

Inspection of Little Stepping Stones Day Nurseries

Argento Tower, Mapleton Road, London SW18 4GA

Inspection date: 3 April 2023

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

Weaknesses in leadership and management have a significant impact on children's safety and welfare. The provider's recruitment and vetting procedures are not robust. Leaders do not carry out adequate checks to ensure that all staff are suitable when they are employed. Furthermore, they do not ensure the continued suitability of the staff. This compromises children's safety.

Children enjoy listening to stories read by staff. However, they quickly become bored and disengaged. Overall, staff do not demonstrate effective teaching skills and they do not have high expectations for all children. Children's individual needs and interests are not consistently considered or planned for, and staff miss many opportunities to extend children's learning. Children do not make the progress of which they are capable. Furthermore, children's play and learning is often interrupted because routines are not adequately thought through by staff and leaders.

Despite these weaknesses, overall, staff know their key children. As they arrive at the nursery, older children are warmly greeted by staff to help promote a sense of belonging. They independently find their peg to hang their coats before beginning to play with their friends. Babies and young children are met with a cuddle from staff before the day of play and learning begins. This helps children to feel emotionally secure. Children generally behave well in this nursery. Children practise self-help skills through dressing and washing dolls. This also helps to develop their fine motor skills.

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

- Leaders do not ensure that staff have a secure knowledge of their safeguarding responsibilities. This significantly impacts the safety of children.
- Leaders do not ensure that there are the required number of qualified staff available in each room. This is a breach of requirements. For example, during lunchtime, inexperienced staff do not understand how to support children and create activities to engage them while waiting for meals. This leads to children becoming anxious and irritated.
- Good hygiene practice is inadequate in the nursery. Some staff follow poor hygiene practices. For example, staff fail to change their gloves between nappy changes and changing mats are not always cleaned. Tissues are re-used to wipe children's noses. This does not help to support children in managing personal hygiene in a positive way.
- Staff do not ensure that children's behaviour is always managed effectively. The planned routines mean that children are often waiting for extended periods. Occasionally, there are limited opportunities available to them to help promote

learning and enjoyment for the next activity. Transitions during the day do not prepare children for play to come to an end. For example, when children are experimenting with block play, learning is interrupted when they are told the activity is finished. Children become frustrated and kick resources. Children's behaviour and attitude to learning is poor.

- Leaders do not ensure that the curriculum intent is implemented effectively to meet children's individual needs and interests. At times, the opportunities do not provide challenge for children to help them make the best possible progress in learning. This means that children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not achieve as well as they should.
- Staff do not consistently build on children's language and communication development. For example, during a walk to the park, staff missed many opportunities to successfully extend children's vocabulary. Furthermore, when young children sit with a group to sing nursery rhymes they quickly lose interest. Staff try to manage children's behaviour, but they lack experience to help to engage fully children.
- Varied outdoor learning opportunities are limited. Children do benefit from lots of fresh air and exercise, such as when they go for a walk to the park. However, staff do not provide children with any meaningful learning opportunities to help widen children's experiences and knowledge.
- Staff and leaders have good relationships with parents. Parents feed back that they appreciate the daily updates they receive on what their child did during the day. Parents comment positively on an online facility where they can view regular observations and comments to support their child's development.
- Staff are generally caring and considerate towards the children. During the settling-in process, the key person begins to develop a positive relationship with children and parents. They gather information, such as what children know and can do, to help promote a consistent approach.
- Children are curious to learn about nature and are interested in how plants grow. For example, each morning, older children check the seeds in the pots that they have planted for spring to see if the shoots are growing. They water the plants and understand how this aids the growth cycle.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The manager does not assure children's safety. This is because breaches in requirements have a significant impact on children's safety and welfare. Safeguarding knowledge in the nursery is poor. Most staff do not know the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff do not know which professionals to contact should they need to make a referral if they had concerns about a child or member of staff. Staffing arrangements do not always mean that there are enough qualified staff to work with children in rooms. Inexperienced staffing puts children at risk. Good health practice is not consistently implemented by staff in the nursery. Not all staff are aware of the procedures that need to be followed if a child is ill and this does not help to minimise and prevent the spread of infection among 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
ensure that all staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and understand the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and neglect and respond in a timely and appropriate manner	21/04/2023
ensure that staff are aware of the expectation to disclose any information that may affect their ongoing suitability to work with children	21/04/2023
ensure that identity checks and vetting processes have been completed for all staff	21/04/2023
ensure that ratio requirements are maintained so that at least 50% of staff in each room are suitably qualified	21/04/2023
implement effective hygiene practice that promote the good health of children to minimise or stop the spread of infection	21/04/2023
ensure that all staff understand how to manage children's behaviour in an appropriate way.	21/04/2023

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

	Due date
ensure that staff develop strategies to manage transitions for children in the day	21/04/2023

ensure that all staff are adequately trained to deliver good teaching	21/04/2023
ensure that a curriculum is in place where staff understand the learning intent of activities so they can support and extend children's development, and meet their individual needs	21/04/2023
ensure that the curriculum for language and communication is delivered consistently.	21/04/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY467575
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10284452
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	Little Stepping Stones Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP907320
Telephone number	02088706824
Date of previous inspection	25 June 2019

Information about this early years setting

Little Stepping Stones Day Nurseries opened in 2013 and is located in the London Borough of Wandsworth. The nursery is open on each weekday, from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year, except on bank holidays. There are 19 members of staff, including the manager. Of these, one holds a level 6 qualification in early years, six hold a level 3 qualification and two hold a level 2 qualification in childcare. The nursery receives funding for free early years education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jacqueline Halpin

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspection was carried out following a risk assessment where concerns had been raised about the setting.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss the curriculum and learning intentions in each room.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector sampled documentation, including insurance, paediatric first-aid training and staff suitability.
- The inspector spoke with parents and staff and took account of their views.

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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