

# Inspection of Stepping Stones of Sopley

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

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Inspection date: 18 October 2019

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children are happy and keen to see their friends and the caring staff as they arrive at the setting. Staff get to get know the families quickly and welcome them warmly. Children show they feel safe and emotionally secure. They are kind, show respect towards each other and behave well. Children patiently wait for their turn in group activities and are learning to control their emotions and feelings.

Children are well-motivated to learn. They enjoy the interesting and challenging activities that the well-trained staff provide. For instance, younger children persevered in working out how to position the chute so objects slide down it. Children relish spending lots of time outdoors where they learn important skills, such as taking risks and keeping safe. For example, older children worked out how to position logs on the uneven ground so they were safe to step on.

Staff have high expectations for every child. The committee and manager show a strong commitment to providing a safe and inclusive culture in the setting. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive targeted support and make good progress in their development. The manager uses additional funding effectively to help support those who need it most. Overall, the quality of teaching is good across the setting.

### **What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?**

- Children enjoy the stimulating environment which staff plan well to match their interests and learning needs. Children are busy and curious. They confidently select activities of their choosing, for example painting in the creative area and mixing water and soil in the garden.
- Staff place a strong emphasis on children acquiring good speech and language skills. For example, children frequently recite songs and rhymes. Staff model vocabulary and develop children's critical thinking skills by asking varied questions. Staff engage children well when looking at books and reading stories. For example, they use props and encourage children to recall the sequence of events.
- Staff plan interesting experiences that deepen children's learning and that help them discover the wonder of the area in which they live. A recent visit from a New Forest ranger had a powerful effect on children. They excitedly described to the inspector what they had seen and learned, including what the deer antler felt like. Children explained that, 'Antlers get knocked off when they rub them on trees'.
- Staff model consistent behaviour values well. They provide specific praise that helps children to understand what is expected from them. Children listen to staff and happily respond when they are asked to do something.

- Children learn about foods that are healthy for them and what they can do to stay safe. Staff work effectively with parents to promote children's independence in toileting and to ensure their good health.
- Staff build strong relationships with parents, which help them to understand the experiences that children have away from the setting. Staff encourage parents to get involved in their children's learning. They offer a book lending library for children to choose from. This helps to foster children's love of books and stories at home. Parents praise highly the good levels of care and education their children receive.
- Effective evaluation helps the committee and manager to constantly raise the quality of the setting. The views of parents, staff and children help to inform areas for improvement. For instance, the doorbell was lowered as children said they wanted to ring it themselves when they arrived at the setting. Having their views valued and acted upon helps children to feel a greater sense of belonging.
- Overall the curriculum promotes children's access to a broad range of experiences. However, there is less of a focus on supporting children's use of mathematical concepts in their play.
- Staff work very well as a team. They have regular meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision and the experiences they provide for children. The use of training, coaching and supervision meetings helps the manager to develop and improve staff practice. However, she does not identify precise areas for development to help raise the quality of teaching to the highest level.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The committee members, who are the provider, understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They follow appropriate recruitment procedures to ensure all committee members, staff and volunteers are suitable to hold their positions. Newly appointed committee members are booked to attend training to help further develop their understanding of wider safeguarding issues. Staff have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms that could indicate a child is at risk of harm. They know how and when to report any concerns to relevant agencies. All staff attend regular safeguarding training to help them keep up to date with current safeguarding requirements and statutory duties.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the monitoring of staff practice and focus even more precisely on how to raise the quality of their teaching and interactions to the highest level
- use opportunities that arise to extend and develop children's mathematical language and concepts more consistently in play.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY468225
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10068899
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children</b>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	30
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	32
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Stepping Stones of Sopley Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP910548
<b>Telephone number</b>	01425 673135
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 March 2014

## Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones of Sopley is a committee-managed childcare setting that re-registered in its new premises in 2013. It operates from the Thornley Hill District Hall, in the village of Bransgore, Hampshire. The setting operates weekdays from 8am to 6pm for most of the year. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are seven members of staff who work with the children including the manager. Of these, six hold an early years qualification at level 3 and one holds a qualification at level 2.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Jacqueline Munden

## Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to the chairperson of the committee, staff, parents and children throughout the inspection at appropriate times to gather their views on the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- The inspector reviewed documents relating to children's progress and to staff suitability, including evidence of suitability checks and paediatric first-aid qualifications.
- The inspector observed children and staff taking part in a range of activities indoors and outdoors, and completed a joint observation of practice with the manager.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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