

# Little Steps (Higham Ferrers) Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY378109

**Inspection date**

14/01/2009

**Inspector**

Kelly Eyre

**Setting address**

5 College Street, Higham Ferrers, RUSHDEN,  
Northamptonshire, NN10 8DX

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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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## **Description of the setting**

Little Steps (Higham Ferrers) Ltd opened in 2008 and is privately owned. It operates from a converted building situated on the main road through Higham Ferrers in Northamptonshire. A ramp to the main entrance means that the premises are easily accessible. Children have access to the fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting receives funding for early education. It is open each weekday throughout the year and sessions are from 07:45 to 18:00. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 65 places and there are currently 105 children on roll who are within this age group. Most of the children live locally and a small number of them attend other settings such as local nurseries.

The setting is also registered to offer care for children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the Early Years age range. There are currently no children on roll in this age range.

There are 13 staff members. Of these, 11 hold relevant childcare qualifications and one is completing training to achieve a level 2 childcare qualification.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall, the setting makes good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The exceptionally flexible approach to planning and thorough assessment procedures are particular strengths. These ensure that children are consistently offered appropriate opportunities and make good progress in all areas. Caring staff get to know the children well and therefore offer them appropriate support so that they are always included, their needs are met and they can participate meaningfully. The managers and staff work together to review the setting's practice, realistically identifying strengths and weaknesses. There are clear plans for ongoing improvements, therefore ensuring that children continue to be offered positive daily experiences.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- promote children's safety further by ensuring that emergency evacuation procedures are clearly displayed
- develop further the observation and assessment methods so that these clearly show children's starting points and their progress.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The thorough procedures for evaluating daily practice and formulating clear action plans mean that the setting shows good potential for continuing to improve the outcomes for children. Managers have a clear vision for the future and involve staff and parents in researching and developing improvements. Examples of recent improvements include the extension of activity planning and the laying of a new floor in order to extend the play opportunities for children.

Children's daily experiences are positive and their care is consistent because managers support staff well, providing clear guidance and encouragement to attend further training. The consistent implementation of policies supports the efficient running of the setting, thereby ensuring that children are offered a safe environment in which to play and learn. Daily safety checks are carried out and the risk assessments are regularly reviewed. Children are encouraged to understand safety issues, such as the reasons for not running between the play areas. However, their safety is not fully promoted as emergency evacuation procedures are not displayed throughout the building. Comprehensive procedures for safeguarding children ensure that their welfare is promoted and they are protected at all times.

The setting works well with parents, carers and other professionals, ensuring that appropriate information is exchanged in order to promote children's learning and development. For example, there are good procedures to obtain information from parents about children's likes, dislikes and daily routines. This information is then used to inform daily care and activity planning.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children are consistently offered an exciting range of activities and opportunities that enable them to make good progress across all areas of learning and development. Staff can react instantly to children's interests and their individual developmental needs because the planning is exceptionally flexible and is directly influenced by the comprehensive observations and assessments of children. Information is obtained from parents about children's preferences and routines. This is used to inform care and planning but children's development is not fully promoted as there is no initial assessment or consistent overview of their progress.

Children's emotional development is promoted and they are happy and have secure relationships with staff. For example, babies laugh and giggle as staff members play 'boo!' and sing to them. This sense of security is prevalent throughout the setting, with children confidently stating their views and independently choosing resources and activities. Staff support children well and encourage them to think critically and solve problems. For example, young children complete puzzles and work out the most effective way to stack building blocks.

Children's learning and understanding are developed because staff play alongside them and offer gentle support and encouragement. For example, children explore

toy animals and are then encouraged to name the animals and discuss where they live. Their home language is known and respected and is incorporated into daily activities and routines. Children also learn to communicate in other ways, such as using picture prompts or sign language.

The thoughtful planning of the environment means that it is rich in signs and displays, with attractive, easily accessible resources. Children are therefore able to explore and make choices about their play. For example, a group of children choose to explore the 'messy room' where they play with sand and foam, paint at the easel, explore gel numbers and draw on a wipe board.

Children work well together and eagerly share their thoughts and ideas. For example, children share their enjoyment of a clip from a computer programme by working with staff to recreate a veterinary surgery like the one they have been watching. They have many hours of enjoyment as they become engrossed in the numerous role play scenarios arising from this.

Children are competent in the use of technology, for example, selecting and completing programmes on the computer and making good use of the interactive white board. Children are offered opportunities to learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles. For example, they can explain why they wash their hands before eating and after using the bathroom.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.