

Step By Step Nursery

15 Chandler Street, LONDON, E1W 2QL

Inspection date

15/08/2013

Previous inspection date

05/05/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 3

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 3

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- The provision for children aged under two years is a strength of the nursery.
- Children have fun and make steady progress in their learning.
- Effective use of the key person system means that staff work in partnership with parents and get to know each child individually.
- Management demonstrate a commitment to making continuous improvements to the nursery.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not fully support older children to develop good mathematical skills.
- Children do not have access to a good variety of resources to support their make-believe play.
- Staff do not provide enough opportunities for more capable children to write for a purpose.
- Staff do not consistently encourage children to look after resources.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's play and staff interaction.
- The inspector and manager undertook a joint observation.
- The inspector talked with available staff and held discussions with the management team.
- The inspector looked at documentation, including a representative sample of children's records, staff supervision and suitability records.
- The inspector sought the views of parents.

Inspector

Sharron Fogarty

Full Report

Information about the setting

Step by Step Nursery is one of two nurseries operated by a private provider. It registered 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 8am to 6pm all year round. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 56 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery gets funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. There are nine members of staff who work directly with the children including the manager and area manager. All hold appropriate early years qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- develop the educational programme for mathematics by providing rich and varied opportunities for counting, comparing length, weight, capacity and time.

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

- ignite children's imagination by providing a wider range of opportunities for them to develop their ideas during role play
- encourage children to look after and tidy away resources
- extend opportunities for children to practise their emergent writing skills by offering more chances to write for a purpose through role play and other activities.

Inspection judgements

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

Children and babies enjoy learning and playing in this caring, welcoming nursery. They learn from being able to lead their own play and by being guided by supportive staff. Overall, the educational programmes and teaching techniques mean children make sound

progress in their learning and development. A key person system is effectively used and key persons have established close relationships with children and their families. This creates security for children, which encourages them to be confident. The appropriate emphasis placed by staff on the three prime areas of learning suitably equips young children with the skills and attitudes they need when they move to the next phase in their education.

In general, the educational programmes enable children to access a suitable range of activities and experiences. Staff pay particular attention to making the baby and infant rooms a stimulating and nurturing environment. Soft furnishings and low level easily accessible toys and resources, such as water and sand play, mean very young children are eager to explore. Photographs of close family members help to support young children's emotional development and babies have many opportunities to develop their physical skills. There is plenty of space for them to move about freely. Young children and babies enjoy direct access to their own outside space where they climb over and under equipment and use push-along toys to support their walking. Children aged between two and five years use chalk and paint to practise their early writing skills on the garden wall. They gain appropriate hand and finger control in a number of activities provided by the staff. For example using scissors to cut out pictures. Children enjoy the opportunity to give meaning to their drawings and mark making. They enthusiastically describe the story related to their picture, and staff write down what they say and read it back to them. This supports children to understand that their words can be read by someone else. Some older and more able children are beginning to know the sound some letters make, and are attempting to write their names. However, for older children, there is a limited range of interesting writing materials, and staff do not inspire more capable children to write for a purpose. For example by making a shopping list or writing a sign during role play. Sometimes staff talk about size and shapes during spontaneous play and provide opportunities for children to count during every day routines. For instance counting how many cups and plates are needed at meal time, or counting the beds for sleeping. However, there are no numbers displayed to help support children's number recognition and the very few mathematical resources are in poor repair. This means staff do not place enough emphasis on developing older children's mathematical skills to help them make good progress.

Staff foster children's communication and language skills suitably. Visual clues help the younger children, children with language delay or those learning English as an additional language to fully participate in activities. Staff sensitively encourage children to take part in conversations and repeat and extend their vocabulary when appropriate. Children love stories. They sit attentively, listen well and can contribute and predict the ending, as staff positively encourage this. Children sit with their friends and look at books independently, turning the pages carefully and discussing the pictures. Children demonstrate a desire to role play and enjoy expressing themselves. They access the freely available creative resources and use the recycled modelling to make things from their own imaginations. Babies explore everyday objects and have opportunity to make discoveries of the world through natural resources. However, older children are not always able to fully extend their imagination. The role play home corner is underused due to limited resources depicting their home experiences. For example, children resort to using a toy ironing board to push around their dolls as there are no pushchairs. Children of all ages have

direct access to the outside area. The use of local amenities, such as the park, means children have a suitable range of experiences to develop their understanding of the world about them.

The staff appropriately use guidance documents to assess where children are in relation to their age. They observe their key children's interests and capabilities, and record these in children's unique 'special book', illustrated by photographs and examples of artwork. These are easily accessible for children and parents to browse through at any time. Learning priorities are identified and these are used generally well to inform the activity planning. Overall, children's starting points are recorded and progress is tracked suitably. Although there is some inconsistency across the staff team in the quality of information provided in children's observation records, and assessments reflect this variation. There is a sound process for completing the required progress checks for children when they are aged between two and three years. This means that staff promptly identify when children are progressing well or if progress is less than expected, so that any additional support from outside agencies can be secured without delay. Parents are actively involved in their children's development as they frequently meet with key persons to find out how they can continue children's learning at home.

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

Children are happy and settled. New starters settle quickly into nursery due to the suitable settling-in systems, resulting in children separating from their main carer with ease. The key persons are caring and attentive to the needs of the youngest children and gather information about their interests, enthusiasms and capabilities right from the start. The staff also provide appropriate support to children when they are due to move on to school. For example, children visit the nearby school to take part in events, and the teachers come into the nursery to meet the children. As a result, children know what to expect from school life and are well prepared for their transfer.

Children are sociable and confident. Staff are courteous role models and, as a result, children play cooperatively with their friends and quickly learn what is acceptable behaviour. The staff use positive behaviour management strategies and children's self-esteem is enhanced as they receive praise for good behaviour, effort and achievement. However, staff do not consistently encourage children to look after the resources. This means children are not learning to respect and tidy away their play things all the time. This results in some resources which are jumbled and children cannot easily access what they wish to play with. For example, the clothes for the dolls are hidden under a pile of dressing up clothes.

The staff work hard to make the premises welcoming and display children's work so they know their efforts are valued. There is appropriate child-sized furniture so that children can play and eat in comfort. Children are familiar with the routines, which make them feel secure. They know that after their lunchtime meal they have quiet relaxing time and go to their beds to settle down. Younger children receive plenty of eye contact and feel nurtured because they have regular cuddles from the staff. Babies snuggle up to staff, receiving

reassurance and settling quickly to sleep peacefully, undisturbed, when they feel tired.

All children have free access to an immediate outside partially covered area. This means children make choices about where and what they want to play with. They grow in confidence, are well motivated and enjoy exploring their surroundings to learn to be independent. Staff support children's emerging understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle that involves physical exercise and a healthy diet. Nutritious snacks and lunches, which include fruit and vegetables, are provided. The staff are knowledgeable about any allergies or special dietary requirements so they can ensure individual needs are met. Children are learning about the need for good hygiene practices as they routinely wash hands before touching food and after visiting the toilet. Children learn about the food cycle, as staff help them to water the vegetables growing in the garden. Staff thread safety through daily routines to raise children's understanding. For example, they learn they have to take care with scissors. Children know to wear their sun hats and drink plenty of water to protect their health in hot weather.

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

The management and staff have a reasonable understanding of most of the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The essential policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. These support staff in meeting the needs of children and contribute to the smooth running of the nursery. Management complete regular and thorough risk assessments. This together with daily checks by all staff provides a safe and secure environment for children both indoors and outside. All staff complete appropriate recruitment processes and vetting checks. All have up-to-date safeguarding training and are trained in first aid, therefore children are effectively safeguarded.

The relatively new management structure means there is a strong focus on making improvements to the nursery for the benefit of the children. Plans are in place to regularly monitor the educational programmes more rigorously. New resources are being purchased for the older children. Management are aware there are some inconsistencies in staff observational assessments and have begun to put in place systems to address this. However, it has not had time to embed fully. Systems to monitor and track children's development have been introduced to ensure all children achieve. Management and staff work well with the local authority advisors and positively take on board advice and guidance. Regular staff meetings and supervisions mean staff are well supported. Staff participate in an extensive range of professional development courses to enhance their knowledge and understanding. This has led to a recent focus on enhancing the environment for the youngest children, and this is a strength of the nursery.

Staff promote positive relationships with parents and are forthcoming in exchanging information. Displays, notice boards, parent consultation meetings and newsletters are just some of the ways used to keep parents informed. Parents say staff are friendly and approachable and are confident they know their children well. The nursery works

efficiently in partnership with others. For example, they liaise closely with the children's centre to support families in need of outreach services. The appropriate systems for working with other professionals ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are closely monitored and they are given valuable support to enable them to participate and achieve.

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 action. 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	EY371767
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	844347
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	52
Number of children on roll	56
Name of provider	Step By Step Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	05/05/2009
Telephone number	02075532880

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
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M1 2WD

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