

Stepping Stones Private Day Nursery

351 Leigh Road, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 1TN



Inspection date

11 December 2015

Previous inspection date

4 May 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	3
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Requires improvement	3
Outcomes for children		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- Staff are well qualified, but this is not reflected well enough in practice. The quality of teaching is inconsistent and in particular is weaker in the toddler room than elsewhere.
- Some assessments of children's progress are not accurate. Staff do not have sufficient information to help them plan effectively and accelerate children's learning.
- The organisation of the toddler room does not support children well enough to make consistently good progress in their learning. There are too few resources that reflect toddlers' age and stage of development and some activities do not inspire them to learn or play purposefully. As a result, some children's behaviour can be challenging at times.
- The key-person system is not sufficiently effective in the pre-school room. Staff have not considered how to best organise their key-person responsibilities so all children consistently receive good levels of support.
- The monitoring of staff performance is not good enough to make sure that weaknesses in teaching are identified and addressed swiftly.

It has the following strengths

- Children receive good support at lunchtime. Staff model how to use cutlery and give children opportunities to take on some responsibilities for themselves.
- Parents are pleased with the care their children receive. They feel that settling-in arrangements are matched to their child's individual needs and that staff support the whole family to feel welcome.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

	Due Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ develop the quality of teaching, particularly in the toddler room, so all children behave well, learn successfully and make consistently good progress 	15/01/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure all staff make accurate assessments of what their key children know and can do and use these to plan effectively and accelerate children's development 	15/01/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ provide an environment where toddlers can play, explore and learn more effectively 	15/01/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ provide a key-person system in the pre-school room that is more effective in meeting the learning needs of each individual child. 	15/01/2016

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

- monitor the quality of teaching more effectively so that weaknesses are swiftly identified and addressed.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching in all age groups, during activities inside and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and an advisor from the local authority early years team. She looked at a range of documentation, including procedures for safeguarding children and children's assessment records. She also discussed the systems for planning children's play experiences.
- The inspector viewed the most up-to-date self-evaluation completed by the manager, the evidence of staff qualifications and of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector took account the views of staff, parents and children. She spoke to a small selection of parents and children during the inspection and read a larger collection of emails sent to the provider the day before the inspection.

Inspector

Joanne Parrington

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management requires improvement

The manager uses a range of performance management techniques, such as staff supervision meetings and observations of practice, to assess staff. However, the evaluations are having too little impact on improving the quality of the learning environment or raising the consistency of teaching and assessment. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are confident with the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. Staff receive regular safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date. The manager talks with determination about raising the overall quality of practice to at least a good standard. She has recently completed an evaluation of the provision, taking into account the views of staff, parents and children to help her begin to identify where improvement is needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

Teaching in the toddler room is not good enough. Staff do not always ignite children's curiosity to learn through purposeful play. They miss opportunities to support and engage children in their learning. The environment is not planned well enough to support toddlers in their learning. Staff's teaching is generally more effective for children in the other age groups. Younger children enjoy exploring paint and making patterns with their hands and fingers. Pre-school children enjoy guessing which numbers they are looking for next, as they go on a number hunt. Staff carry out assessments of children's progress. However, staff do not gather enough accurate information to form a clear overview of each child's overall progress. Staff do not always recognise quickly enough when there are gaps in children's learning. Planning is not always precise enough to help children catch up quickly and make consistently good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

The organisation of the toddler room is not considered carefully enough to make sure that all children can play, explore and learn effectively. This lack of planning and organisation leads to a drop in standards of behaviour for some children because they are not meaningfully engaged in play and learning. Toddlers are not always stimulated or enthused by the activities and resources provided. However, all children arrive positively and separate well from their parents. They receive a warm welcome from staff, who contribute effectively to children's emotional well-being. All children have a key person and on the whole have secure attachments with this staff member. However, the arrangements for key persons in the pre-school room are not well considered and responsibilities are not shared out in an effective way. As a result, pre-school children do not always receive good quality support with their learning.

Outcomes for children require improvement

Not all children are making consistently good progress from their starting points. Weaknesses in teaching mean that children are not as well prepared as possible for starting school. However, pre-school children are developing some skills that will help them in the next stage of their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	323016
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	872166
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	38
Name of provider	Patricia Malone Cavanagh
Date of previous inspection	4 May 2011
Telephone number	01942 605 481

Stepping Stones Private Day Nursery was registered in 1991. The nursery employs nine members of childcare staff, including the manager. All hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2 to 4. The manager has a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Early Years. The nursery also employs two consistent supply staff, who are qualified to levels 3 or 4. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.45am until 6pm.

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