

# 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 July 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
The quality of education	<b>Inadequate</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development	<b>Inadequate</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	GoodGood

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is inadequate

Significant weaknesses in safeguarding knowledge and practice compromise children's well-being. The committee members do not conduct risk assessments in relation to staff who do not have appropriate suitability checks in place. In addition, they cannot provide assurance that students and volunteers are suitable. This does not ensure children's safety.

Children arrive happy and ready to learn. They are confident and independent. Children have access to a large outside area, where they run, climb and explore. This helps to develop their physical skills. However, staff do not provide an ambitious curriculum, nor do they plan to move children on to the next stage of their learning. As a result, children do not enjoy activities planned to meet their individual needs. Children flit from activity to activity, and they sometimes struggle to share and take care of the toys.

Behaviour is not consistently good due to the lack of stimulation. Children disrupt other children's learning by taking their belongings. Staff spend much of their time dealing with this behaviour. They chase children to retrieve the items taken, which limits the time they spend engaged in purposeful activities.

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not make the progress they are capable of due to the weakness in planning and behaviour management.

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

- The committee members do not fulfil their roles and responsibilities. There are significant weaknesses in the safeguarding requirements and quality of practice. Recruitment procedures are not robust. There are no risk assessments in place for staff who start without suitability checks. In addition, there is no evidence of suitability for students and volunteers. The very newly appointed manager and staff do not have a secure knowledge of safeguarding procedures. This impacts on children's safety and well-being.
- There are systems for the supervision of staff. However, these are not effective. They do not ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Supervision does not address weaknesses in teaching. It does not provide staff with opportunities to develop through focused targets and training. As a result, they do not improve their teaching ability.
- There are no systems in place to ensure that staff complete statutory assessments. Progress checks for two-year olds are not always completed and shared with parents. This does not help staff to accurately assess where the children are in their development and what support they need to help them in

their learning.

- Overall, most children enjoy playing together. For example, children work together to create their 'chocolate cake' in the mud kitchen. They talk about searching for leaves, 'the biggest in the whole wide world', to add to their mix. Children make good friendships. However, due to weaknesses in teaching, not all children benefit from targeted support. This means they have poor attitudes to learning, with frequent occasions where children disrupt other children's play.
- The manager demonstrates clear intentions for learning. However, staff do not understand how to implement the curriculum effectively or to make the best use of routines. For example, children experience large-group activities that have little impact on their learning. As a result, children become restless, and staff do not meet their emotional needs. In addition, transitions are not effective. Staff do not count children as they move rooms; consequently, not all children arrive at the next activity. This means that children are not always supervised effectively.
- Despite the weaknesses in the planning of activities, children enjoy role play. They pretend to get ready for bed and look for their slippers. Children return to the adults to inform them it is now morning, and they are getting up. Some children have a wide vocabulary and knowledge. For example, while exploring the tyres, children say, 'This is a car wheel as it is massive.' Others say that they think it is a motor bike wheel, and they chat freely to each other about their reasoning.
- Staff build good relationships with parents, who appreciate the updates they receive. Parents comment that staff are amazing and that their children have made progress since starting. They say their children are well supported in their move to school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The weaknesses in the arrangements around suitability vetting mean that children's safety is compromised. The manager and staff have completed safeguarding training. However, they do not have a secure understanding of the procedures to follow regarding the welfare of children. In addition, they are unsure of the process if they have concerns about adults or volunteers. This does not safeguard children. Supervision of children is not always good, as staff fail to ensure they have all children during transitions. There is a strong focus on ensuring the building is secure to prevent anyone from gaining unauthorised access.

## 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:**

	<b>Due date</b>
ensure all staff and volunteers are suitable and risk assessments are in place when suitability checks are not complete	01/08/2023
ensure the designated safeguarding lead and all staff have secure knowledge of safeguarding procedures	01/08/2023
ensure supervision is effective to help staff support children's individual needs and raise the quality of teaching to a good level	01/08/2023
implement effective behaviour management strategies to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.	01/08/2023

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

	<b>Due date</b>
improve the organisation of group times to ensure that children have their needs met and transitions are effective and well managed	15/08/2023
create and implement a suitably challenging curriculum that reflects children's individual learning needs	15/08/2023
implement effective systems to ensure progress checks for two-year olds are completed and shared with parents.	15/08/2023

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY468225
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10302504
<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 at time of inspection</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>	18 October 201918 October 2019

## 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 four members of staff who work with the children, including the manager. Of these, three hold an early years qualification at level 3, and one holds a qualification at level 2.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Lindsay Osman

## 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.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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