

Inspection of Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore WR10
1PT

Inspection date: 14 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 | Not applicable |

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children's safety is not assured because the risk assessment process is not effective. The manager and staff do not follow robust procedures to identify and minimise potential hazards in order to protect children from harm. Staff do not deploy themselves appropriately to ensure that children are supervised at all times. Children sleep in a room where the provider stores a tall, upright, empty fridge that children can potentially access because they are left unsupervised during this time. The manager does not ensure fire exits are free from obstructions. Children drink from staff's cups that have been left unattended, and other staff do not know what liquid is in the cups. Furthermore, on several occasions, children attempt to enter the kitchen while cooking is taking place because staff do not follow the nursery procedure to lock the kitchen door to prevent children from accessing this area. Such practice exposes children to risks in their environment.

In the pre-school room, the environment is noisy, chaotic and disorganised. Children run around disrupting other's play. Younger children wander around for long periods. They flit from one activity to another, hoping to engage with a member of staff. However, when they try to join in an activity involving older children, staff do not include them. For example, when children reach for a coloured toy bear, staff, without any eye contact, acknowledgement or discussion, take this from them and shield the other bears with their arm to prevent younger children from accessing them. Adult-led activities, such as circle time, do not take account of children's age and abilities, which leads to children becoming bored and disengaged. Staff interrupt story time as they remove children for nappy changes or encourage children to blow whistles in close proximity. This does not support children to develop a positive attitude towards learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive the support they need to enable them to make the progress they are capable of.

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

- There are significant weaknesses in leadership and management that have a negative impact on the care, safety and learning children receive at the nursery. Leaders do not ensure that the newly appointed manager and staff receive the supervision, training and support they need to fully understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and meet their learning needs.
- The newly appointed manager has devised a sequenced and ambitious curriculum. However, due to being constantly deployed to work directly with children, she has not been able to monitor its implementation or impact across the nursery. While she has identified some weaknesses in the quality of staff teaching practice, she has not yet had the opportunity to focus on staff

development and training or to put plans in place to address areas for improvement. The high level of staff turnover has a negative impact on the care and learning that children receive.

- Leaders do not provide sufficient and up-to-date training for their staff. They do not ensure that the manager and staff fully understand the risk assessment process. Consequently, staff fail to recognise hazards in the environment and risk assessment is poor. This compromises the safety of the children.
- The manager does not always ensure that the correct number of qualified staff are available to work with the children. This impacts on the quality of care and learning that children receive.
- Staff do not manage children's behaviour effectively. As a result, children do not always behave in an appropriate way. For example, they run indoors, and older children snatch resources from younger ones. Staff do not help children to learn right from wrong and, at times, behaviour impacts on the confidence and well-being of others.
- Children with SEND do not receive the support they need to help them to make good enough progress from their individual starting points. They spend long periods wandering around unoccupied because staff do not interact positively with them or provide them with appropriate resources and activities that meet their individual learning needs. Staff report that additional funding received is not currently used to benefit these children.
- The quality of teaching is poor and interactions between staff and children are not good enough. Activities do not stimulate children's interest and do not meet their individual developmental needs. Staff do not do enough to meet the learning needs of the children attending. For example, as children play, staff do not support them to extend and build on previous learning. When staff provide a focused activity for some older children, there are no planned activities for the remaining children.
- Staff do not deploy themselves effectively to provide opportunities for children to engage in purposeful learning. Consequently, they do not help to equip children with the skills and attitudes they need to be ready for their next stage of learning, including their move on to school. That said, in the baby room, staff encourage children's communication skills well. They sing songs and constantly chat to children as they play.
- Parents comment that the staff are friendly. However, some are unaware of their children's next steps in learning and comment on the lack of progress they make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff do not identify and minimise potential hazards to help to ensure children's safety. This puts children at risk of harm. They do not deploy themselves appropriately to ensure that they supervise children at all times, including when they are asleep. Children are at risk as they drink from staff's cups that have been left unattended and fire exits are obstructed, which poses a risk to children's

safety in the event of an emergency. However, staff demonstrate a suitable knowledge of the possible indicators that may suggest a child is at risk of abuse or neglect. They know how to report any concerns they may have about a child's welfare. Leaders have robust recruitment procedures in place to help to deem staff suitable to work with 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 the risk assessment process is effective in identifying and removing all potential hazards, to keep children safe at all times | 28/04/2023 |
| provide support, training and supervision for the manager and all staff, to ensure that they have appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their roles and responsibilities | 28/04/2023 |
| deploy staff appropriately to ensure that the minimum qualification requirements are met at all times | 28/04/2023 |
| support staff to ensure they manage children's behaviour effectively | 28/04/2023 |
| ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with the care and attention they need to support their emotional well-being and to help them thrive. | 12/05/2023 |

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

| | Due date |
|--|----------|
|--|----------|

| | |
|--|------------|
| implement a broad, well-sequenced educational programme throughout the nursery that builds on all children's knowledge and skills and helps them make good progress and become motivated learners | 12/05/2023 |
| support staff to provide every child with ambitious and enjoyable activities that match their individual learning needs, interests and stage of development to ensure all children make the progress they are capable of | 28/04/2023 |
| provide all parents with information about their child's next steps in learning and the progress that their children make. | 28/04/2023 |

Setting details

| | |
|--|---|
| Unique reference number | 2696926 |
| Local authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 10286127 |
| 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 | 35 |
| Number of children on roll | 55 |
| Name of registered person | Monarchs Childcare Ltd |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP900988 |
| Telephone number | 01386565404 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Stepping Stones Day Nursery registered in 2022. The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one with qualified teacher status, two at level 2 and two at level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for a week at Christmas and bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Karen Laycock

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.
- This inspection was carried out as a result of a risk assessment, following information received about the provider.
- The inspector completed a learning walk to gather information about how the provision and curriculum are organised. The inspector observed the quality of teaching to assess the impact of this on children's learning.
- The manager carried out a number of joint observations with the inspector to evaluate the impact of teaching on children's learning. The inspector held meetings with the manager.
- Parents spoke to the inspector and gave their views of the nursery. The inspector also looked at written views from parents, provided by the manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of staff suitability.

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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