

Stepping Stones Nursery School

Oakhill Farm, Upper Oakhill, Froxfield, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3JT



Inspection date

3 October 2017

Previous inspection date

Not applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate	4
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Inadequate	4
Outcomes for children		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is inadequate

- Staff have a poor knowledge and understanding of safeguarding. Not all staff have a secure awareness of the signs and symptoms that a child may be at risk of harm, including from extreme views and behaviours. In addition staff are not confident in the referral process to follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
- The manager fails to implement the nursery's policy for the use of mobile phones and uses her mobile phone when children are present. Not all daily attendance entries are a true reflection of when the children arrive, which compromises children's safety.
- Children's health and well-being are compromised. Staff fail to ensure children have their hands washed prior to eating. They do not take sufficient action to prevent younger children eating food which has been on the floor used for play.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Some staff's teaching practice is poor and does not help children make good progress. Not all staff interact with children purposefully. Although staff observe and track children's development, they do not act swiftly on gaps in development, which hinders children's learning. Managers do not effectively monitor progress to improve outcomes for children.
- The management team fails to monitor practice and identify weaknesses and breaches of requirements. It does not ensure that all staff have appropriate support, supervision and training to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- Staff do not consistently help children to develop their independence skills.

It has the following strengths

- All children enjoy playing outside on a daily basis.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due Date
■ ensure all staff know how to identify possible signs that a child may be at risk of harm and understand how to implement the nursery's safeguarding policy and procedures in the event of a concern about a child's welfare	03/11/2017
■ ensure all persons working with the children implement the mobile phone policy	03/11/2017
■ review hygiene routines to ensure necessary steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, with particular regard to snack and meal times	03/11/2017
■ ensure staff receive effective induction, supervision, support, coaching and training to ensure they fulfil their roles and to raise the quality of teaching	03/11/2017
■ ensure that an accurate daily record of children's attendance is kept	03/11/2017
■ monitor the educational programmes effectively to identify and target weaker aspects of children's learning, to improve outcomes for all children	03/11/2017
■ ensure staff provide good-quality learning experiences and effective support and interaction to engage all children, to help them make good progress.	03/11/2017

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

- create more ways to help children manage and build upon their independence skills
- use self-evaluation effectively to identify any weaknesses, including any breaches of requirements, and take action to improve the quality of the provision.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities and learning experiences available to children.
- The inspector observed interactions between children and staff and spoke to children.
- The inspector asked staff questions about their work and observed practice with the registered provider.
- The inspector spoke to some parents about their views and opinions on the provision and considered these.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager, and both inspectors sampled documentation.

Inspector

Tracy Bartholomew

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is inadequate

Safeguarding is ineffective. Some staff have a poor understanding of the signs, symptoms and referral procedures to follow in the event of a child protection concern, which puts children at risk. Not all staff have had safeguarding training, despite them working at the nursery for over a year. The nursery has a policy for the non-use of mobile phones. However the manager was seen using her personal mobile phone, which has access to the internet, in a room when working with children. Although staff have registers to record children's attendance, not all entries are entered as children arrive. Staff incorrectly record children's arrival later in the morning, which does not meet the requirements. The manager provides staff with supervision, appraisals and training, but fails to use these effectively. She does not ensure that staff use their teaching skills effectively to support children's learning. Procedures for monitoring children's progress and evaluation of the nursery are weak and the leaders have failed to identify weaknesses in the provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

Staff are well qualified. However, not all children receive adequate support from staff, especially in the pre-school room. Children in the pre-school are not all motivated to learn and are fluctuating in their development and not making adequate progress. The quality of teaching in this room is variable and too often children are ignored when speaking. For example, in a group activity children are ignored when they correctly answer questions about the weather. Staff often do not respond to children's interests. For example, when a low-flying helicopter came past, children excitedly called staff to show them; however, they were ignored. Despite this, some teaching is pleasant. For example, children in the younger rooms have fun exploring with arts and crafts. Furthermore, younger pre-school toddlers enjoy investigating with musical instruments, and some pre-school children benefit from small-group times when they learn about numbers as they play an elephant game with staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

Children's well-being is compromised by weaknesses in safeguarding practice. Furthermore, hygiene measures are inadequate and children's health is put at risk. Staff fail to ensure children have clean hands before eating snacks. For example, babies are given a pre-dinner snack on the floor without having their hands washed and pre-school children eat their snack outside after exploring in the forest-school area. Children's health is further compromised as younger pre-school children are seen drinking from other children's water bottles, and toddlers and babies eat crushed-up cornflakes from the floor which have been trodden in by staff and children in their outside shoes. Staff manage children's behaviour appropriately and children receive praise which helps boost their self-confidence. Staff occasionally encourage children to take some risks. For example, they encourage children to climb and take steps to move up the stairs to the slide. Parents talk positively about the nursery and how settled their children are.

Outcomes for children are inadequate

Children do not make the progress they are capable of, or gain the skills they need for their future learning, particularly older children. On too many occasions older children are left to their own devices without any purposeful interaction or support and wander around aimlessly. Some children enjoy playing with their friends and have a good time outside. For example, pre-school children enjoy digging in the mud kitchen. Toddlers have fun mimicking sounds staff make as they chase a football. Babies have their walking skills encouraged as they hold their key person's hand and walk around. This helps to support the children's physical development. However, not all play is enjoyable because staff miss too many opportunities to challenge and extend all children's learning. For example, staff are too quick to do things for the children, such as putting on coats and shoes for the children rather than supporting their independence skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY488986
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	1016532
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	63
Number of children on roll	66
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones Nursery School (froxfield) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP534565
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01488 681067

Stepping Stones Nursery School re-registered in 2015. It is based in the village of Froxfield. The nursery operates from 7.45am to 6pm from Monday to Friday all year round. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The children have access to open-plan rooms with free flow to enclosed outside play areas. The children also have access to a playing field with an outside classroom, a large playground with play equipment and an enclosed woodland area with mud kitchens. There are 12 staff working with the children. Of these, nine staff, including the manager, hold suitable early years childcare qualifications.

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