

Learning Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY272610

Inspection date

05/03/2012

Inspector

Ruth Thrasher

Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Learning Steps Day Nursery registered in 2003 and is privately owned. It operates from a detached former school building with a secure outdoor play area to the front and a garden at the rear. Children have access to several rooms on the ground and first floor. There are different rooms for babies, toddlers, pre-school and out of school care as well as a shared dining room. The nursery is in a residential area of Chorley. It is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm all year round, excluding Christmas and Bank Holidays.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 79 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery provides care for children from birth to 11 years. There are currently 90 children on roll, 64 of whom are in the early years age group. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are 14 members of staff who work directly with the children and all have a relevant early years qualification to at least level 2, with 12 staff being qualified to level 3 and above. They include a qualified teacher and a member of staff who is working towards Early Years Professional Status. In addition a cook and housekeeper are employed. The nursery provides funded early education for children aged three and four years. It has achieved the Lancashire 'Step into Quality' award.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

A high commitment to providing good quality childcare and professional and dedicated staff, result in an environment where children really enjoy their learning and their needs are very well met. Overall, planning and assessment support children to make good progress in all areas and develop an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles. Resources are used exceptionally well to support children's learning. Partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies are mostly very effective in providing continuity and support for children. Considerable improvements have been made since the last inspection, and management and staff demonstrate a strong capacity to continue to improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the systems of assessment and planning to ensure they fully support children's progress across all aspects of the areas of learning and are

- consistent throughout the nursery
- improve further the systems in place to ensure a regular two-way flow of information with other early years providers to ensure continuity in children's learning and welfare.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding children and all have completed relevant training. They are very clear about procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a member of staff. Children's safety is clearly a high priority in the nursery with regular risk assessments completed for the premises and activities. Staff carry out safety checks before children go out to play and count the children in and out. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure adults caring for children are suitable and Criminal Record Bureau checks are updated every three years.

The owner has a clear vision for the nursery and supports staff to undertake further training and take on different responsibilities. Self-evaluation is used effectively to identify areas for improvement for example, discussions take place at team meetings about how to improve practice and changes are made as a result. All recommendations from the last inspection have been completed. For example, babies have more privacy when their nappies are changed and all documentation now meets requirements. Continuous thought is given to improving resources and how these can be used effectively to support children's play, such as access to the outdoor play areas. The resources are exceptionally well-organised, clearly labelled, and attractively and imaginatively presented. There are many open ended resources to enable children to initiate their own learning and be creative, including many that use natural materials.

Equality and diversity is actively promoted in the nursery and staff support all children to make good progress by ensuring their individual needs are provided for. For example, resources are clearly labelled to support children who speak another language at home. Staff have a good understanding of children's different learning styles and there is much to engage both boys and girls in all areas of learning, indoors and outside. Staff are pro-active in seeking support from outside agencies where there is an identified need for additional support, such as speech therapy.

Parents and carers speak very highly of the nursery. They say that their children love coming and they are very pleased with their progress. Parents and carers are welcome to visit as many times as they like until their child feels settled, which provides the child with a strong sense of security. Parents and carers have many opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. In addition to the very important regular verbal exchange of information, they receive daily written reports, information about children's next steps and regular newsletters. There are many displays throughout the nursery that cover topics, such as aspects of children's learning, child safety, weekly planning and invitations to look at children's files. There are some good partnerships in place with other agencies for example, books are used to share information between the local school and

children attending the out of school club. Diaries are also used to share information where a child attends more than one early years setting. However these are not consistently used in an effective way to fully support continuity.

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

Children are enthusiastic learners and show delight and curiosity as they explore the interesting and high quality resources. They are well supported by competent staff who provide appropriate questioning and additional resources to extend their learning. Staff skilfully support children's language and understanding of numbers and problem-solving through their play. For example, staff join in the babies' water play and act out a number song with the toy ducks, causing much delight. Children learn about the world around them as they play in a tray of torn paper and shells pretending it is the sea. Staff use children's interests to plan activities. A project on dinosaurs produces a wonderful display of children's creative work using a variety of media. Dinosaur toys provided in the sand tray extend the activity outdoors.

Children have many opportunities to make their views heard. They contribute to the planning of activities by selecting pictures of resources. Children are asked individually what they want to do after they listen to a story. Children receive lots of praise from staff who promote their self-esteem by displaying their work for others to see. Children are absorbed in their learning and as a result behave well. Staff sensitively teach them to take responsibility for their actions and to be kind to their friends. Because key persons know the children very well, they provide activities that ensure that each child makes good progress. Observations of the children are used to identify the next stage in the children's learning and are fed into the planning. However staff have identified a need to improve tracking to ensure that there are no gaps in children's learning. There is sometimes a lack of consistency in ensuring that children's next steps are planned for in a timely way to ensure all children receive optimum challenge.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff explain they must wait for the outdoor area to be checked before they go out, or learn to walk up and down stairs safely. Children develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles as they regularly play outdoors whatever the weather. Toddlers indicate that they want to go outside by pointing to their coats and staff immediately respond. The garden is exceptionally well designed to enable children to challenge themselves and develop their physical abilities. They enjoy nutritious meals and help themselves to vegetables served at the table. They are well informed about healthy living, for example colourful posters remind them of the importance of eating fresh fruit and vegetables. Children sometimes walk to the local market to choose fresh produce for meals. Babies and very young children are extremely content and settled because their individual health and welfare needs are very well met.

Children take part in a variety of activities that help them think about differences.

They talk about emotions and make 'sad' faces when listening to a story. They have access to resources and images in books and posters that reflect other lifestyles, such as the 'we are all different' display. Children develop good skills to support them in their future learning; they readily use computers and technology toys. They are well supported in transitions between rooms through gradual introductions and exchange of information by key persons.

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	1
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	1
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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