

# Stepping Stones Nursery School

16 Bruce Road, SOUTHSEA, Hampshire, PO4 9RL



## Inspection date

26 May 2015

Previous inspection date

31 January 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Inadequate	4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Inadequate	4
The setting <b>does not meet legal requirements for early years settings</b>			

## Summary of key findings for parents

### This provision is inadequate

- Leaders do not consistently monitor and evaluate the safety and welfare of children, and the quality of practice in the nursery to make improvements to the environment and staff practice. As a result, specific requirements, including the requirements of the Childcare Register, are not met and children's safety is not ensured.
- The manager does not have a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures and does not consistently enforce the nursery policy on the use of mobile phones.
- Arrangements for supervision are not strong enough to assess staff's performance and identify areas for development. This is particularly apparent in the Ladybird room, where staff do not always plan activities that challenge children to help them make good progress, and art and crafts materials are sparse.
- Leaders do not check the range of activities well enough to make sure all children have interesting, stimulating learning experiences.
- Staff do not always meet children's physical needs well as the food provided to children is not always healthy, balanced and nutritious.

### It has the following strengths

- The effective key-person system helps staff to build close bonds with children, which supports their emotional development well. They use effective and consistent strategies to help children learn how to manage their feelings.
- Strong partnerships with parents and other professionals involved in children's care and learning help staff meet children's additional needs well.
- Children benefit from spending lots of time outdoors and enjoy many worthwhile outings, which promotes their good health and some learning.

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

### **To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:**

- ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented consistently, with particular regard to mobile phones. Ensure that they include information about when a member of staff is disqualified from working with children and the procedure to follow when a member of staff is dismissed, or would have been, due to a child protection concern
- complete and monitor risk assessments to ensure the play spaces and sleep areas are safe, and take all reasonable steps to remove, minimise and manage risks and hazards to protect children's safety and welfare
- ensure the food and drinks provided for children are healthy, balanced and nutritious
- ensure the professional development needs of staff are identified and met through ongoing support and training, so that the quality of teaching and learning is improved, and a culture of self-evaluation is fostered
- check that planning of activities and experiences consistently provides interesting, challenging experiences for all children to help them make good progress.

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

- improve the evaluation methods to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

### **To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:**

- take all necessary measures to minimise any risks to the health or safety of the children (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that any food provided is wholesome and nutritious (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).
- take all necessary measures to minimise any risks to the health or safety of the children (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)

## **Inspection activities**

- The inspector observed children and staff during play and learning activities, and viewed the play and sleep areas, and resources.
- The inspector undertook two joint observations with the manager.
- The inspector had discussions with the manager about the policies and procedures, including how they promote diversity, how staff work with parents and other early years providers, and self-evaluation methods.
- The inspector looked at a sample of children's progress records, planning and tracking systems, and had discussions with staff.
- The inspector talked to children and some parents to gain their views of the nursery.

## **Inspector**

Jacqueline Munden

## Inspection findings

### **How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement**

Most children enjoy a varied and interesting range of activities that meet their levels of development and that prepare them for the next stages in their learning. Pre-school children show they have very good literacy skills. They write their names on artwork and confidently talk about letters and their sounds. They are keen to take part in the games that help them build on their counting and calculation skills. In the Ducklings room, staff skilfully use children's interests to engage them in discussion, which extends their communication and language skills. Children collected leaves and grass from the garden to use in their imaginary play with the model dinosaurs, and talked about what they ate. Babies strengthen their muscles and develop their skills for walking as they explore equipment. In the Ladybirds room, however, staff did not provide suitable equipment in the water activity to promote children's learning effectively. In addition, staff did not interact effectively to promote children's language skills. This environment is adequate although unappealing.

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

Staff do not complete effective risk assessments to ensure all areas of the nursery are safe and to protect children. For example, an electric flex next to a cot causes a choking risk. Staff keep the premises secure. Children develop high levels of independence through the daily routines, such as snack time. However, staff are inconsistent in how they teach children about healthy lifestyles. For example, while they plan fruit tasting activities to help children learn about foods that are good for them, they also provide unhealthy sweet snacks.

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

The manager is unclear of some regulations and employment procedures, which puts children's welfare at risk. These include understanding the disqualification of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children, and how to respond should she dismiss staff due to a child protection concern. Regular training ensures that other staff understand child protection policies and procedures. However, they are permitted to use their personal mobile phones when they take children on outings; this does not comply with the provider's policy to protect children. Staff are supervised, which helps to ensure that appropriate support is obtained from outside agencies to support children. However, the manager does not make the best use of her qualification and self-assessment to check the quality of teaching, planning and assessment rigorously enough across the nursery. Self-evaluation has brought about some improvements, including the growing area outdoors, but insufficient progress has been made on the previous recommendations.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY346747
<b>Local authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	835160
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	60
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	68
<b>Name of provider</b>	Rose Lodge Nurseries Ltd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	02392 421718

Stepping Stones Nursery School registered in 2007. It operates from a house in Southsea, Hampshire. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.45am until 6pm all year except for all public holidays. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years old. There are 14 members of staff employed to work with the children, including the manager who holds a relevant early years qualification at Level 4. Of the remaining 13 staff, 12 hold a recognised early years qualification.

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