

Small Steps Day Nursery And Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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).

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.

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Description of the setting

Small Steps Day Nursery is one of two settings and is privately owned and managed. It was registered in 2010 and is situated in West Kirby, Wirral. The nursery is on ground floor level and is accessible to all children and their families. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 7am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year, with the exception of Bank Holidays. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 46 children may attend the nursery at any one time, all of whom may be on the Early Years Register. There are currently 49 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where staff know them well and respect their individuality. Children are involved in a range of activities and experiences, both inside and out, which support their progress towards the early learning goals. There is a strong commitment to working with parents, carers and professionals. As a result, children's individual needs are well met and they are settled in the nursery. The self-evaluation process is in place to identify the strengths or areas to develop within the nursery.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure there is a balance of child-initiated and adult-led, play-based activities and increase opportunities for children to make choices in their play
- extend opportunities to promote children's independence, for example, through routines at snack and lunch time.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Good systems are in place to safeguard children and staff are aware of the child protection procedures to follow. The setting has a designated safeguarding member of staff to provide leadership in this field. Records and information are in place to protect children's welfare. Risk assessment of the areas and resources

used are carried out and recorded. Security measures ensure that unauthorised persons do not gain access to the premises and all visitors are recorded in the visitors log. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure staff employed are suitable to work with children. Inductions, meetings and appraisals keep staff well informed. Access to ongoing training provides staff with good opportunities to continue to build on their knowledge of childcare and education.

Staff are deployed effectively to ensure that children are well supervised at all times. A key worker system is in place to provide children with effective support in their progress and help them feel secure. The provision supports and promotes equality and inclusion and the setting is accessible to all. There are planned activities to help develop children's awareness of different cultures. Toys and resources are well organised, which children can access with no gender bias. This has a positive impact on their learning and development. The outside area has recently been renovated and the children enjoy the new surroundings, which offer stimulating play within a child-friendly environment. Parents' and children's views were sought as to how best to develop the outside spaces. The result of their collaboration is an outside area that offers plenty of opportunity for children to enjoy and benefit from their time in the fresh air. The setting has put into place systems for self-evaluation to strive towards constant improvement. The setting demonstrates its capacity for improvement in the future because it seeks the suggestions of advisors, parents and staff. This is the nursery's first inspection.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents and carers are keen for their comments to be included within the report. They say they are 'very happy' with the care and education their children receive. They state that a particular strength of the setting is that the staff are approachable and always available to discuss any issues. Daily written and verbal information exchanges and display boards keep parents informed. Parents evenings, a suggestion box and questionnaires provide additional opportunity for parents to contribute to the operation of the setting and be involved in their child's learning. Children's development files are accessible and children's key workers discuss their progress with parents to encourage everyone to work together to support children's learning and progress. Staff work with other professionals to promote continuity and progression of children's learning and well-being. For example, they work with the speech therapist to meet individual needs and support children's progress. They are aware when the need arises to work in partnership with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure a cohesive service is provided to children and their families.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They plan purposeful play which generally provides a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. However, some children spend a lot of their morning in adult-directed activities. For example, they go from circle time to group story time. Staff then place them into pairs or a small group and direct them to either a floor puzzle or construction activity. They have no choice as to when they complete their 'ladybird stone' as they are individually called to the table to complete the craft task before

returning to the whole group for an exercise session outside. The directed activities provide children with a variety of learning experiences, which they enjoy. However, they do not maximise children's opportunity to become independent thinkers or enable them to be inquisitive in their learning.

Good hygiene routines are followed throughout the setting and additional measures are in place for the baby room. All visitors to the room are required to remove or cover outdoor footwear before walking on the carpet areas, helping to ensure the environment is consistently clean and comfortable. For practical purposes there is an area of no carpet to permit entrance without having to observe the footwear requirements. Babies have plenty of space to move around and play under the supervision of their familiar room staff. The staff know individual babies well and provide them with a good level of support to extend their learning. For example, they have introduced 'baby bear' to join story time and help the older babies remain engaged for longer when listening to stories. Staff place themselves on the floor with the babies to support their play and encourage them to explore their environment. Babies have daily access to fresh air in their own designated play area or when they go for walks in their prams in the local community. Outings are an integral part of the nursery routine and enable children to develop awareness of their local and wider community. Each week staff walk with a group of children to the local greengrocers to select and purchase the fruit for the week ahead. They visit the park to look for shapes they have been introduced to during their topic work. Good use is made of the environment to bring learning to life, such as, when they travel on local transport to visit the museum or the urban farm. Children's understanding of diversity and difference is enhanced as they celebrate festivals and special events throughout the year. All children are encouraged to access all toys and resources, regardless of their gender. This ensures that children learn to value aspects of their own lives and the diverse society in which they live.

Children and babies make good progress in their learning and development because the staff work together well to plan activities. Key workers tailor the plans to meet the individual needs and interests of their children. Children show a good understanding of the nursery routines and as a result they develop their confidence and feel secure in an environment where they can predict what happens next. Children feel important at circle time as they take turns to be the nominated 'helping hand'. They smile and display their joy as they are elected to the position and take pride in being given the extra responsibility which comes with the role. They are interested and responsive as they listen to the story about the ladybird who did not want to have to do very much. They help themselves to books and turn the pages carefully. They learn about different life spans as they nurture the caterpillars and observe how they are preparing to spin their cocoon.

Children count in everyday play and have many opportunities to recognise numbers. Rhymes and songs promote opportunity for simple calculation. A range of resources, such as programmable toys, cause and effect resources and computers, develop children's understanding of technology. Children can express their creativity through music and can role play using puppets and small world play. They explore different mediums, such as, dough, sand, water and paints. Fresh, nutritionally balanced meals prepared by the cook on the premises promote

children's health and general well-being. However, routines in place for meals and snacks do not promote children's independence. For example, all lunches are plated up for children, food is cut up for them, their drinks are poured by staff and the tables are pre-set by the cook. Children have fresh water at hand throughout the day to help them stay hydrated. Children enjoy and learn through purposeful activities about leading a healthy lifestyle. All the children have access to outside play spaces all year round. There is plenty of opportunity to develop physical skills indoors and outside as children handle tools, such as cutters to shape dough and spades and buckets to dig in the sand or soil. The outside play spaces provide ample opportunity for children to enjoy outside play and benefit from fresh air and exercise.

Procedures are in place to help children understand how to keep themselves safe, for example, they practise fire drills. They behave well as they negotiate, share toys, take turns and show consideration for each other. Staff provide lots of praise for children's efforts to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met