

# Stepping Stones of Sopley

Bransgore and Thorney Hill District Hall, Burnt House Lane, Christchurch, Hants, BH23 8DD

## Inspection date

11/03/2014

Previous inspection date

Not Applicable

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

2

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

2

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is good

- Staff make excellent use of the very well-resourced outdoor play area. This allows children to play in their preferred environment and successfully promotes all aspects of children's learning.
- Staff successfully plan and promote children's learning accurately. As a result, children are making good progress.
- Staff maintain a safe and secure environment through thorough daily checks and close supervision. As a result, children explore and lead their own play freely and safely.
- Management and staff are all driven to maintaining continuous improvements, and actively involve parents in the development of the setting.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not support children in learning to handle books carefully to further strengthen their literacy skills.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities and the quality of teaching in the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- The inspector sampled children's assessment records and planning documentation.  
The inspector held a meeting with the registered person and manager to assess the suitability and qualifications of staff and management's knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents.

## Inspector

Bridget Copson

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Stepping Stones of Sopley registered at the current premises in 2013 and is run by a committee. It operates from a room in the Thornley Hill District Hall, in the village of Bransgore, Hampshire. Children have access to a spacious enclosed outdoor play area. Children attend from the local surrounding areas. The group is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 35 children on roll in the early years age group. The group is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The group is open weekdays during term time only from 9am to 3pm. There are five permanent staff members and two relief staff members employed to work directly with the children, all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- support children better in learning to handle books more carefully to further strengthen their literacy skills.

### Inspection judgements

#### How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff plan and assess children's learning accurately and according to children's individual needs. Staff keep written records of children's progress, which they use to identify any gaps in children's learning and to plan activities to help children progress in these areas. As a result, children are making good progress in all areas of their learning. Staff work successfully with parents from the start, obtaining information about children's needs, interests, routines and developmental stage. Staff provide parents with a summary report of their child's progress in which parents contribute information about what their child is doing at home. Staff also provide parents with the required progress check for two-year-olds. These effective working partnerships help to promote children's all-round development further still.

Staff provide new and younger children with close support and comfort to help them settle in and explore the interesting activities around them. As children progress, staff promote children's independence and ability to complete responsible tasks successfully. For example, children learn to dress themselves for outdoor play, tidy up toys, help set out snack time and serve their own meals. This helps to promote children's confidence and helps to develop children's skills for the future in readiness for school.

Staff promote children's communication and language skills effectively. Children benefit from on-going feedback about what they are doing in their play to reinforce their

understanding. Staff skilfully adapt and shape activities to promote each child's communication and language needs. They ask simple questions to younger children and extend this for older children to encourage them to think and predict events. Staff recognise younger children do not always benefit from larger group activity times and instead organise small intimate activities to promote children's speech and language. For example, staff use props with nursery rhymes and small hand held recorders for these children to develop their understanding and use their voices to express themselves. This effective practice helps to keep children interested and challenged well.

Children's creative development is nurtured by staff who provide a good choice of open-ended art and craft activities and materials for children to use freely. As a result, children become absorbed in their exploration. For example, children use paints to mix colours, find brushes, sponges and rollers to create different effects and extend their painting to other surfaces. This promotes children's curiosity and allows them to create their own ideas and designs. Children enjoy stories and benefit from a cosy book corner with a tent in which children hide in to read quietly. Staff create exciting story sessions with props to involve children and reinforce their understanding. For example, children name, touch, and smell a chilli pepper, samosa, jelly, sticky sweets, coconut and mango, all linked to the story. This helps to include and involve children in stories and promote their enjoyment and interest in books. However, some children are not challenged when they run over books or handle them roughly and some books displayed are torn. This does not help all children to learn how to handle books carefully to further strengthen their literacy skills.

Children benefit from continuous free flow to the extremely well resourced outdoor play area. Here, children ride on wheeled toys, roll hoops to one another, dig in the soil pit, climb, play ball games, bounce on the trampette and run freely. Staff interact to show children how to use the equipment to move in different ways safely and successfully. Staff use the area to promote more active children's next steps in their preferred environment. For example, children use water and brushes to mark make on the shed and toys. Children draw pictures and tell staff, 'look, this is my mummy' and write letters of their names. Staff also make very good use of the environment to help children learn about natural life. For example, children observe birds in the forest and grow flowers, herbs, fruit and vegetables in beds. They also meet the forest ranger who teaches them about the forest inhabitants, such as looking at snake skins. This helps to develop children's understanding of the world in exciting activities.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children**

Children settle in quickly on arrival due to the warm welcome from staff. Key persons provide younger children with lots of reassurance and cuddles to help them feel secure. Staff work with parents from the start to obtain information about children's needs and routines, and ensure children's comforters are close by when they need them. This helps to support children in the move between their home and the pre-school. Staff are good role models for children, providing gentle and patient interaction and showing a respect for each child. This helps children to develop positive attitudes and good behaviour. Most

staff promote the pre-school expectations consistently through reminding children of what is expected and how their actions might make others feel. Staff also support children well in learning about keeping safe, such as reading stories about fire in which children tell staff they know to dial '999' for help.

Children benefit from a safe and secure environment, which staff organised well with defined areas of play. Each area provides children with a good range of toys and resources, which children choose for themselves. As a result, children move around freely and safely and lead their own play and exploration. For example, children dress up in the role-play area, find airplanes from a toy box, which they then fly around the play room and then out into the garden.

Staff promote children's healthy lifestyles effectively. Children benefit from healthy snacks, which they serve for themselves during the caf-style snack time. Children eat lunch together and talk with staff about the healthy foods they have. This helps children to develop good eating habits and an interest in healthy foods. Staff provide children with continuous outdoor play time throughout the sessions. They interact meaningfully in the outdoor play area to provide children with challenge and promote all aspects of children's development. This helps to ensure children can fulfil their potential in their chosen play environment.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision**

Management and staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have a clear knowledge of the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern about the welfare of a child, and their responsibilities to safeguard children's welfare. Management implements secure vetting procedures to help ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Management deploys staff appropriately throughout the indoor and outside play areas to ensure children are supervised at all times and their needs are met well. In addition, staff implement thorough daily checklists and risk assessments to ensure children are kept safe and secure. This includes close monitoring of all visitors to the premises.

Management uses effective systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of the pre-school provision. The manager observes staff through working as part of the team each day. She meets with staff at supervision sessions each half term and at annual appraisals, and goes through the children's assessment files each term. This allows her to evaluate the impact of staff practice on children's learning and to promote staff development. Management collate the views of staff and parents through discussion, surveys and meetings to develop an up to date self-evaluation form. This identifies the strengths of the provision and areas for improvement. As a result, staff have successfully implemented improvements, which children have directly benefitted from. For example, greater security to keep children safe, more displays of children's work to promote their achievements and better partnerships with parents. Staff have prioritised further improvements to enhance children's

experiences, such as developing the outdoor play area further. This will include a mud kitchen, vegetable patch, wild area and slopes for greater physical challenge.

Staff establish successful partnerships with parents who they provide with clear information about all aspects of the provision. Staff keep parents informed through face-to-face communication, displays and newsletters. Parents are encouraged to contribute their views of the setting at meetings with staff and on surveys. Parents state they have 'total confidence' in staff who are 'very friendly and approachable'. Staff establish good links with the schools and other early years settings children also attend. This helps to promote children's needs consistently.

## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

## Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY468225
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	934340
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	35
<b>Name of provider</b>	Stepping Stones of Sopley Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	07867521583

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## Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools



and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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