

# Learning Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY272610
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann, Theresa Flynn
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Old School House, Parker Street, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 1ES
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<b>Registered person</b>	Learning Steps Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Learning Steps Day Nursery has been registered since August 2003. The setting is in an old school premises located in Parker Street, Chorley. It is in close proximity of the town centre, schools, library and park.

The setting is a detached building, with children having access to several rooms. The ground floor consists of a baby unit, infant room with attached toileting facilities and their own sleeping area, a large communal dining room, kitchen and staff facilities. The first floor of the property consists of pre school room, toddler's room with a large room for children who attend after school. The office and staff facilities are also located on this floor.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 79 children. Presently there are 120 children on roll, of which 39 are children who attend after school. There are 25 children who receive funding for nursery education. There are no children attending who have learning difficulties or disabilities and there are children on roll with English as an additional language.

The setting operates five days a week Monday to Friday all year round excluding Christmas & Bank Holidays. Opening hours are between 07.30 until 18.00 hours.

The registered provider is qualified and experienced in childcare. There are 20 staff employed, the majority of whom are qualified or trained in childcare. In addition a cook and a cleaner are employed on a part time basis.

The setting receives support from the local authority teacher team.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff follow satisfactory hygiene practices. For example, they encourage children to wash their hands following toilet use and prior to meals. Children show confidence as they independently wash their own hands following activities, such as craft. Children use individual bedding when they sleep, which is washed daily, thus helping to promote children's good health.

Children access structured outdoor play on a regular basis and enjoy a basic range of outdoor resources. Young babies also enjoy some access to fresh air as they are taken for walks in their prams by staff, which helps in promoting children's health and well-being.

A sick child policy is in place, which is available to parents and involves comforting sick children and contacting parents if children become ill during their time at the setting. Children who are sick or tired have opportunities to rest or sleep using equipment, such as rocker chairs, cots or sleep mats.

Children are well nourished through the provision of some healthy snacks and meals, which includes a variety of fruits. Meal time provides a social occasion with children and staff sitting together in the large dinning area.

Within the nursery rooms drinks and snacks are freely available to children as continuous provision and children freely access their drinks or snacks as they choose, thus helping to develop their independence.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure indoor and outdoor environment. Resources are available at child height, which the majority of children freely access, thereby providing children with safe choices for their play. Space is suitably organised into planned areas within most of the nursery rooms, which enables children to enjoy some choice from a range of continuous provision.

Equipment is in place for the babies including, highchairs and cots. However, there is no privacy provided for children during nappy changing.

Children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe within the setting by being involved in emergency evacuation practices. Staff explain to children about issues of safety, such as not having small resources on the floor, which may cause children to trip up and explain to children why not to throw sand, thus helping to develop their understanding of safety.

However, children's safety is compromised because staff do not undertake adequate risk assessments of the premises. Hazards identified include trailing wires, unlocked fridge in which

medication is stored and accessible to children and an exposed screw within a storage unit used by the children in the toddler room.

Children's safety is also compromised when accessing the toilet area on the first floor unsupervised, which is accessible to visitors. Children attend after school and walk to the setting crossing major roads. However, children are not clearly visible and are therefore at risk.

Children's welfare is maintained because staff are aware of the child protection policy and procedure. Staff are aware of the need to record details of any concerns and of reporting to the manager any concerns they may have, thus helping to maintain the safety and welfare of children.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Activities and opportunities provided for children are satisfactory. A varied and sometimes interesting range of age appropriate resources and activities are available. These include areas of water play, sand play, craft activities, painting, construction, role play and an area in which children freely access books. However, within the nursery room for the younger children under two years, the infant room, access to continuous provision and resources is limited. Children enjoy some activities outdoors, which provides interest to help children make some progress and enjoy their time at the setting.

Staff are satisfactorily deployed offering suitable support and guidance. The children initiate their own play socialising well as they discuss the items they are playing with, which develops their social skills, language and imagination. Staff are available to offer support and guidance when necessary, for example, during carpet time, as they discuss with children their weekend news, thus helping children to learn.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is followed for the younger children and planning using this framework caters for the needs of the young children who attend. Within the baby room staff are attentive to the needs of the children, sitting with them on the floor to offer appropriate support.

Children in the nursery are generally interested in the activities provided and have free access to resources, such as puzzles, role play, books and construction. Children enjoy making party hats and gluing glitter onto Christmas shapes, thus providing children with enjoyment and choices for their play.

Children who attend after school enjoy age appropriate activities such as, computer games, television, craft activities and outdoor play, thereby providing opportunities to play and relax following their day at school.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the staff's adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage and some effective teaching helps children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Children are sometimes questioned and challenged by the staff, who on occasions ask appropriate questions of children, for example, they ask children questions in mathematical terms, such as " how can we make a star shape" during the blocks activity. Staff question children to help

them to identify the colours of the blocks they are using, which provides some appropriate questioning to make children think and to help them to learn.

Staff organise story time to encourage children to speak out in the group, thus helping them to learn and develop their confidence, for example, children are asked to talk to the group about their weekend news. Staff inform children of what not to do with explanations as to why, for example, staff stated "don't leave toys on the floor, which you have dropped because somebody may trip up", thus developing children's learning.

Children are encouraged to be independent and are able to make some choices for learning, for example, children choose their own activities and choose who they wish to play with and when to access snack, thus helping them to develop their independence.

Children are developing confidence through appropriate praise and encouragement. For example, when they receive praise for their efforts during block building as they count the number of camels in the story, which helps to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Children are socialising well as they learn to share resources when playing within the sand tray and during the craft activity, thus helping to develop their understanding of how to share. Children's personal independence is developing as they access the hand wash basins themselves to wash their hands following activities, such as sand play and craft.

Children are developing their literacy skills as they are provided with opportunities to mark make, which are available within a well resourced mark making area, during craft activities and outdoors. Children freely access books from within the book area and are learning letter sounds as they confidently name and sound out various letters within their names.

Children are developing their understanding of mathematics, as they count the number of camels and men in the story and as they correctly copy the shape structures using blocks.

Children have opportunities to develop their understanding about information and communication technology, through computer use, thus helping to develop their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology.

Children's creativity is developing through varied experiences, such as painting, gluing, construction, imaginary play and through use of various crafts, which provides opportunities to develop children's creativity and imagination. A child uses blocks to be creative explaining how he has made a bench and the blocks on the bench are the people, thereby using resources in imaginative ways and thus helping to develop imagination and creativity.

Planning is devised in a basic manner, with all staff planning activity sessions using focused activity sheets. However, there is no system in place to ensure all the six areas of learning are sufficiently covered. Learning objectives within the planning are identified, although evaluations of the focused activities do not clearly link to the learning objectives and therefore the evaluations are ineffective.

Staff do not have a system in place to identify children's learning at the onset and there is no system in place to obtain information from parents about children's starting points. Observations of children enables staff to identify where children are at in their learning and how to help them progress, but this does not take account of parents knowledge about their children's stages of development.

Observations of children are undertaken, which sometimes identifies the next steps in their learning, although observations are not used to inform future planning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing their awareness and understanding about diversity, through discussion and activities, such as topics involving Chinese New Year. Resources are available which reflect diversity, including books and dolls and children are made aware of the needs of others, for example, having access to small world figures, which reflect disabilities, thus raising children's awareness of the needs and customs of others.

The behaviour of children is good. They accept and work with age appropriate strategies, praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour. Children receive praise, for example, when they discuss their weekend news, thus helping to develop children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are developing their understanding of right and wrong through explanations by staff of acceptable behaviour.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately as they learn to take turns and share, for example, during the craft activity.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children's individual needs are appropriately met because of the positive relationships which have been established with parents. Information is shared through written policies and procedures, daily discussions, diary sheets for younger children and through newsletters, thus helping parents to remain informed. However, the complaints procedure does not include the correct telephone number of the regulator.

Parents do not have regular access to their child's development record, within pre-school and parents do not have regular opportunities to comment about their children's development and learning.

Parents are informed about the various topics and themes by use of the notice board and newsletters, however, there are no other systems in place to encourage parents to be involved with their children's learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Time and space is organised satisfactorily so that children are able to independently play and relax within the setting. Some of the children access varied resources, which helps in promoting their development. Time is organised to cater for structured, free play and meal times, therefore meeting children's individual needs.

Adequate procedures are in place for the recruitment of staff, the majority of whom are trained in childcare. Staff meetings are undertaken twice yearly providing a forum in which staff discuss various nursery related issues. Adequate staff to child ratios are maintained, thereby ensuring that children receive appropriate levels of support to help their individual developmental requirements.

Documentation is maintained in line with the National Standards, thus helping to promote the satisfactory management of the provision. However, there is no evidence maintained confirming staff have suitable Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) clearance.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory.

There is some understanding by staff of the Foundation Stage curriculum and staff are clear on their roles when delivering the provision. However, management do not have an effective system in place for monitoring the effectiveness of the provision for nursery education and therefore children's progress is limited.

New staff are satisfactorily inducted and a staff appraisal system is in place involving staff identifying their own training needs and accessing appropriate training.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the last inspection there was one recommendation raised relating to documentation.

The register of attendance for children and staff has been revised to clearly identify the numbers of children and staff present.

Due to the action taken the care and safety of children has been enhanced.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop a suitable physical environment by providing privacy for children during nappy changing
- promote children's safety by formalising risk assessments and ensuring they are adequately supervised whilst using the first floor toilet

- promote the safety of children by making safe hazards relating to the storage of medication in the baby room, trailing wires within the infant room and an exposed screw within a storage unit housed in the toddler room
- promote children's safety when they are walking from school by ensuring they are clearly visible when crossing the road
- promote the enjoyment and achievement of children within the infant room by providing a wide and varied range of age appropriate activities and resources to enhance children's all round development
- develop documentation by ensuring the complaints procedure includes the correct telephone number of the regulator and that evidence of staff's CRB disclosures is maintained.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop teaching and learning by developing a system to identify children's starting points in their learning as they begin their time at the setting
- develop planning by ensuring a system is devised to ensure all six areas of learning are sufficiently covered, that evaluations of learning objectives are effective and by ensuring that the next steps in children's learning are used to inform future planning
- develop partnership with parents by ensuring parents have regular access to their child's development record and that parents are provided with regular opportunities to comment about and be involved with their children's development and learning
- develop leadership and management by devising a system to ensure the provision for nursery education is monitored and effective.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)