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Stepping Stones Community
Organisation & Pre-school
75-77 Raymond Street
Hanley
STOKE-ON-TRENT
ST1 4DP

Our Reference EY439671

Dear Stepping Stones Community Organisation Committee

Monitoring for provision judged as inadequate

An Ofsted inspector, Dianne Adams, monitored your provision on 08/04/2014 following your inspection where the provision was judged to be inadequate.

Outcome of monitoring

As a result of our inspection on 20/01/2014, we sent you a notice to improve. The actions you were set are included at the end of this letter.

During the monitoring visit the inspector discussed with you the steps you have taken to address the actions raised in the notice to improve. She observed interactions between staff and children, especially at lunchtime and when outdoors. The inspector had discussions with individual members of staff and children. The inspector looked at a range of documentation, which included; your action plan, risk assessments, induction and supervision procedures, key person arrangements and behaviour management procedures. The inspector found that as yet, you have been unable to access support from the local authority.

The inspector found that while you have addressed three actions raised, you have not developed an action plan that supports overall improvement. As a result, you have not effectively identified how to tackle all the weaknesses which were identified as needing to improve.

The inspector found that you have improved the cleanliness and safety of the indoor and outdoor environment by carrying out effective risk assessments. This ensures children are kept safe and access suitable furniture, equipment and resources. Play equipment outdoors is more plentiful which allows children to move their bodies in different ways. For example, children enjoy taking turns to ride tricycles, explore play tents and develop their physical skills by digging in compost with forks and spades.

Staff have improved upon their expectations for their own teaching and for children's

learning. They provide children with some interesting activities which develop children's curiosity for learning. For example, children enjoy planting and growing fruits and flowers outdoors and are supported by staff to consider what fruit they enjoy eating as they explore different fruits when indoors. Staff have improved the choices children make in their learning and encourage children to have their own ideas for doing things. For example, while outdoors children choose to play football and staff respond to their requests appropriately. Staff also consistently provide children with lots of opportunities to develop their independence. For example, children are encouraged to dress themselves to go outdoors, serve their own lunch and pour their own drinks.

The inspector found that although the deputy is qualified to take charge of the pre-school when the manager is absent, she still does not demonstrate all the necessary skills and knowledge to manage the pre-school effectively. The deputy does not understand how to provide staff with effective support through supervision and coaching and does not model good practice with regards to managing children's behaviour.

Staff now have an appropriate understanding of the importance of developing close attachments with children which supports their emotional well-being. As a result, children new to the pre-school are settling well and developing their confidence with appropriate support from their key person. However, arrangements in place to support children when their key person is absent are not effective. For instance, when staff, such as the manager, take responsibility of the key person role, they are constantly not available due to completing other tasks, such as preparing the lunch, and answering the telephone. This does not meet children's needs, especially children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The inspector found that staff are still not being provided with effective support and coaching. Although the manager observes the practice of some staff and provides them with supervision every three months and an annual appraisal, she does not identify or discuss areas of their practice that need to be improved. This does not support continuous improvement. In addition, newly appointed staff and students are not provided with adequate induction or support. As a result, they do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and children's needs are not consistently met.

You have taken time to discuss feelings with children, the importance of being kind and you have put in place strategies for rewarding positive behaviour. However, staff still do not demonstrate an appropriate understanding or the ability to deal with inappropriate behaviour effectively. Children are not consistently given clear explanations about why some behaviours are unacceptable, especially at times, such as lunchtime. This results in children not behaving appropriately and not always showing respect for adults.

Having considered all the evidence, the inspector is of the opinion that the setting has not taken prompt and effective action to address the points for improvement.

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Next steps

We will take enforcement action to ensure compliance with children's welfare and/or learning and development requirements.

If you have any further queries please contact us on the number at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Nick Hudson
National Director, Early Education

Actions

Action	Due date	Closed date
undertake a risk assessment of the premises and equipment; at least once a year, and immediately, where the need for an assessment arises (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)	03/02/2014	08/04/2014
undertake a risk assessment of the premises and equipment; at least once a year, and immediately, where the need for an assessment arises (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)	03/02/2014	08/04/2014
ensure that children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)	03/02/2014	08/04/2014
ensure that children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).	03/02/2014	08/04/2014
improve the educational programme for physical development by providing a sufficient and broad range of outdoor resources and equipment to fully support children in practising how to move their bodies in different ways.	03/02/2014	08/04/2014
ensure risk assessments cover specific issues and inform staff how children will be kept safe by managing these risks. This is in relation to the cleanliness of the floors and children's furniture, the temperature of radiators and children's access to broken toys and fallen leaves in the outdoor areas	03/02/2014	08/04/2014
ensure the key person system is effective so that all children are supported to form secure attachments by; developing practitioners knowledge of secure attachment theory and how this has an impact on children's emotional well-being, and by reflecting on the role of the key person in relation to offering a settled, close relationship for all children	03/02/2014	08/04/2014
ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity	03/02/2014	08/04/2014

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to learn through improved teaching strategies, such as encouraging children to have their own ideas, make links between their ideas and develop strategies for doing things for themselves

ensure there is a named deputy who is capable and qualified to take charge in the manager's absence 03/02/2014 08/04/2014

ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for regular appraisals and supervision of staff, including support and coaching, to increase staffs' knowledge and skills and identify any concerns and underperformance 03/02/2014 08/04/2014

support children's management of their own feelings and behaviour through positive role modelling by staff and through discussions about why some behaviour is unacceptable and why, so that this builds on children's confidence and self-assurance 03/02/2014 08/04/2014

ensure all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities 21/04/2014

ensure that children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner (compulsory part of the Childcare Register) 21/04/2014

ensure that children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner (voluntary part of the Childcare Register). 21/04/2014