

Inspection of Stepping Stones of Sopley

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

Inspection date: 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Good
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate
--	------------

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are confident to come into the welcoming nursery. Staff greet children warmly and support them to be independent. For example, staff encourage them to hang their coats up and put their lunch boxes away. Children develop close friendships and learn how to cooperate in their play. For instance, they happily work together taking turns to build a wall with large bricks, and give each other praise as they create collages.

Staff know their key children particularly well and are able to recognise when they need reassurance. For example, staff comfort children while supporting and encouraging them to try different activities. They provide all children with a range of activities that are planned to meet their individual needs and interests. For instance, children show a keen interest in the birds and insects in the garden and enjoy making bird feeders. Children make good progress in their learning and development.

Staff support children to develop their understanding of risk. Staff teach children how to use equipment and help them to learn how to stay safe. For example, staff demonstrate how to use scissors safely and talk about being aware of others when riding the bicycles.

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

- The manager has worked hard since the previous inspection to make significant changes to improve the quality of the provision. They have a clear vision for the future of the nursery. The manager has liaised with outside professionals and acted on their advice to help improve staff's knowledge of how to implement the curriculum. Staff plan purposeful learning opportunities for children that they know will keep them interested and motivated to learn. This has had a positive impact on the quality of care and learning that children receive.
- Staff talk positively about the changes that have been put in place. They feel supported by the manager and committee. Staff have regular supervisions and have attended training to improve their knowledge. In addition, the manager closely monitors staff practice. For example, she provides feedback to help them to improve, and identifies additional training needs. However, the manager has not fully developed staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure that staff consistently provide a high standard of teaching.
- Children's behaviour has greatly improved since the last inspection. The manager recognises the positive impact of changing the routine on children's behaviour. For example, children enjoy having the freedom to choose to play either inside or outside for most of the day. Staff teach children to value and respect each other. For example, staff encourage turn taking and sharing, and

give children clear explanations of why some behaviour is unacceptable.

- Staff support children's enjoyment and engagement in their favourite stories. For example, children relax in cosy areas with staff and enjoy listening to stories and discussing the pictures in the book. However, on occasion, staff do not give children the time they need to think and then respond to questions, in order to extend their communication and language skills further.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The special educational needs coordinator is very knowledgeable and supportive of parents and staff. She works with different specialists to support children's individual needs. Children with SEND make good progress.
- Staff support children with their physical development well. They encourage the children to use their imaginations to challenge themselves physically. For instance, children enjoy building with the tyres and delight at rolling them down the garden. Staff celebrate with the children as they discuss whose tyre has travelled the furthest. Children excitedly encourage their friends to have a turn.
- Parents are extremely positive about the nursery. They say that they and their children have good relationships with the staff, especially their child's key person. Parents receive regular information about their children's learning and development. For example, parents recently enjoyed attending a parents' evening, where their children's progress was discussed with them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Since the last inspection, the manager and all staff have completed safeguarding training. They have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. The manager and staff are aware of what to do should they need to make a referral about a child or an adult. The manager and committee have developed effective recruitment procedures. They understand the importance of vetting committee members, staff and volunteers to ensure that they are safe to work with children. Staff undertake risk assessments daily to ensure that the environment is safe and secure for all children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- build further on staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to supporting children's care and learning, to help to raise the quality of teaching to a higher level
- strengthen staff practice in allowing children enough time to think things through and share their ideas, to further develop their communication skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY468225
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10306573
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Stepping Stones of Sopley Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP910548
Telephone number	01425 673135
Date of previous inspection	18 July 2023

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 nursery opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, for most of the year. They receive funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are five members of staff who work with the children, including the manager. Of these, four hold an early years qualification at Level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nicole Atkinson

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 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 small-group activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023