in the form of weekly monitoring, action planning and oversight of delivery following an unsuccessful learning visit. This has now led to actions being rectified, work standard and quality increase, quality guidance for staff and therefore a better lesson for each young person.
* Staff do approach the Head regularly for guidance, support or a general discussion. She prides herself on this, and hopes be able to signpost for solutions. If not, guidance will be sought from HR.
* All Policies are up to date, relevant and purposeful to the School. They are regularly checked by Schools Improvement at visits and all staff know where to find all Policies.
* The Head’s passion is evident in the everyday vision for her staff, school and young people. Stepping Stones has been on a very different journey through her Headship. Starting 6 years ago in a shed, on site of a children’s home, progressing to offering high quality education, with positive outcomes for the most vulnerable learners. To moving off site due to demand for local communities to offer day places. Applying for a material change, to increase roll numbers, changing name, different local authority, to achieving positive destinations and outcomes for each young person is a journey all are very proud to have been part of.
* Excellent External Verification feedback each year and the offer and broadness of curriculum grows each year. This allows more to our offer, more experiences for young people and more development and creativity for staff.
* New subjects are received with enthusiasm and challenge. New imperative areas such as preparing for Adulthood, DIY Skills and Independence have been added this year in making our young people are independent and resilient as possible in all areas of their lives.
* New creative ways have been introduced to develop learning opportunities such as My Day forms, Capturing opportunities, Closing the Gap (linked to baselining and targets), outcome trackers, handover and debrief allows for information sharing and sharing good practice.
* Delegation of duties to include key-working, Progress coaching, Food Management oversight has allowed ownership, personal growth and creativity to empower staff. Staff have enjoyed having the extra responsibility and ‘making it their own’. This has been well matched with their skillset. They then deliver training to all staff to make sure this practice is being upheld and reviewed. For example, one HLTA wanted to take ownership of the Food Management. When Camp Covid took place, the HLTA worked with staff and students to plan, manage and implement food sampling in line with the thematic teaching. She then produced a feedback sheet to ‘draw’ out adjectives to describe the food. The young people really responded well!
* Staff work extremely hard with young people to encourage, adapt and amend lessons to keep engagement high. Rewards and raffle tickets help young people see their progress and outcomes and celebrations are held for achievement to include prom, Student Voice, Headteacher’s Certificates etc. Leaders monitor, audit, discuss and work with staff on all aspects of progress to include the ‘I CAN’ Tree progress (capturing the smallest of steps) to the academic and personal outcomes. Leadership recognise for a young person to maintain a whole lesson calmly may be a huge progress and this needs recognition as well as academic. Head believes every young person can achieve in all ways, and doesn’t let staff lose sight of all progress.
* The Head insists on 100% Internal Verification to maintain high standards. She has completed numerous audits throughout the year to show progress and situation.
* All staff are QTS/QTLS or vocationally qualified to make sure standards and vision are high for every young person.
* All Policies are fully compliant and checked by Schools Improvement Advisor to ensure all up to date and relevant.
* Head always encourages staff to embed trips, visits and guest speakers into their delivery. This brings the education alive and very real. Our young people really respond well to real life situations. Unfortunately our usual trips to faith premises, communities, parks etc have been very limited due to COVID so this hasn’t helped. However, this has just made the team more determined to be creative and this is evident through the Camp COVID 19 steps of this.
* BKSB is used for baselining, but only when a young person is ready. Assessment takes place from initial referral, information gather or information share. The Head works extremely close with Virtual Schools, parents, carers, CAMHS, previous schools, EHCP Co-ordinators and external agencies to ensure a wide starting point is established with common aim.
* Leadership encourages strategy meetings to share good practice, discuss ideas and interventions on a weekly basis. This ensures all staff are consistent in their approach to avoid confusion, mixed messages and cross referencing of positive strategies for each child. It allows cross-curricular links of evidence sharing – ie. In Maths target maybe to use multiplication. This can then be embedded in a young person’s gardening lesson – ie. Planting bulbs in multiples of 3. The evidence is shared and learning/skill is embedded for the long term memory.
* This year, trialling our Vocational Tutors with QTS Teachers rather than TAs in the classroom has robustly added value. This way, we can ensure Vocational and Academic learning are being streamlined together for maximum effect to the young person. This has allowed learning of Teacher Standards opportunities for Tutors to gain further skillset and knowledge and vice versa – for Teachers to learn a Vocational Skills whilst in the lesson and be creative in their thinking, assessment, preparation and delivery.
* The Head this year has embraced opportunities for visitors to the school to include Parents, Stakeholders, Commissioners, Core Groups, School Nurses, Specialists, Clinicians, PCSOs and other interested parties. The Head is very proud to open our doors and invite others in to showcase what our young people achieve and their outstanding behaviours.
* Leadership allows interventions for any young people who are due to move on. Sometimes, very little notice is given for a LAC to be moved. Therefore, we have either put on extra home visits to finish qualifications or visited to where they moved to (EG) to allow unit completion and maximum outcomes for that young person. Through COVID, we have been putting on additional work, zoom lessons and personal interventions (NC) to allow for courses to be completed. If a young person is leaving our Care environment but is being placed locally, the Head will work in partnership with local authorities to allow young people to stay at the School as a Day Pupil if possible so they can have minimal disruption, reduce anxieties and complete their studies until a new school is found. This also allows Teachers to arrange more workshop sessions with that young person to target their outcomes with additional learning time.
* No young person has been excluded or off-rolled by Stepping Stones School.
* All activities are inclusive to all. Stepping Stones prides itself on ‘Risk enabling not Risk disabling’ all students to be able to participate in all parts of school life.
* Leadership have arranged for the National Citizenship Service to visit in Student Voice to discuss their programme. PCSOs have also visited and Anesis Homeless Charity. Due to COVID, community activities have been very limited due to safety and this has been difficult for all concerned. However, CAMP COVID has given a new, bespoke twist to our curriculum to include Lambs on site for feeding and singers in the Car Park.
* Head holds Reflective supervisions at staff request or when Head feels necessary. This can be after an incident, CPD opportunities, performance management, and welfare, return to work etc. This allows the Head to be reactive to staff circumstances and situations and amend/action as necessary. This is in addition to Back to Work interviews and Appraisals. Head operates an ‘open door’ policy where staff can approach her to discuss worries, concerns or celebrate times of success.
* Each morning the Head is present for Handover and at the end of the day for Debrief. This allows her to monitor staff performance, risk management, daily plan and potential outcomes, behaviours, worries and can act accordingly using the matrix above. Staff worry box is present in staffroom for confidential communication.
* Leadership has worked hard to have an approachable line of communication. Procedures and Policies are in place and evident for whistleblowing, complaints, and a robust chain of structure is apparent with all staff. Staff know in their staff handbooks who and how to speak someone in the structure chain if necessary.
* Governance has been vastly improved this year. This now has a clear structure, meetings being held termly, as well as Governance reporting to Directors on a monthly basis to include Quality reports. All Governors are enhanced DBS checked and details held on Single Central Record. This is audited regularly to ensure compliance and statutory regulations. All Governors have completed the ‘Governance in Schools’ training along with Safeguarding and Prevent. Governance checks the school vision and values each meeting, alongside open questioning to explore and give depth to their queries. Quality reports and the Headteacher’s termly report share all information to include progress, outcomes, destinations, safeguarding, staffing, HR, compliance etc. This shows the impact Stepping Stones has on each young person and their overall achievement. The Governance is made up of Two Directors, One Regional Manager, One Parent Governor, One Educational Psychologist (Independent), One Chair (Teaching School Director) and Two Care Managers. All are very well qualified and experienced in their roles.
* Safeguarding and Risk Management is extremely robust within school. Staff work with young people to identify strategies to enable them to participate in all parts of life. All young people have their own Personal Risk Assessments and activity/trip risk assessments are completed as standard. All Risk Management has to be submitted minimum 3 weeks before the activity to ensure all safety has been considered. Safeguarding is reportable to Staffordshire Safeguarding Board First Response and to date, Stepping Stones School have found their help invaluable. Safeguarding reporting procedures are in place and all staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding this. Safeguarding and incidents are recorded on the in-house RIVO system, which is shard with local authority, Directors and Regional Managers. This enforces the vision of ‘transparency’ throughout the school. Regular localised Safeguarding training is held annually and in all school meetings, safeguarding is part of the agenda. All staff undertake Prevent Duty Awareness training also and these courses are reflected in the SSCR and CPD files. Staff have completed the SSCB Early Help training and the Head and Head of Support have escalated their training to Level 4 as DSL & DDSL with Staffordshire.
* Head & Support Lead conducting all interviews have up to date Safer Recruitment training. All references are checked and majority of staff are recruited on a ‘temp to perm’ basis through two chosen agencies. They have already been robustly checked with the agency, then at the time of permanency offer, the checks are made again.

**Areas of Development*** To complete, review and update all Audit by Oct half term to identify areas of strength and development
* To meet with Care Manager and Deputy to discuss the impact of poor or late Handovers
* To establish review dates and position of each yp ECHP plans
* To allow for maximum teaching observations to move teaching from Good to Outstanding
* School Calendar marked at the start of the academic year to note all College Open Days and Careers Events (shared with Care Management for outside of School Hours)
* Risk Matrix to be re- produced with Local Authority and Government Guidelines.
* Due to COVID, our current outreach for Day pupils cannot take place in the home. Also, at one point last year, we reach maximum on roll.
* Full Auditing of all key areas to ensure full compliance and gaps to be identified for action planning
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| **POST 16 PROVISION** |
| **We judge the Sixth Form provision as Outstanding and evidence meeting all the criteria for Good in the effectiveness of sixth-form provision securely and consistently:** **Evidence:****Sixth Form students over the period:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Year** | **Number of Post 16** | **Destinations** |
| 1 | 2016/2017 | 1 | North Warwickshire & Hinckley College – Hair & Beauty L1 (AC) |
| 2 | 2017/2018 | 2 | North Warwickshire & Hinckley College – Foundation Learning (KG)Placement terminated Moved back to home area – attended Haringuey College – Catering (CK) |
| 3 | 2018/2019 | 5 | North Warwickshire & Hinckley College – Foundation Learning (LG)Hospitalisation (TM)Hospitalisation (EK)Stepping Stones School – further year (RB)Stepping Stones School – further year day pupil (NC)  |
| 4 | 2019/2020 | 6 | Virtual School Home Education (PK)Hospitalisation (LR)Hospitalisation (MC)Stepping Stones School – further year (RB)Adult Education – Health & Social Care Level 1 – Coventry Council (NC)Stepping Stones School – full time (HM) |

* All our Post 16 young people participate in Preparing for Adulthood. This work is started pre 16 as an Independence course. However, in preparing for adulthood, focus on career options and paths, volunteering, life skills and resilience are paramount. Most of our young people may leave us to live semi-independently and recognise every minute needs to count in learning. They may be from learning DIY skills, budgeting, travel training, washing and caring for your clothes etc. All young people have also chosen an Option Pathway to give vocational qualifications and to study in this area. This year, we have added Health & Social Care, Young person Development, Gardening, Basic Construction Skills, Bike Maintenance, Animal Care and Cooking. Volunteering has taken place in the form of Young person Care Nursery for one learner, looking for a career in Young person Development. Foodbank volunteering has also been undertaken. Work experiences in local businesses are being explored as the next step for others interested in moving forward. Peer Mentoring within school has given further opportunities to support the TAs in their duties has given 4 young people the opportunity to accept additional responsibility, learn new skills in a vocational area, build confidence and guide new students in the appropriate school way.
* Stepping Stones schools recognises the importance of Preparation for Adulthood and installs these lessons (called Independence for younger ones) for all. These covers subjects from social skills, resilience, tolerance, budgeting, DIY, turn taking, timings, flat furnishings, bill management etc. These are differentiated for different levels and ages but are all inclusive for all.
* Employability lessons and qualifications are offered for all ages to include early KS3. We recognise it’s paramount for young people from an early age to learn about careers, futures, vocational options and work expectations. This also maximises self-worth and confidence giving hope for their futures. Many young people who are with us who have been in long term hospitalisation settings or out of school, believe they will not have futures. This is evident when they join us and in tutorials. By offering them qualifications and lessons for future plans, helps build their aspirations and with positive praise, believe they will achieve and have a positive future. The school this year has received two thankyou letters to show how young people feel about giving them hope and a future they thought they would not have. We refer to the Gadsby Guidelines and ensure we fulfil their requirements.
* In the dining room – success stories are displayed with destinations and outcomes of our young people who have moved on. This is referred to regularly if young people are suffering with their mental health and as a strategy of hope and future.
* Opportunities to stretch & challenge not only in academic is recognised daily. This is recorded on their My Day form and it may be in a social way. One anxious young person struggled to mix with peers in a group setting at times but wanted to work in Health & Social Care. This was referred to regularly and with small strategy steps, she managed to mix with others in the dining room with support from staff. Gradually over time, she then managed to enter on her own and this resulted in her being a peer mentor as she appreciated how anxious settings can be. She has now left to join Adult Education to study Health & Social Care (NC).
* High expectations are in place at all times. Post-16 are reminded of role modelling for the younger ones and this has worked really well. Some younger peers look up to the older ones for advice, reassurance and maturity. This is where mixing groups can be advantageous rather than age. At times, Post-16 will mentor younger ones in lessons to help and support with learning.
* Post 16 are continually encouraged to independent study to build this life skill. This was evident through lockdown where young people had independent study time to produce a Presentation on the thematic teaching area for that week. This gave some young people a realistic view on further education and its expectations. It was evident some young people really struggled with this and needed to reach out to the Teacher Helpline and Support Lead on daily checks. This has been identified of an area of need to allow more independence to grow.
* All our Post-16 have excellent attendance levels and punctuality 98.9%. Even on days where they feel down and not in the frame of mind for learning they still attend. They have been known to come straight in, request a tutorial, spend time with the Support lead and after 30 minutes return to class and have a good, productive day. As we operate fluidity around each young person at times of need, we can amend and adjust to maximise learning.
* Our curriculum has been extended this year to include Health & Social Care. This is due to one young person not being able to access this course due to her mental health decline at the time and the College not feeling able to meet need. For this purpose, a Health & Social Care teacher was sourced and this year, two young people studied this subject.
* Post-16 show maturity, empathy and understanding within the school. They work hard to motivate each other and work extremely well in a team. They share experiences such as feeding lambs, visiting cafes, teambuilding and other activities with each other.
* One Post-16 young person has been the main driver in the fundraising for the charity Anesis Homeless. She has arranged fundraising, inspired other young people in the school to make crafts for the School Xmas Fayre to sell to raise funds. She and others, visited local shops to purchase food parcels, hats, scarfs, gloves and children’s toys etc to donate. She then promoted the charity at the annual Prom to raise awareness and undertook a raffle.
* At our annual Prom, one Post 16 young person sang in front of 120 people (the same one that couldn’t enter a room), one read out her own personal thoughts and feelings for Stepping Stones and how it impacted on her life and journey and this received a huge feedback from the public.
* Head has worked in the education industry for the past 25 years and has excellent local connections with schools, colleges and 6th form provisions. She has a good understanding of each young person and their ambitions for their careers. She can use these connections to be able to work in partnership with local provisions to enable a place to be secured. The clinical teams are happy to support local provisions with risk management to alleviate fears and worries, training etc to maintain excellent working partnerships. The Head will also liaise and work in partnerships across the UK with local authorities from which the LAC children originally reside if their pathway plan is to return to their own area. She will bridge the gap between the young person, LA, Virtual School and local potential school to help find a suitable provision based on the knowledge at Stepping Stones.
* Three young Post 16s have been unfortunately hospitalised this year. However, Stepping Stones still maintained contact, offered support, offered education work to be carried out on the wards if required, and worked with the current hospital education to identify a pathway and ensure outcomes were still achieved. Head also attend any CETR/CTR as requested.
* All curriculums were sequenced to allow for growth and progress. In the option areas, young people were encouraged to take in the longer term plan. The curriculum blended well to achieving an Award in the first term, Certificate in second term, and work experience/volunteering in the final term. Unfortunately with COVID, only two placements took place before lockdown.
* All lessons are sequenced for their journey. There will be a natural starting point, ie. Health & Safety, followed by planning, completing the task and evaluation. Reflection is paramount through the My Day Form and this informs the next sequence for the next lesson.
* All Teachers are fully qualified and Vocational Tutors experts within their areas of specialism. Teachers feel confident in delivery and have upmost drive to challenge their young people. This includes academic, social, communication and resilience. These opportunities are captured through witness statements, debriefs, My Day and reflection. Staff motivate young people and have high expectations for achievement and to survive reality. They praise, encourage, listen and give constructive feedback to allow for growth and improvement. Teachers also drive subjects they would like to offer, that the school currently didn’t. This is evident in the Drama subject this year which has resulted in outstanding qualifications and fun.
* All units are 100% internally verified to show this level of expectation. This is then scrutinised in IV sessions and feedback given through strategy meetings. The EV feedback supports this and has now recommended direct status as the young person’s quality is very high.
* Teachers use the ‘two stars and a wish’ marking system. Young people report (tutorials) they like this style as it not all negative. This allows feedback, positive and an area to develop. This is then revisited each lesson to recap for long term memory retention.
* This year we have started to develop a Pre & Post Unit quiz. This allows for Teachers and young people to recognise their starting point and end point. It will show the learning journey and evidence progress made. It will be revisited throughout the learning to remind, reflect and to reinforce memory and learning techniques. This will be used across the whole school from September 2020.
* This year, an addition to the core we have added a ‘Closing the Gap’ weekly sessions. This information has been gathered through baselining (BKSB) and assessment. This has allowed all young people to explore areas of development in a 1:1 safe space where embarrassment is minimal. Feedback in tutorials show young people have really enjoyed this and it has impacted well on their levels. They have enjoyed the ‘fun, out of the box’ delivery style whilst feeling proud of their results.
* Assessment weeks (every 6 weeks) have allowed other opportunities to come away from their standard timetable. This includes trips, visits, guest speakers, PCSOs, assessments and workshops to take place to enhance opportunities for learning and widen the offer. This works well for some who may have been hospitalised, or may have been in crisis with their mental health to catch up, reinforce long term memory and retention and achieve rather than fall behind.
* Post 16s have achieved in all areas this year of the curriculum (see outcomes matrix) and overall, have over achieved in Preparation for Adulthood, Life skills and experiences. They have gained valuable skills in DIY skills, budgeting and Cookery. They have shown excellent understanding on living independently and managing by themselves. They have excelled in learning British Values, SMSC, Protected Characteristics and SRE. They have recognised the dangers within Social Media, acceptable usage of IT, Personal Safety and built excellent social skills and resilience. Some are leaving this year to progress into College settings and I am confident of their success.
* All young people have a PCEP (Person Centred Education Plan) which shows their individual journey in care, education, risk and other factors. This is a real life journey to how they have progressed from very low starting points. Staff can be shocked at the factors these young people have faced prior to Stepping Stones and to see the success and positive fun relationships they have in school, is a credit to their strength.
* Post 16 work through their Personal Education Plan meetings to develop their Pathway Plan from the start of joining the school. The long term aim, career choice and young person’s feelings and wishes are considered as part of the planning. Termly reviews allow to confirm the pathway is on track or amendments made. EHCP reviews also support this process. Virtual School, EHCP Co-ordinators and careers advice are consulted and informed and kept up to date. Multi-agency approach is always paramount at these meetings to ensure the young person’s aims are met.

**Areas of Development*** More Volunteering Opportunities – COVID dependent
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**Stepping Stones Culture**

**Based on Daniel Coyle – The Culture Code**

**Building Safety**

Listening – Stepping Stones believes strongly in listening skills whilst communicating. This is a key feature of our Service and is recorded in staff feedback forms and evaluations. We have recently introduced a Staff Well-being & Student Well-being box to enhance our opportunities for listening. This gives staff and students opportunities to record their thoughts, worries, ideas and training needs in a confidential way to allow the Service to signpost to support networks internally and externally.

Freedom to Challenge – thoughts, views, complaints and compliments. Staff meetings are held as a transparent time to share, challenge, disagree without fear of repercussion. Ideas are discussed, and decisions are made within the team. All parties from TAs to Head are present to show everyone and their thoughts and views are just as important as each other regardless of hierarchy.

Discussion – Handover, debrief, staff meetings, reflection, reports, EV visits, feedback, Exam Board compliance and reporting. Twice daily discussions are had to handover and reflect. This allows staff to plan, alter, risk manage, amend, problem solve and work together for the benefit of the student. This starts the day on a positive note with as little disruption as possible to allow calmness and structure and outcomes for all.

Quality staff enhances learning experiences and maximises for all. All staff are either qualified Teachers, qualified TAs, experienced vocational tutors or/and all have a passion to make a difference. They have a common goal which is reiterated regularly in discussions on maximising every learning opportunity, securing qualifications, building self-worth and encouraging a child with a ‘can do’ attitude. This is evident through thankyous (written and verbal), student voice, Celebration events and certification. Positive progressions to external schooling, colleges, A Levels and 6th form underpin the positive effect of quality education.

Staff well-being box, appraisals, teacher standards, training, clinical advice, EP direct work with staff, understanding & empathy for each child’s journey, CPD opportunities – gives a sense of future value, investing in staff to allow them to feel their worth and their thoughts are important. Honest, open relationships within the workplace allows transparency and better communication. Encouragement for temporary staff moving onto permanent contracts within Young Foundations which adds security and benefit for all. This promotes a sense of belonging and being valued. Saying thank you regularly and showing appreciation from Head and SLT carries positivity and recognition at times of exceeding expectations. Saying sorry when we are wrong and admitting we can get things wrong no matter what level, position or experience we come from. Weekly sharing of the progress and wider plans for growth of Mortimer House encourages excitement for reaching more young people, further progression opportunities and promotions. Giving updates of future roll places, broader curriculums and education ideas (ie. Alpacas, Drama etc) gives staff the motivation to be creative, outside the box thinking and allow fun education activities with positive outcomes/qualifications to become reality. Problem solving becomes the norm to make education alive. Low staff turnover shows Stepping Stones has in the majority, happy staff.

**Share Vulnerability**

Admitting Mistakes – being honest, saying sorry, saying that didn’t work and feeling safe to be able to say that with colleagues is a powerful community within Stepping Stones. Staff comment in their appraisals, exit interviews or probation reviews they feel safe to admit mistakes. They are encouraged to learn, reflect, change and move on following errors. They recognise everyone at times makes misjudgements, its how we learn from them that is important. We are constantly scrutinised for our quality, by Ofsted, OCN Exam Board, Young Foundations, Schools Improvement Advisors, IQA Exam board, local authorities, External Verifiers, Internal Verifiers, lesson observations, learning walks, commissioners and many more. However, having the faith and belief in our Service and each other and remembering why we do what we do and seeing the positive Impact we have, keeps us strong at times of error.

Being exposed to children’s journeys sometimes brings memories of our own past and not always a positive one. Being in Mental Health Training this year and being asked why are you here? A very powerful, painful question brought many personal reasons and vulnerabilities in all staff to the session. Staff reported in their evaluation, seeing others vulnerabilities was empowering and refreshing. This created an honest and trusting environment, releasing empathy towards each other as well as the children we teach. This bonded the group afterwards in a strong united team with a common goal. For most, it was to be the listening, supportive educator to enhance lives and outcomes of young people who others may have given up on.

Reflecting after incidents shares vulnerability. Not judging actions of each of the team and having open conversations has brought the team closer after significant events in the past. At times of stress, knowing and watching the team bond, reassure, support and offer solutions can generate a sense of unitedness at times of worry. Completing Rivos allows times of reflection, strategy effectiveness and outcomes to be evaluated. Knowing we can openly share, comment and show our own vulnerability in times of distress, adds a sense of belonging again.

Having high standards can challenge staff vulnerability. This can at times, add awkward stresses to the workload. Stepping Stones staff know that Safety, Quality and Risk Management is paramount to what we do and cannot be compromised. All staff are aware every second of education must count in some way to allow for maximum outcomes. Staff are regularly reminded a young person could leave our education at any point and therefore, we must maximise the time to benefit the child and their future through qualifications, outcomes and positive experiences. New staff at times, can struggle with this through the conditioning of external education providers where positive statistics and league tables are the primary concern. Stepping Stones ethos is to enhance education experiences and outcomes for all young people in numerous ways to include social, academic, and holistic and distance travelled. Each one is just as important to recognise and capture and this means constant assessment in each area not just academic. Risk taking is another area of vulnerability amongst the school. Most Teachers and TAs are not confident in dealing with risk management of Mental Health and are afraid to allow a child to risk take in a safe way. Training, discussions, conversations and risk management support allows staff to become confident enough to risk enable a child rather than disable.

Reading EHCP plans with staff allows for times of understanding, sharing a child’s vulnerability and story can be empowering for staff. Understanding their journey allows for staff to recognise why behaviours are there, how they have experienced previous education settings, and allow for them to support, be creative with the education they deliver and focus completely on the child. Staff unite in their approach and discuss strategies, build relationships and share positive successes in a team approach.

**Establish Purpose**

Caring For the Traumatic Mind? The question posed to us all by TE. Why? This is most powerful question.

All staff at Stepping Stones School are interviewed and shown the Stepping Stones journey over the past four years. Most have admiration for its journey, its ethos and its success to date. Prior to joining Stepping Stones I hear good education staff have considered leaving the profession as it’s not about the young people anymore and all about certification, outcomes and high achievers. Stepping Stones is aimed at each and every child and building their own education successes regardless of their starting points. Staff feel connected to the School and want to help and make a difference to some children who have not had the best start in life. The school runs a ‘family approach’ where everyone has a voice, wants to face challenges, use creativity and opportunities to help educate young people and build positive careers and futures. Values are revisited within school, high standards are monitored through quality assurance, lesson observations, team meetings and outcomes. Progression is a significant part of the School and this is the ultimate reward to see a child reach their education goal and return to external education with our help and input.

Ofsted’s new framework (Sept 2019) clearly outlines the Three I’s Practice. I have outlined below my thoughts around this and how it reflects Stepping Stones and describe its culture.

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| Ofsted Three I’s |
| Intention | To support each other in delivering the best education opportunities & experiences to our young people enabling outcomes and opportunities for each child. To have open and honest conversations for the benefit of each other and the school. To put the child at the heart of all we do. To be able to turn to each other when needed, be able to approach, suggest, and offer advice and to celebrate the smallest steps. To witness a child achieve academically, socially and morally throughout their time in our school and move to positive destinations when ready. |
| Implementation | Giving staff the autonomy to recognise each child’s individual need and build a successful education programme to reflect this. To design and deliver bespoke, unique packages which are child centred, achievable and inspirational. To embed nationally recognised qualifications, social outcomes and resilience. To empower a child and give them the tools to believe. Reinforce purpose and to aim high outcomes for all. To be creative with lessons to make education experiences fun, purposeful and achievable. To show a young person resilience and all to share in the successes for each child. To acknowledge it’s ok to make mistakes as long as we learn from them. To show nurture and empathy towards each other. To celebrate the smallest outcomes.  |
| Impact | Young people comment through thankyous the staff at Stepping Stones have made such an impact to their lives. They have been there to listen, support, offer solutions and advice and nurture. Our culture is to look at the struggles and help. A child cannot learn when stressed and in crisis. Relationship building, trust and time is paramount in our jobs. All staff relish having quality time with each and every child in the school. The starting point for each child tells a story and our culture is to build the blocks to educational success. |