

Step By Step Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY371767
Inspection date	05/05/2009
Inspector	Vivienne Rose
Setting address	15 Chandler Street, LONDON, E1W 2QL
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

Description of the setting

Step by Step Nursery is one of two nurseries operated by a private provider. It opened in 2008 and operates from purpose-built premises within the Wapping Children Centre in Wapping in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 52 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 28 children aged from birth to under-five years on roll, some in part-time places.

The nursery is in receipt of funding for free nursery education and currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. There are seven members of staff including the manager, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a higher qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Children are safe and secure because the staff know them well and are caring. The staff identify the children's achievements and interests and children make satisfactory progress given their starting points. Younger children and babies make good progress in their learning, however, there are times when the older children's play lacks focus and challenge. Sometimes the lack of consistent staffing and organisational issues in areas of the nursery impacts on the children's well-being. The management has not yet developed a system for self-evaluation, however, management and staff are beginning to identify areas for improvement within the setting to address these weaknesses. Children are treated with equal concern and their individual needs are met through staff successfully engaging in a partnership with parents, which is a clear strength within the group.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve the deployment of staff and ensure that there are adequate transitional arrangements in place for children to make sure that children's security and well-being is supported at all times
- develop the consistency of the systems for observation, assessment, evaluation and planning for the older children to ensure that the experiences are appropriate and challenging; pay particular attention to providing opportunities for the children to learn the sounds of letters and words and to access creative resources independently
- ensure that all accidents are recorded effectively and that parents sign an acknowledgement; all incidents and injuries which occur to children outside of the setting are recorded effectively to safeguard the welfare of children

- ensure that accurate records are maintained throughout the nursery of all children's arrival and departure times.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff and management have a generally good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, but have yet to fully implement this effectively throughout the nursery. The planning for younger children and babies is fully implemented and meets the needs of the children well. However, there are some inconsistencies regarding observation and planning for the older children. As a result, the older children's play sometimes lacks challenge to support their next steps towards the early learning goals. The setting has enlisted the support from the teacher on site to ensure that appropriate systems are developed. Younger children benefit from the key worker system and staff working with younger children build strong relationships with them to promote their welfare and security. However, there are times when the organisation and the staff deployment for the care of the older children lacks consistency and as a result children are unable to build strong relationships with a key worker. This impacts on their security and well-being. For example, when children are transferring from one room to another and they are unable to relate to the same member of staff, which causes them to feel unsettled and insecure.

There has been some self-evaluation carried out, but this is not formalised at present. However, after discussion the manager has a clear understanding of the provisions weaknesses in its organisation and how to implement systems for improvement.

The setting has built good relationships with parents and this shows in the commitment the parents have to the setting. Children's safety is generally promoted well through appropriate safety measures, risks assessments for indoors, outdoors and for outings and staff that care about the children's welfare. There is a secure entry system to each room and a visitors' book. However, staff do not always remind children about how to safely use equipment such as scissors or to adopt healthy habits to prevent cross-infection, for example, when children sneeze or cough.

There are clear policies and procedures in place to safeguard the children and to ensure that their individual needs are met. However, some organisational procedures are in the process of being reviewed.

Adults have attended suitable safeguarding children training and are aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe and there is a clearly written safeguarding policy. Although, sometimes they forget to record injuries to children that occur outside of the nursery, to full protect their welfare. Accidents are recorded, however, these records are not always acknowledged by parents.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are helped to learn through daily routines and caring staff who interact well, in particular with babies and younger children. The environment is stimulating and staff encourage learning through experimentation and access to a variety of resources that are age and stage appropriate. Staff carefully observe children and plan activities that help children to develop their next steps, for example, in walking or crawling and using their developing skills for communication. Planning is in place for older children and next steps are devised. However, there are some inconsistencies in the frequency and methods used to identify appropriate next steps as systems are not yet fully implemented. A range of resources are provided for children and they show concentration and play with what is provided for them. However, the environment planned for older children is not always used effectively and often lacks purpose and structure to challenge and support children's learning effectively. For example, the children have access to cutting and sticking and finger painting, but the variety of materials to extend this learning is limited. This means that children have few opportunities to use their own thoughts and ideas.

Very young children are confident as they crawl around and explore and investigate using a wider variety of resources including natural resources. Babies respond to music, shaking rattles and they use treasure baskets and battery operated toys. Physical development is fostered positively as babies try to pull themselves up and walk with aids provided by staff who know them well. All children in the nursery have access to the secure, soft surface outdoor area to play and promote their motor skills and well-being. They are encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after using the garden for play and that they need to use a tissue for their nose. However, staff do not always remind children or discuss the reasons for these routines. Children enjoy a variety of healthy meals and snacks, which includes chicken casserole, and fresh vegetables, such as cauliflower and broccoli. There is plenty of choice as a selection of fruit includes, bananas and apple and grapes. Children sit together at small tables at mealtimes, which are happy and social occasions. However, at present children do not serve themselves to promote their independence skills.

Children count using rhymes and songs enabling them to learn number names. However, less emphasis is placed on children learning the sounds of letters and words and to learn about calculating in every day situations. Children use resources including markers, paint and crayons. However, these are not easily accessible and the variety of creative resources provided is limited, which does not enable children to self-select and make choices. Children enjoy listening to stories, for example, the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' and listen to music from around the world, such as songs in French and Greek. Adults encourage children to develop habits and behaviour appropriate to good learners and to be responsible for their actions towards others. Children are encouraged to share and take turns and are kind to each other. They are able to join in, make friends and show respect for each other taking account of their diverse needs and backgrounds. Children enjoy playing within the home corner accessing a variety of utensils from around the world to develop their understanding of the world. They play with the 'Bob the Builder' set and enjoy using a hairdryer in the home area, plant seeds in pots and

watch them grow and play with magnetic letters on the whiteboard. Children are supported to develop a sense of time when they have conversations with staff and ask 'When will Daddy come and pick me up?' and staff respond well to reassure the children. Most children develop a sense of self-worth through the supportive interaction of the adults caring for them.

A comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place, which are shared with parents and implemented satisfactorily. However, some documentation is in need of updating to ensure that parents have accurate information and that the correct details are maintained on children to support their well-being. For example, permission to use sun creams and who may have parental responsibility for children. Sometimes staff forget to ensure that the registers are maintained to show the arrival and departure of all children within the nursery, to safeguard their welfare should an emergency occur.

There is regular communication with the parents of all of the children through the use of 'special books' where parents can make comments about their child's developmental progress and also through the use of a daily feedback sheet. Review meetings have already been established with younger children's parents to ensure that they can be fully involved in planning the next steps for their child.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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