

Little Steps at St Georges School

28-30 Priory Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU5 4HR

Inspection date

10/01/2013

Previous inspection date

18/11/2005

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Teaching is securely based on practitioners' thorough knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They therefore make good use of opportunities to promote children's learning through play and structured activities.
- Children are happy and eager to learn. Their behaviour is good and they make independent choices about their play. This supports them in developing a positive attitude to school and future learning.
- Children's interests and needs inform the planning and they are offered a wide variety of activities. The key person system is also used well, meaning that practitioners and families can work together to promote children's learning and well-being.
- Children's language and communication skills are well promoted. Children who use English as an additional language are supported in developing and extending their vocabulary and in making good progress in their overall development.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is further scope to develop the assessment procedures to make greater use of updates from parents in order to enhance activity planning.
- Snack and mealtimes for younger children are not consistently used as opportunities to develop their independence.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all rooms and the outside area.
 - The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision.
 - The inspector talked with children present.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation,
- evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting, the provider's self-evaluation form and a range of other documentation.
 - The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Steps at St George's School was registered in 2005 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated within the ground and first floors of adjoining properties that house St George's School in Dunstable, Bedfordshire and is managed by a private provider. The nursery serves the local area. It operates from four main rooms and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor

play. The first floor accommodation is accessed via a staircase.

The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 and 14 at level 3 or above, including one member of staff with Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 75 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance the assessment procedures by making full use of updates from parents about their child's learning and development at home
- review the care practices with younger children at snack and mealtimes so that these can be used to further promote children's independence.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Good procedures to gather information about children mean that practitioners know them well, ensuring that children are always appropriately supported and their individual needs are met. Children are therefore secure, enthusiastic and approach their play and learning with positive attitudes. Practitioners have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well supported in their work. This means that teaching techniques are strong and practitioners encourage children to develop their own play, offering support whenever needed. For example, children playing with bricks enjoy naming the colours. A practitioner joins them and encourages them to choose a brick and find items around the room that are the same colour. Children thoroughly enjoy this challenge and continue the game independently.

Practitioners use their knowledge and experience to support children in developing the skills to learn effectively, achieve well and develop the necessary skills in readiness for school. They model inquisitive behaviour, thereby encouraging children to think further and develop their own ideas and knowledge. For example, children enjoy discovering toy animals in the sand. A practitioner encourages them to name the animals and then

wonders which ones would be found on a farm and the children enjoy working this out together. Good organisation means that children have time and space to explore and concentrate on their chosen activities. For example, children playing with construction straws become totally engrossed in this activity. They experiment by making simple shapes, going on to work out that if they bend the straws, they can make more complex shapes. Children proudly show off the models they have made and move on to make models of letters, competently naming these and finding items beginning with that letter.

Children are very well supported in developing their language and communication skills. For example, babies learn new vocabulary while older children participate in discussions and are encouraged to listen to each other's contributions. This means that children become confident in expressing themselves but also learn to respect the views of others. Children who use English as an additional language are supported in building and understanding new vocabulary. They therefore make good progress in using English confidently and in their overall development. For example, practitioners learn key words in the children's home language so that they are able to support their early communication and thus build their confidence to extend this.

Children's starting points are clearly assessed. Practitioners work in partnership with parents to obtain this initial information, which is then used to inform the initial planning. Good communication procedures mean that parents have opportunities to share daily news about their children and regularly view their child's assessment files. Parents are also supported in playing an active part in their child's learning. For example, regular newsletters explain the Early Years Foundation Stage and the current activity planning so that parents can extend their child's learning at home. However, the assessment procedures do not take full account of all updates from parents about how their child has been learning and developing at home. Consequently, practitioners are not able to include this full range of information in their planning and so promote children's development to the optimum.

Thorough assessment procedures mean that practitioners have a good understanding of each child's current developmental stages. They also carefully note children's interests and frequently update this record. This information is fed into the planning, which is regularly reviewed to ensure that children are offered balanced activities and play opportunities that promote all seven areas of learning. Comprehensive tracking procedures enable practitioners to check that all children are making good progress. They seek additional help whenever needed so that they are able to promote the progress of all children towards the early learning goals.

Activity planning is flexible so that practitioners can respond to children's current interests and utilise these to promote their learning. For example, after noting that younger children enjoy identifying colours, practitioners help them to make a related display. Children thoroughly enjoy pointing to the different items and naming the colours and this now forms a key part of their routine as they are getting ready for lunch. Practitioners and the manager also review the planning to ensure that children are offered well-balanced opportunities to play independently and to participate in structured activities. Children are therefore able to play an active role in their learning and learn to work cooperatively with others.

Children are offered a wide range of opportunities that promote their physical development. For example, they manipulate construction pieces and use small writing tools, such as pencils and chalks. They also develop skills in balance, control and coordination as they use large play equipment and participate in music and movement sessions. Children are offered a variety of meaningful opportunities to learn about their community and the wider diversities of society. For example, after children attended a wedding, all children looked at different weddings around the world, drawing their own illustrations and dressing up in relevant costumes.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The well-implemented key person system and good procedures for working with families help to ensure that all children are secure and form strong relationships with practitioners. Children are observed and monitored by practitioners, ensuring that they are happy at the setting and are making good progress. They are supported in exploring their environment and in expressing their views. This helps children develop essential skills and a positive approach to future learning, thus preparing them well for the transition to school.

Children are sensitively supported and are praised for both effort and achievement, thus promoting their self-esteem. They work well together, sharing the resources and happily including others in their play. They enjoy taking on responsibility. For example, they help tidy up before sitting down for lunch. New children quickly settle because practitioners work with parents to find out about their interests, needs and routines. These then inform the daily activities and routines. For example, babies sleep and feed according to the patterns established at home. Practitioners act as good role models, showing care and concern for all. Children reflect this positive approach and thus learn to appreciate and respect the needs of others.

Children are well supported in developing their self-care skills. For example, they put on their own coats before going outside. There are thorough hygiene procedures relating to the changing of nappies and to keeping the setting in a clean condition, thus promoting children's health at all times. Procedures at meal and snack times are appropriate. All areas are clean and children are supported in learning self-care skills, such as feeding themselves. Older children are able to help serve their meals and tidy away afterwards, supporting the promotion of their independence. However, the procedures for younger children do not make the most of similar opportunities to promote their independence. For example, they do not help to prepare the snacks or serve themselves.

Children are encouraged to understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. For example, they learn about the effects of exercise as they note that they feel warmer and their heart beats are raised after exercise. Ongoing discussions and specific activities also support children in gaining a good understanding of safety issues. For example, they learn about road safety as they use the associated role play equipment, making their own roads and crossings.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years

provision

The manager is experienced and conscientious, setting high standards for the setting. Her thorough self-evaluation procedures take into account the views of practitioners, children and parents. This ensures that there is a balanced and representative overview of the setting's work. She implements practical action plans that prioritise areas for improvement. For example, recent changes include the review of all operational procedures to ensure that these are consistent and staff can work well together to promote children's welfare and development. There are secure systems for monitoring staff performance and promoting professional development through training. This is done formally through annual appraisals and informally through daily observations and supervision.

There are thorough procedures to monitor each child's progress and ensure that this is promoted throughout their time at the setting. Practitioners work well with other professionals in order to support children and their families. They have good procedures to support partnership working with other providers caring for the children. For example, they frequently exchange information with other nurseries attended by the children, which helps to promote consistency. Good partnerships with parents mean that children's care is consistent and their development promoted.

Children's welfare is prioritised and this is supported by comprehensive safeguarding procedures. The manager and practitioners are clear about their role and work well in partnership with families and external agencies. They have attended relevant training and have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and the correct procedure to follow should they have any concerns about a child. The suitability of all practitioners is well considered and rigorously checked. Practitioners have a good awareness of safety issues, regularly reviewing the risk assessments and carrying out daily safety checks. This ensures that the environment is safe and welcoming. This contributes to children's enjoyment of their time at the setting and means that they have a positive childcare experience that forms a sound base for their future learning.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
-------	-----------	-------------

Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY297718
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	894978
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	70

Number of children on roll	75
Name of provider	Patricia Rosemary Beverley Plater
Date of previous inspection	18/11/2005
Telephone number	01582 661 471

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

