

# Little Steps Neighbourhood Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY289844
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<b>Inspector</b>	Rachel Ruth Britten
<b>Setting Address</b>	Lister Drive, Liverpool, L13 7HH
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<b>Registered person</b>	Lister Steps Ltd.
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School 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 good. 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?

Little Steps Neighbourhood Nursery is part of Lister Steps Limited, a committee based organisation with charitable status run by a Board of Directors. It opened in June 2004 and operates from a pre-fabricated building. It is situated in a re-development area in Tuebrook. A maximum of 61 children may attend the setting at any one time for full day, sessional, out of school or holiday care. The setting is open each week day during term time from 07.30 to 18.00 and in school holidays from 08.30 to 17.30, with only bank holiday and Christmas week closure. All children share access to secure enclosed play areas.

There are currently 64 children aged under five years on the nursery roll and the playgroup has 21 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these, 13 receive funding for early education. There are 34 school age children on the out of school club roll and approximately 40 on the play scheme roll. Children mostly come from the local catchment area of Tuebrook, Old Swan and Kensington. The setting also supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and five children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 28 members of staff. Of these, 24 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is satisfactory because practitioners keep the setting clean and provide suitable hand washing and toileting routines. Plenty of physical exercise is usually provided indoors and outdoors and children are offered healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. Sufficient paper towels and toilet paper are available, but some rooms do not benefit from warm water for hand washing, easy to use taps, tissues for nose blowing, liquid soap and accessible paper towels. This holds back children's independence in taking care of their own hygiene. Most staff encourage children to be independent in dressing themselves and protecting their clothes for messy play, but they do not consistently teach and reinforce learning about hygiene and cross-infection. This means that pre-school children do not use the rolling snack food and drink hygienically because they do not remember to clean their hands before taking fruits from the communal bowl and they do not always use clean cups for their drinks of water. Kitchen, toilet and nappy changing areas are well organised and kept clean, but children have little involvement in keeping their play environment clean because staff do all the washing up, sweeping up the sand and mopping up water spillages.

Good attention to individual children's health needs means that toileting and dietary needs are appropriately catered for according to each child's needs and their parents' wishes. Many staff have first aid qualifications and consent is obtained for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical treatment. Accident and medication records are well maintained and there are good systems for obtaining consents for, and storing of, temperature reducing medications. Children enjoy good levels of physical activity and challenge both indoors and outdoors, taking part in climbing, balancing, ball skills, group games, chalking and riding activities in the gym and grassed playground. In addition, a 'boogie bus' is available to transport a number of children safely to the nearby park and places of interest.

Children are well nourished and enjoy a healthy diet through snacks, such as apple, banana, yoghurt, toast and bread sticks. Brown bread is sometimes offered and toddlers and playgroup children learn to make their own sandwiches or spread their crackers. Pre-school children's independence in pouring and serving are fostered well through a rolling snack table. Out of school club children enjoy a healthy meal of vegetable stew and brown bread because there is plenty spare from the nursery lunch. Water is drunk in playgroup and pre-school and is optional for toddlers, but juice is given to babies and after school club children. Teeth cleaning is not presently provided for, but consideration is being given to re-introducing this if parents request it.

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

The provision is good.

All children are cared for in a bright and welcoming home environment with a happy and purposeful atmosphere. The spaces are invitingly set out to maximise children's choices and provide cosy spaces to set up and use the resources. Children's coats and bags are accessibly stored and resource boxes are labelled and accessible so that children can easily set up and use a good range of media. The walls are covered with displays of children's work, photos of them

at play and relevant information for them to refer to, such as the key worker groups and behaviour incentive charts. Children use a good range of stimulating resources which contribute well to their enjoyment and achievement, they are set out for them to access easily. Floor, table top and comfortable seating are plentiful and there are varied resources for messy play and good use of music, role play and books. Children use less natural objects and materials, although babies enjoy various textures and materials in 'treasure baskets' and pre-school children have, on occasions, taken part in growing vegetables and made leaf collages after walks in the locality. Children feel confident in their surroundings and feel that it is truly theirs because they are allowed to explore and use everything within it.

There is good security to the two public entrance doors for the nursery and the playgroup and out of school rooms. Staff are highly vigilant and keep the registers accurate and up to date. They know where each child is at all times and work as a team so that children are escorted if they want to visit the toilets or play in the gym room. Careful arrangements using passwords and enrolment information are made to ensure that staff know exactly who is collecting a child and who is permitted to do so if this is not the usual parent or designated carer. Children's safety is supported well through documentation and staff's practice. Regular fire drills are held and records are kept of these. Electrical appliances, wiring and fire equipment are checked and documentation about what to do in the event of any emergency is posted. Risk assessments are undertaken to manage the play environment safely and identified hazards are promptly fixed by the caretaker. Wet floors are always marked clearly with signs and any accidents or injuries children arrive at the setting with are carefully documented and signed for by parents.

Children are mostly learning about how to keep themselves safe because staff teaching about safety is clear and balanced. Children learn how to walk slowly indoors and to play quietly away from areas where children are sleeping. Staff show children how to manage tools, such as cutlery, glue and scissors safely as they eat their meals or make things. However, pre-school children are taking little responsibility for their environment because they are not very involved in cleaning and clearing away their own activities. For example, staff mop floors under the water tray and sweep up the sand under the sand tray rather than involving children in this. Children are well protected from abuse because all staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection and safeguarding procedures. Staff understand how to work together with other agencies to support children who are at risk and have procedures in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The named person for child protection has been on recent safeguarding children training although she has not yet completed the planned update of the child protection policy.

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

The provision is good.

Children's enjoyment and achievements across the whole setting are good. Children immediately settle to play, discover and experiment because the environment and staff offer them a good level of challenge, choice and independence. For example, children in the playgroup enjoy a detailed hospital role play, using bandages, stethoscopes, phones, keyboards and real x-ray pictures as they 'treat' their friends and staff. Similarly, babies and toddlers enjoy a wide variety of messy play, using gloop, mousse, floor paints, shaving foam, sand, play dough and water. Staff offer ideas and challenge children to discuss what they are doing and thinking so that they are becoming confident learners. Children attending after school also enjoy a variety of table top games, crafts for the next wall display and construction. They all play well together when staff lead them in energetic group games after tea. All children are given time to persist in favourite activities and try new things but this is balanced with encouragement to take part

in looking after themselves, their friends and their surroundings. As a result, they help to set up and tidy resources away and cooperate well.

The daily routines are simple and group times are skilfully used by most staff to enthusiastically explain what choices children have, to talk about the weather and the date and to find out who is here. This helps children to have a strong sense of group identity with their friends. Children attending the after school club are also offered a good variety of pastimes including interesting craft ideas which capture their imagination and often link to celebrations, such as Easter. Activities in most rooms are linked to a theme, although this is not always discussed very clearly with children to help them make connections in their learning. However, child initiated activity is successfully encouraged and developed so that children are learning through favourite media and ideas that particularly interest them at the time. For example, the subjects of space and bereavement have been covered in pre-school because particular children have wanted to explore these topics. All children under three years have a developmental profile composed under the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff make good quality, regular written observations and assessments and use these to plan the next steps that individual children should take next. Every child's key worker collates all their observations into one file and makes good use of photos to make these records come to life for parents to view. Similarly, photo albums around every base room show the variety of activities and experiences enjoyed during the year.

### Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff provide a stimulating and nurturing environment and atmosphere in the pre-school room and foster high levels of enjoyment, self-confidence and child-initiated activity. Staff's skills, experience and knowledge of the Foundation Stage enable them to promote each one's development in all areas through choices that the child has made for themselves. As a result, children are eager to learn because they feel in control and can follow their interests. For example, children who enjoy arts and pencil skills spend long periods carefully colouring shapes, cutting them out and writing their names on their work. They are developing good communication, small motor, language and literacy skills as they talk with staff about shapes and what they are doing. However, some children make better progress than others because adult interaction is inconsistent. For example, some children play in the sand and water and use the computer and gym room with little adult interaction to extend their learning. This is because key staff are taking time to keep the environment safe and clean rather than involving children alongside them in this.

Each child has a developmental profile highlighting what stepping stones they have reached during each term. Evidence examples of their knowledge and achievements are retained in note, photo and assessment document form. These are placed in date order in a file to aid completion of each profile. Children's art and craft work all goes home each day unless it is part of a display, but pieces of work are not regularly discussed with children or notes put on them about what they show. As a consequence, parents receive little regular information about what their child knows and can do. Display books of photos are also placed around the room to show interested parents how children's play and activities are leading to their development, but these are not clearly linked to the areas of learning. Some planned activities are assessed, but plans are very flexible to move with children's interests and enjoyment. This maximises children's progress when key worker staff are regularly in touch with, and steering children towards, the next things they need to learn. However, some staff working with pre-school children are less engaged with them and some children play alone, with minimal input from staff to challenge, extend or consolidate their learning. In addition, the policy of allowing

children to settle for one month before beginning assessments after moving into the pre-school wastes valuable learning and assessment time and holds back children's progress.

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

The provision is good.

Children are helped to be independent, confident and considerate learners because the staff design the environment to maximise its welcome and children's sense of belonging. They use photos and label work so that children look around and know that they are valued. For example, pre-school children have photos of their families and pets around the setting and babies have mirrors and textures low down on the walls for them to investigate. Staff greet children and their carers individually and share information to ensure that children's routines and circumstances are taken into account so that they can settle easily. Children attending after school enjoy a friendly club atmosphere and their parents are made very welcome, sharing in the snack tea themselves if they wish.

Children are helped to consider and value diversity because there are themed craft activities, for example, about the Chinese new year. There are also good resources, such as books, dressing up, musical instruments, dolls, play figures, puzzles, posters and games which show positive images of various cultures and disabilities. There is a staff member who coordinates equal opportunities information for the benefit of all staff to ensure that all children's individual and social needs are given priority within the context of social need in the locality. Children also experience exchange visits and links with an African school and learn about the different lifestyles experienced there. They raise funds together and have sent their friends there a present of the local football strip. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children and adults with physical disabilities and behaviour or learning needs are included fully in the life of the setting because the setting is on one level and staff are both committed to inclusion and skilled to identify emerging concerns. They liaise sensitively with parents and relevant professionals to ensure that they plan and work together using recognised and consistent techniques which benefit children with emerging developmental needs. A number of children who speak English as an additional language are also supported. Staff are skilled and successful in promoting good behaviour and developing social skills because they include and involve all children in decision making and promote group cohesion. Children behave well and are able to share and cooperate because staff model appropriate play skills, ask children to help them to resolve conflicts themselves and offer easy ways for children to respect, consider, praise and apologise to one another without losing face or feeling humbled. Children are cooperative and can listen attentively and participate in group activities because staff provide for them to have active times and make group times interesting and fun.

The quality of partnerships with parents and carers for nursery education is satisfactory. All children receive consistency of care between all elements of their life because key staff communicate well with parents and obtain good quality consents and child details from the outset. Staff are supportive to parents and show interest in their family circumstances. Parents are given a detailed brochure about the policies and procedures of the setting, but little information about the content of the Foundation Stage curriculum is given. Some parents complete the forms given about what their child can do when they start at pre-school so that staff can plan for each child from their individual starting points. There are also regular newsletters from each base room incorporating relevant information, but the pre-school newsletters do not often give ideas about how to extend children's learning at home. Scissor

skills packs for home use were not well received by some parents and staff are unsure about how to engage parents realistically in extending their child's learning at home. There are twice yearly individual appointments for parents to hear about their child's progress and see a written report and parents are encouraged to view their child's progress record, but parents do not all attend these. Nevertheless, parents are very satisfied with the child care and education in the setting and receive a good amount of social and health information support.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Recruitment, vetting and staff support systems work well to ensure that children are well protected and cared for by trained, up to date and motivated staff. Staff ratios are generally good and there are regular staff meetings. All staff and key workers are well motivated to work as a team to meet the needs of each individual child in the group. There are opportunities for ongoing professional training and some staff have specialist lead responsibilities for areas such as behaviour, equal opportunities and child protection. However, induction, appraisal and training records are not clearly set out on staff files.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The management team act as approachable role models for the whole setting and are committed to promoting an inclusive environment where every child matters. They ensure that staff use the 'every child matters' agenda and evaluate their room under the five outcomes on a regular basis. However, these evaluations lack detail about what ideas and changes are planned to continue to improve the outcomes for children. The nursery as a whole are developing their use of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are displaying this clearly around the rooms, but they do not have clear action plans for ongoing development. In addition, the Foundation Stage curriculum is less well delivered to pre-school children because the organisation of the day means that these children move in and out of their base room to suit staffing arrangements. As a result, they spend time with toddlers and different staff and are not benefiting from well planned use of their time and base room.

Policies and procedures work well in practice to promote good outcomes for children. Accident, behaviour incident and complaint procedures work well and child details, daily registers, safety checklists and risk assessments support children's welfare and safety well. Children's details, profiles and evidence of their work are accessibly kept for frequent and easy reference. Policies are made accessible to parents. However, written parental permission was not in place for one instance of medication administration, although the parent had supplied the medication in case of need, was contacted by phone before it was given and signed the medication record to acknowledge what was given.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were five areas for improvement identified at the last inspection of care in March 2005. These have been adequately addressed to improve children's health, welfare and enjoyment and achievement in the setting. The nursery now complies with environmental health requirements in the kitchen areas and has greatly improved the organisation of play materials in all the base rooms so that they are stimulating and promote choice. In addition, the resources and activities provide children with positive images of various cultures to improve their understanding of diversity.

Records for recording behaviour incidents, including incidents of physical restraint, are now fully in place. However, child protection procedures and policies are still being updated and do not yet make clear what the procedure is if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff.

### **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 good. 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):

- ensure that pre-school children gain independence in adopting hygienic routines for use of the rolling snack
- extend children's involvement in keeping their play environments clean, tidy and safe
- ensure that written parental permission is always gained before any medications are given.

#### **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):

- ensure consistently high levels of staff interaction to each pre-school child, so that every child makes as much progress as they can and has a full and detailed progress record
- increase the opportunities for parents of pre-school children to be involved in continuing their child's learning at home and their opportunities to regularly see and understand how their child is progressing in each of the areas of learning
- ensure that movements around the setting during the daily routine and transfers of children to the next rooms in the nursery do not hold back their progress.



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