

Little Steps (Higham Ferrers) Ltd

5 College Street, Higham Ferrers, RUSHDEN, Northamptonshire, NN10 8DX

Inspection date

29/10/2013

Previous inspection date

14/01/2009

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

- Quality interactions between staff and children extend their learning on a consistent basis.
- A well-planned environment means children have a wide range of experiences that promote their development across the seven areas of learning.
- Assessment and planning are linked, this enables gaps in children's learning to be quickly identified and closed. Consequently, all children are making good progress, including those with English as an additional language.
- Very strong partnerships with parents and the local community have been formed. This provides a solid link for children's learning and enables the nursery to work collaboratively to establish care routines.
- Thorough self-evaluation identifies strengths and areas for further development in the nursery. This commitment helps the nursery review practice consistently and implement improvements.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Resources are not yet consistently organised to fully extend children's ability to learn independently, this means that particularly in the baby room, their experiences are occasionally limited.

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 conducted a tour of the premises.
- Observations were undertaken within the three main areas of the nursery and the outdoor area.
- Documentation including policies, planning & assessment records was reviewed.
- A joint observation with the deputy manager was undertaken.
- Discussions were held with children, staff and parents.
- A meeting with the managers and deputy managers was held.

Inspector
Ben Hartley

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Steps (Higham Ferrers) Ltd opened in 2008 and is privately owned. It operates from a converted building situated on the main road through Higham Ferrers in Northamptonshire. A ramp to the main entrance means that the premises are easily accessible. Children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas.

The setting receives funding for early education. It is open each weekday throughout the year and sessions are from 7.45am to 6pm. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Most of the children live locally and a small number of them attend other settings such as local nurseries. Some older children attend, usually during school holidays. These children share the same facilities as those in the early years age range.

There are currently 155 children on roll. There are 32 staff members. Of these, 26 hold relevant childcare qualifications at a minimum of level 3 and the others are completing training to achieve a childcare qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend children's free access to resources, particularly in the baby room, in order to fully support their ability to learn independently and broaden their experiences.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the ways in which children learn, providing them with a wide range of interesting activities to promote and extend their development. This means that children engage in their learning and develop a range of skills. Staff also demonstrate their detailed knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This ensures that children are provided a wide range of rich experiences that extend their development across the areas of learning. The nursery also undertakes regular outings that enrich children's learning further. For example, the nursery has recently visited Salcey Forest, Harold Country Park and Life Farm. This gives children a wide range of learning opportunities and enables them to add context to their learning. There are also a wide range of imaginative activities and resources linked to the art, with specific areas set up for children to paint, cook and explore different textures and materials. For example, the

nursery uses a Perspex frame and water as an area for children to make meaningful marks. These types of imaginative activities allow children to be highly creative. There is also a high level of skilful communication between the staff and children. This supports the children in their acquisition of language and they demonstrate good communication skills. The nursery makes full use of social situations to further increase children's language skills. For example, during lunchtime the staff sit with the children to encourage conversation and develop their skills within this social situation.

All children make good progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as an additional language. Children are beginning to develop independent learning skills, particularly within the pre-school room. They also demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning, for example, they sustain their interest in specific activities and persist with challenges. This means that they are well-prepared for school or the next stage in their development. However, opportunities for the youngest children to explore freely are less consistent. This means that although they are engaged in their learning their opportunities are occasionally restricted. Planning and assessment are closely linked, with an effective key person system ensuring that children's learning is taken forward by providing individualised learning plans and activities. There is an appropriate balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, this allows the children to express their own preferences for their play and be supported when required. For example, a member of staff sensitively supports children in a play dough activity, extending their learning through the use of good questioning about textures and senses. This balances well with other opportunities when children choose their own play without adult support.

All staff have high expectations of the children, these are communicated with them effectively. These expectations result in, children making positive choices about their behaviour, and consequently there are very few behaviour issues that need to be dealt with. For example, children are encouraged to share toys with their friends, this results in, lots of collaborative play and children working together to achieve their desired outcome. Parents are also involved at all levels within the nursery. For example, the nursery recently had a Halloween breakfast for families and the community to enjoy. There are also formal and informal methods of delivering information about children's learning and care routines. Parents comment very positively about the level of care and learning within the nursery.

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

Individualised care practices that are developed in conjunction with parents are well-established and meet the individual needs of the children. The nursery gain detailed knowledge about children prior to them starting, this helps support their transition and helps them to settle quickly. The care practices throughout the nursery are particularly strong, for example, food requirements and sleep patterns are clearly displayed, individualised and implemented for each child. Nappy changing routines are closely adhered to and the monitoring by staff ensures that children's needs are met. Children are encouraged to learn about maintaining health and the importance of exercising. The

importance the nursery places on diet is also evident. For example, they have achieved the 'gold heartbeat' award for healthy eating. This emphasises the importance the nursery places on provided high quality, balanced, nutritious meals to support the children in maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Children are kept safe within the setting, with all staff having a good understanding of the appropriate safeguarding procedures. There are also comprehensive policies in place that supports the safeguarding of children. For example, there is a clear policy that controls access to the building, this policy is supported by all the staff and parents and implemented effectively. Additionally, two members staff within the nursery have undergone designated person safeguarding training. This ensures that safeguarding is always given a high priority during absences.

Children form secure attachments with staff, particularly in the baby room. Staff display warmth and affection for the children and this means they regularly seek comfort from them. For example, when babies are having their milk staff show affection and comfort them. This means the babies enjoy this time and ensures their health is maintained. These attachments help children to show increasing confidence and take risks within their play. Children within the nursery settle quickly and easily, separating from their carer with minimal support. The environment also enables children to develop close relationships with each other. This further enhances their confidence and contributes to their emotional development. The nursery has also developed particularly effective strategies for handling transitions. For example, staff follow their key children on 'visits' into the next room. The nursery has also added an additional room within their toddler unit that is used to help children handle transitions easily.

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

The management of the nursery is strong with clear areas of responsibility designated between the team. For example, the two owners of the nursery split the responsibilities into safeguarding and learning. This allows them to focus time on their specific area and implement measures to continue improving. Thorough self-evaluation and reflective practise also ensures the nursery are constantly striving to improve. The management team consistently monitor practice. For example, they undertaken regular peer on peer observations to provide staff with feedback about positives and areas for further development. This has a positive impact on the quality of the teaching throughout the nursery.

Good partnerships with parents and the local community have been developed and continue to be improved. These partnerships ensure there is consistency between the home environment and the nursery, with collaboration ensuring children's learning is enhanced. Parents commented very positively on the relationships that have been developed with the nursery. The management also have a good understanding of their importance within the local community. They offer various different events that enable them to provide additional support for families within the local area. The nursery are

actively trying to promote additional relationships, for example with local schools. They have developed strategies to try and build positive lines of communication to support the transitions of children within the nursery in their moves to the local school. Many teachers from various local schools now visit the nursery to gain additional information. Older children from these local schools also attend the nursery, particularly during the school holidays.

The management team fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children, making their procedures and policies clear to all staff and parents. There are also strong procedures in place to provide staff with ongoing support and training. This is devised through management identifying any additional training needs, or through staff asking to go on training for their ongoing professional development. All staff have a good understanding of safeguarding, including the signs and symptoms of abuse and appropriate procedures to follow. Written policies relating to safeguarding are also thorough. These procedures, the knowledge of the staff and strength of the management team ensure that children are protected at all times within the setting.

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	EY378109
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	917604
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	99
Number of children on roll	155
Name of provider	Little Steps (Higham Ferrers) Ltd
Date of previous inspection	14/01/2009
Telephone number	01933 357400

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: 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, 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.

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

