

Inspection of Stepping Stones Nursery and Woodland Adventures

Manor Farm, Upper Slaughter, CHELTENHAM, Gloucestershire GL54 2JJ

Inspection date: 9 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

The manager/owner has failed to provide a safe and secure environment for children. There are several breaches relating to the safeguarding and welfare requirements, which places children at significant risk of harm.

The quality of teaching and care is poor at this nursery. The manager does not provide staff with relevant training, supervision and ongoing support to enable them to promote children's safety and offer meaningful learning experiences.

Despite staff having built bonds with their key children, they are unable to identify children's next steps in learning due to insufficient planning, observation and assessment. As a result, staff do not provide targeted support to address children's learning needs. This means that children fail to make the progress they are capable and they are not prepared well enough for the next stage in their learning.

The provision for babies and young children is particularly poor. Staff in the baby room do not hold the relevant qualifications to care for babies and young children. Furthermore, due to a recent turnover of staff, the manager has failed to recruit new staff to ensure the safe running of the nursery. She continues to accept new babies without putting in place suitable staffing arrangements to meet the required staff-to-child ratios. This means that due to the lack of adequate staffing, the manager is unable to deploy her staff team effectively. She relies on other administrative staff, including the nursery cook, to help supervise the children. This compromises the quality of care and experiences for babies and young children.

Children are well mannered and polite. They are respectful to adults and kind to their friends.

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

- The manager does not provide a broad and balanced curriculum that builds on what children already know and can do. Staff are not able to explain what they want children to learn and how they embed this through their planning. Despite staff providing some interesting activities, such as weekly music sessions, children's learning experiences are not enriching and at times, overly directed by adults. For example, during the inspection, pre-school children joined staff for a planned craft activity to make a pretend pond for creatures. However, despite staff using open-ended questions to capture children's interests, they did not encourage children to actively participate. Some children sat back and watched staff draw and cut out animal pictures, while other children lost interest. Additionally, due to insufficient planning, children did not have access to resources, such as scissors, pens and paper, so they could join in. This meant

that children were unable to extend their learning, such as practising their early mark-making and scissor skills.

- The manager does not have sufficient arrangements in place to assess and monitor children's progress. Despite some staff using a 'tracking sheet' to identify if children are meeting developmental milestones, staff comment that they do not find this helpful and refer to it as a 'tick box' process. Consequently, staff are not familiar with children's next steps in learning and there are gaps in monitoring children's ongoing progress.
- Parents do not receive continuous information about their child's progress. Although staff help children to settle in and exchange information with parents about their child's daily experiences, parents state that they do not receive information about their children's progress. They are unsure about their child's next steps in learning and how to promote this further.
- The manager does not ensure the premises are safe and secure to prevent unauthorised individuals from entering the nursery or prevent children from leaving unnoticed. During the inspection, the nursery front door which leads directly to the pre-school room, was left open on two occasions. Furthermore, the kitchen door overlooking a public car park, and which leads directly into the nursery, was left open with no adult supervision. This places children at significant risk of harm.
- Staff do not protect young children's right to privacy during intimate care routines. During the inspection, parents were invited to enter the nursery to collect their children from the baby room. This meant that they had to walk through the toddler room to gain access. During this time, staff failed to protect the privacy of toddlers, such as when removing their clothing to use the potty. There are insufficient safeguards in place during nappy changing and toilet training routines to protect children's dignity.
- The nursery caters for children with varying dietary and medical needs. Children enjoy freshly cooked meals, including a range of fruits and vegetables. Children have access to the nursery woodlands where they have opportunities to develop their physical coordination skills, such as running, balancing and climbing.
- The manager has failed to provide staff with appropriate training and support to foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous supervision. Consequently, staff do not receive the support they need to ensure children's safety and staff morale is low. Staff comment that they do not receive regular one-to-one supervision meetings and feel unsupportive. Staff have limited opportunities to access further training to address gaps in their knowledge, such as how to plan and assess children's learning, and to broaden their safeguarding knowledge. The manager recognises that staff have not received regular supervision and states this is due to her being unavailable as a result of managing staff cover.
- The manager/owner does not have a secure understanding of her role to meet legal requirements and does not reflect on the quality of the provision. She has failed to take action to report an allegation made against a member of staff to the Local Authority Designated Officer. Furthermore, she does not understand the requirement to notify Ofsted of significant events affecting her suitability.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The manager/owner has failed to understand her responsibility to keep children safe. She has not followed the procedure of her local safeguarding partnership by reporting an allegation made against a staff member. Furthermore, as the designated safeguarding lead person, she has not completed the required child protection course to support her role. Staff have some understanding of the signs of abuse and neglect and how to report a welfare concern about a child. However, not all staff are familiar with other safeguarding matters, such as the 'Prevent' duty. Staff cannot recall when they last attended safeguarding training. The manager does not assess the environment to identify and address risks to keep children safe, such as to prevent unauthorised persons for entering the premises. Staff are not deployed effectively to ensure the adequate supervision of children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
provide staff with effective training and support to help them understand their role and responsibility to keep children safe	23/05/2022
ensure that staff are deployed effectively, to keep children safe and to meet their individual care and learning needs	23/05/2022
adhere to the required ratio and qualification requirements by ensuring at least one member of staff working with children under two years holds an approved qualification at level 3 as well as suitable experience	23/05/2022
implement the allegations management procedure by informing the Local Authority Designated Officer and Ofsted of concerns about adults working with children	23/05/2022

ensure the designated safeguarding lead attends the relevant child protection training and supports staff to identify child protection concerns and take appropriate action	23/05/2022
provide suitable facilities for young children who are in nappies and those who are toilet training by ensuring that you protect their privacy during intimate care routines	23/05/2022
improve arrangements for monitoring the security of the premises, to ensure management and staff are aware of persons entering at all times	23/05/2022
improve knowledge and understanding of the requirement to notify Ofsted about significant events that affect the suitability of the provider's health.	23/05/2022

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
plan and provide a broad curriculum that builds on what children already know and can do, to help them make good progress in their learning	06/06/2022
monitor staff's practice to ensure that they are aware of the next steps that each child needs to take and are able to extend children's learning at an appropriate level	06/06/2022
keep parents up to date about their children's progress, including any targeted support, to ensure continuity in their learning and care.	06/06/2022

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY301590
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10239657
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	75
Number of children on roll	53
Name of registered person	Wilson, Claire Louise
Registered person unique reference number	RP512714
Telephone number	01451 820345
Date of previous inspection	13 February 2017

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Nursery and Woodland Adventures registered in 2005. The setting is based in Gloucestershire. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. The provider receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years old. There are 11 members of staff working with the children. This includes the owner/manager who holds a childcare qualification at level 4, four staff who hold relevant qualifications at level 3, two hold relevant degree qualifications and four staff are unqualified.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Shahnaz Scully

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the setting.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector took account of parents' views through their verbal and written feedback.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- Discussions were held with the staff, parents and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.

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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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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