

Second Steps Day Nursery

Durham Road, Laindon, BASILDON, Essex, SS15 6PH

Inspection date	13/08/2013
Previous inspection date	06/12/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	4
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

- Children learn how to keep fit and healthy as practitioners actively support their understanding of healthy eating and the importance of exercise and fresh air.
- Children go for regular walks in the local area, enabling them to explore the geography of the local environment.
- Children are suitably safeguarded as staff understand their responsibility with regards to protecting children. Consequently, children are cared for in a safe and secure environment, which has recently been re-furbished.

It is not yet good because

- Children whose home language is not English are provided with limited opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and learning, to support their language development at home.
- There is limited information about children's starting points available to enable key persons to produce an initial assessment of children capabilities and to use this information to track their progress.
- The key person system is not supported by having a 'buddy' or second key person available, who can step into this role for each child, when the main key person is absent or working in another room. Consequently, some younger children are only cared for by their main key person for short periods of the day.

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.

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 of the nursery rooms and garden and viewed all areas of the nursery.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, registered provider, special educational needs coordinator, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a range of records and documentation, including children's details, information about children's learning and development, information about staff qualifications and the vetting process used to assess their suitability and a selection of other records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the time of the visit.

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Second Steps Nursery was registered in 2005 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a converted building in the Laindon area of Essex, and is managed by a private company. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from two floors within the building and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, 24 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level two and above.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7am until 7pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 80 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide opportunities for children whose home language is not English to develop the use of their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.

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

- review procedures for obtaining information about children's starting points and capabilities to inform an initial assessment of children's development
- review systems for ensuring each key person is paired with a 'buddy' who knows younger children well and can cover in the absence of the main key person.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are provided with opportunities to explore a wide range of learning experiences, which help them to make progress across all seven areas of learning. They are actively engaged throughout their nursery day and enjoy guiding their own learning. Children make choices over the resources they play with by selecting trays of equipment and replacing them when they have finished. They invent games, such as, schools, devising their own register and making up their rules. With the assistance of an enthusiastic and helpful member of staff, they write the names of all of their friends, staff in the room and even visitors on their register. They tick them off proficiently, recording who is present. Older children excitedly enter an imaginary world, using a wide selection of action figures to create their game. The figures fly through the air and occasionally enter into a battle. Staff follow the children's lead during these exciting games, intervening when they are included by the children or asked to name the figures.

Children's language and communication skills are supported by staff listening carefully to the children, asking them questions which stretch their thinking and introducing new vocabulary. Younger children and babies are responded to appropriately when cooing or babbling, encouraging them to learn the art of conversation and taking turns to speak. Children's literacy skills are extended as they enjoy sitting in comfortable areas and covered dens to look at the interesting selection of books available to them. They access writing and drawing materials freely, enabling them to express themselves through pictures and to begin to form letters and numbers. Children learn about a 'letter of the week' and consider people's names and objects in the nursery that begin with the specific letter.

Younger children and babies are provided with clear spaces in which to develop their mobility skills. They are able to move around in whichever way they choose, for example, some babies enjoy 'combat crawling' whereby they rarely lift their bodies off of the ground. Others use the range of toys and equipment available to help them to take their first tentative steps, supported proficiently by the adults caring for them. A range of natural and household objects presented in treasure baskets enable children to explore texture and weight and to follow their own natural curiosity.

Staff regularly observe children playing and use their observations to identify children's next steps in learning. Children's progress is recorded in their learning journeys, which are shared with parents both on an informal basis and through formal open evenings. Staff devise planning for each room, which is taken from key persons observations, which enables them to tailor the activities to meet each child's individual learning style and requirements. At present there is limited information recorded about children's starting points and capabilities. Therefore, evidence to show exactly how much progress children make through their nursery journey is weak. However, summative assessments used to share information with parents on their children's development, show that children make appropriate progress between assessments. These include those children who have special educational needs and or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language. There are children attending the nursery for whom English is not their home language. Opportunities for these children to use their home language in play, to support their language at home, are limited.

Older children are prepared for 'school readiness' as practitioners encourage them to

develop self-care skills through everyday routines. For example, they learn to dress and undress themselves when they access the dressing-up clothes. They learn to sit quietly and listen at story time and they learn to follow simple directions, such as, lining up to use the toilets, which are situated in another room.

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

Children form close relationships with the adults caring for them and their key person. They are generally settled and enjoy their nursery day. Effective settling-in procedures ensure that parents, children and staff are confident before children are left at the nursery. While the key person system is in place and is regularly monitored to ensure that all children's needs are being met, there is no 'buddy' key person system in place. This is especially relevant for the younger babies, as the baby unit staff often work between the two rooms. Therefore, there are periods of time when younger children's key persons are not based in their base rooms and the children are cared for by other core staff.

Children play and learn in a resourceful environment, which has recently been reviewed to provide more opportunities for children to develop independence and self-care skills. For example, much of the play equipment and resources are now presented in well-labelled storage boxes at the children's height. Walls are made interesting, bright and welcoming as practitioners display colourful posters and examples of the children's creative work. The large garden is sectioned off to provide a safe soft-floored play area for babies and toddlers. Staff are continuously developing this area, for example, by adding more natural materials and enabling children to make decisions about the range of equipment available.

Children are generally well-behaved and understand the nursery's rules. For example, the pre-school children know that the younger children are getting ready for a rest after lunch, so children creep quietly through their room to use the toilet and wash their hands. Children understand about using their indoor feet indoors and running feet outdoors and know that this keeps them safe. Children learn to take some risks during their nursery day, which help them to establish their understanding of safety. For example, they move resources and natural materials around the garden, learning which ones are heavy and which ones they can manage alone.

Children enjoy a range of meals and snacks during their nursery day. A varied menu, provides them with a well-balanced diet, which includes a good amount of fresh ingredients. Children sit together at mealtimes and are generally well-supported by staff who sit with them and encourage them to enjoy their meal. Children are able to develop some independence skills at snack time, as they choose when to access the snack table and help to cut and prepare some of the snacks. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise on a daily basis when they play in the nursery garden or go for walks in the local area. A range of planned and freely chosen physical experiences, enable children develop a secure understanding about keeping healthy, fit and active.

Staff pay careful attention to supporting children through their transitions. For example, they are prepared for their next stage of learning, such as, moving into the next age group room. Their key person accompanies them to the new room a number of times to help them to become familiar with the new surroundings and new adults and children.

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

The nursery is privately owned and employs a large number of qualified staff. The manager and many of the staff have worked at the nursery for a number of years, forming a stable and experienced staff team. The manager is supported by a quality assurance manager, whose role has been adapted and defined since the nursery's last inspection. This inspection was generated to follow up a previous inadequate inspection judgement and as a result of two complaints, which resulted in the nursery being issued actions and enforcement notices. All areas highlighted by these actions have been appropriately addressed and clearer systems and working practices have been implemented. The pre-school room of the nursery has had a thorough refurbishment to ensure that flooring and walls are clean and safe. The room has been completely re-organised by the nursery team, resulting in a review of the storage of resources, to enable children to access them more independently. The room has also been zoned into specific learning areas to enable children to benefit from the resources available. The nursery management team are gradually working their way through the nursery, re-decorating and re-organising all of the rooms. There are effective systems in place for the manager and quality assurance manager to monitor and review all areas of the provision. This enables them to monitor that all children are being consistently observed. Through this process they ensure that the key person's observations are being used appropriately to plot children's progress and plan for their next steps in learning.

Children are appropriately protected from harm as staff regularly update their safeguarding knowledge through training and in-house events. The person appointed as the designated safeguarding officer has completed the relevant training. All adults working with children or having regular contact have been appropriately vetted and proof of their suitability clearance is available on file. Systems for risk assessing the premises and carrying out daily safety checks have been reviewed and strengthened to ensure that children play in a safe and well-organised environment.

The effective supervision of staff enables the manager and quality assurance manager to hold regular, three monthly discussions with each individual staff member. This enables them to review the well-being and development of each of the key children in their group. It also provides a forum for discussing staff's performance, training needs and professional development. All staff undergo an annual appraisal. The nursery has a clear training plan in place and actively supports the professional development of its staff. Four staff members are currently studying for a management qualification.

Partnerships with parents are good. The nursery provides parents with a good amount of clear and well-presented information about its procedures, staff team and aims. Parents

are spoken to each day and provided with clear information about their child's day and development. A clear log of all accidents is shared with parents at the end of each day and then filed in the office for the monthly audit. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection, were happy to share their views on the friendly atmosphere within the nursery and their complete confidence in the staff. Some parents comment on the vast improvements that have taken place since the last inspection and feel that they were kept well-informed about the difficulties the nursery was encountering and how management intended to deal with these. Partnerships with the local authority are good and the manager has worked well with development officers to turn the nursery around following the last inspection. The nursery has strong links with a number of local schools as they drop off and collect children for the out of school provision. This aids a smooth transition to school for those children coming to the end of the nursery experience. The nursery works well with other early years setting that children attend. However, at present no current children attend a second provision.

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 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	EY308855
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	931899
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	83
Number of children on roll	80
Name of provider	Sharon Anne Harrison
Date of previous inspection	06/12/2012
Telephone number	01268 410937

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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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