

# Small Steps Day Nursery and Pre-School

9 Lang Lane, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 5HE

<b>Inspection date</b>	03/03/2014
Previous inspection date	23/02/2012

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>2</b>
	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

- The staff team have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and their responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements and the safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- There is a well-established key person system in place, which supports children's emotional well-being and ensures practitioners have a detailed knowledge of children's individual needs.
- Effective partnership working is established with parents, carers, professionals and other providers, in order to support continuity in children's progress.
- The staff team demonstrate a strong commitment to continually improving the quality of their provision, in order to improve the learning and development outcomes for children.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Not all opportunities to build on children's good self-help skills have been incorporated into daily outdoor activities. Tissues are not readily available outside, to support their independence in attending to their own personal hygiene needs.
- There is scope to improve aspects of the nursery routine to fully engage children's interest after lunch, particularly in the pre-school room.

## 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 activities in the designated playrooms and outdoor play area.
- The inspector had a meeting with the managers and undertook a joint observation with the registered provider/manager.  
The inspector looked at children's records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of adults working in the setting and a range of other documentation, including self-evaluation records and questionnaires.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents, carers and children spoken to on the day of the inspection.

## Inspector

Jean Thomas

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Small Steps Day Nursery and Pre-School opened in 2007 and is one of two nurseries owned by a company. It operates from four playrooms within a converted house in West Kirby, Wirral. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery and pre-school serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. The nursery and pre-school are open five days a week, from 8am until 6pm, 51 weeks of the year. Children attend a variety of sessions. The nursery and pre-school employs 17 members of childcare staff. All staff hold an appropriate early years qualifications, including two at level 2 and 10 at level 3. Three members of staff are qualified to degree level and one holds Qualified Teacher Status. There are currently 68 children attending, who are all in the Early Years age group. The nursery and pre-school 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 and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery and pre-school are registered on the Early Years Register.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend further the opportunities for children to develop their independence, particularly outside
  
- review the routine for after lunch, to fully engage and sustain the interest of the pre-school children.

### Inspection judgements

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

Staff use their very good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development to effectively support children's good progress in their learning and development. Teaching in the nursery is good. Key persons have detailed knowledge of how individual children learn, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, they plan challenging and fun activities, which are based on children's interests and ideas. Consequently, from a young age children show the characteristics of effective learning as they are fully engaged in play and exploring and show deepening levels of concentration. However, some routines, such as the group storytelling and phonic activity after lunch in the pre-school room do not meet all children's needs and as a result, children's engagement and concentration is not maintained. Staff know their key children extremely well and has high expectations for their achievements. This is reflected in their commitment to work in partnership with parents, other professionals and providers

involved with children. Key persons source as much information about the individual child as they can, in order to be able to effectively meet their individual needs. For example, in response to information from a speech and language therapist staff have designed a game with specific learning intentions to support a children's language development.

Staff establish their key children's starting points with parents and complete regular, subsequent observations to inform the next steps planning. Parents have opportunity to access their children's record of learning at any time. This is in addition to the meetings arranged with their child's key person twice a year to talk in detail about their achievements. Staff are continually reviewing and considering different approaches to involve parents further in their child's learning and to gather more information about children. They have recently introduced 'the clouds,' which is a method for parents to record what their child is doing at home. Planning shows how complementary activities are planned linked to this information. There are well-established two-way communication systems with parents in place, including the daily diary and daily discussion between key persons and parents. Key persons complete the required 'progress check at age two'. This helps to support children's progress and to identify if there are any concerns, so that further support can be put in place. Different initiatives to support children's learning and development are researched and introduced, such as developing the use of music for this purpose. Information is displayed and resources are made available for parents to continue this approach to learning at home.

Staff thoughtfully plan the playrooms to create stimulating environments to motivate children's desire to explore and learn. The continuous provision of a very good range of play materials and resources gives children opportunity to play at their own pace and return to equipment to practice skills. Staff are enthusiastic and playful, which influences children's positive attitude towards play and learning. The babies enjoy looking at themselves in the low-level mirrors and staff talk to children about what they can see to support their developing self-awareness and confidence. Children are provided with an extensive range of sensory resources to explore. In the baby room their attention and listening skills are encouraged as they listen to the different sounds they make handling containers filled with different objects. These sound shakers are decorated with photographs of children's family members and other special people in their lives. Babies happily vocalise and point to the photographs as staff name the different people. Family photographs are positioned in each playroom to help children feel secure and to support them in making relationships with others.

High priority is placed on supporting children's language development. A range of teaching strategies are used to promote this aspect of children's development. Staff have undertaken specific 'Every Child a Talker' training and have implemented the guidance in practice, which includes creating communication friendly areas in both the indoor and outdoor environments. They use visual aids, such as picture timetables and cards depicting play activities, which have a positive impact on children's communication skills. Staff model language and talk very clearly to children for them to hear the correct pronunciation of words. Staff ask children questions and give them time to think and respond. Staff introduce new words to children's vocabulary. For example, at lunchtime children are excited as they notice a moving light across the ceiling. Staff explain that this is the reflection of the light beam on children's cutlery. Children later use this word as they

again notice light reflecting from the shiny displays. Mealtimes are social occasions. Staff sit with children at each mealtime and show how they value children's ideas, which motivates children to talk and think further. Children's self-confidence is nurtured so they develop a 'can do' attitude. For example, they make concentrated efforts to complete tasks for themselves, in their play and dressing themselves in preparation for outdoor activities.

Staff fully embrace outdoor learning in the knowledge that for some children this is the preferred learning area. They have undertaken forest school training. Staff have adapted this approach to outdoor learning for use in their local environment and have developed a 'beach explorers' educational programme. The nursery's outdoor environment is well-resourced and children of all ages show their excitement when staff announce that it is time to play outside. This area offers space for children to be exuberant in their movements and resources to develop their physical skills. The pre-school children choose to play pirates and are creative in adapting the outdoor resources to fit their play plans. They cooperatively negotiate the roles they are assuming in their play and enthusiastically discuss their ideas. They use their problem-solving skill and mathematical knowledge to build a pirate barbeque using large interlocking blocks. They use a building block to represent a spirit level to make sure their construction is straight. In the comfortable area of the outdoor summer house a small group of children engage in the story being read to them. They are not distracted by the lively play being pursued in close proximity to them. The quality teaching and the range of opportunities children experience results in them being well-prepared for the next stage of their learning.

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

Staff are caring and supportive in their practice, which contributes to children feeling safe and secure and forming trusting relationships. Staff warmly welcome children and their parents into the nursery. This ensures that children feel valued and cared for and that relationships with parents are strong. The effective partnership working with parents promotes two-way communication to ensure children's individual needs are fully met. Staff are sensitive to children's needs and respect the uniqueness of each child. Children are supported when they change playrooms as they progress through the nursery. These moves are sensitively handled to help prepare children for this change. Parents are involved in the decision making. For example, they help with identifying the appropriate timing for this transition to take place. Staff plan activities and provide resources to help prepare children for school. This includes visits being made to the nursery by school teachers.

Staff support children's developing social skills and are positive role models for children's behaviour. Through effective, gentle reminders, consistent boundaries and clear explanations staff reinforce behavioural expectations. In this caring and secure environment children develop their self-confidence and enjoy the social aspect of their play as they make friends. Babies are content, happy and confidently separate from their parents. If on occasion children become upset, they are given appropriate hugs and reassurance to effectively and sensitively meet their emotional needs. Children learn about

the diversity of society through a wide range of resources available in their everyday play and through planned activities. Parents and members of the community, such as, police officers, fire fighter and dentists are invited to come to the nursery and talk to children to help them to understand the role of people in their community. Staff use resources from the local services to extend children's knowledge and understanding further. For example, resource centre staff visit to talk to children about the racial and cultural differences in society. Children's involvement in raising funds for a variety of charities raises their awareness of the needs of others.

The nursery has achieved the National Health Service Health Promoting Early Years Status. This reflects their commitment in promoting children's enjoyment and a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle. Children have daily opportunities to benefit from fresh air and to be physically active. Staff are continually looking at ways to further promote children's enjoyment in being active and healthy. The nursery's gardening club gives children opportunity to grow their own vegetables. This and other activities, such as preparing their own snacks, trigger children's interest in a wider range of healthy food options. Children benefit from a nutritionally balanced diet with individual dietary requirements and preferences being catered for. From an early age children are encouraged to independently attend to their self-care needs, such as, toileting, hand washing, dressing and serving their own food. Older children remind each other to wash their hands after toileting. However, these skills are not as well-promoted when children are outside. The nursery has prepared 'toilet training' resource bags for parents to take home to promote continuity in helping children at this stage of their development. The bags contain books depicting pictures and stories relating to potty training, a doll and doll's potty and guidance cards for parents. Staff support children's understanding of personal safety. For example, they encourage children to hold on to the bannister rail when walking up and down the stairs and to follow the road safety procedures on outings.

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

Following a recent visit by Ofsted the registered provider received a notice to improve to ensure that the premises, including outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose; spaces, furniture, equipment and toys must be safe for children to use and to notify agencies with statutory responsibilities for safeguarding concerns without delay. A warning letter was issued to ensure Ofsted is notified of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises. The inspection found that the nursery's designated safeguarding officers have subsequently undertaken specific safeguarding training pertaining to allegations. Through discussion they demonstrate that they are fully aware of their responsibility to notify Ofsted in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The documented safeguarding policies and procedures have been amended to ensure they are effectively implemented in practice to protect children from harm. The inspection found that the vent in the playroom had been repaired. No other hazards were identified and the premises are fit for purpose. Therefore, children's safety and well-being are now assured. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities to protect children from harm. They are confident in

the knowledge of the procedures to follow, including the 'whistle blowing' procedure, if they do not feel appropriate action is being taken by the managers to safeguard children. The training programme identifies that all staff will be completing safeguarding refresher training. This training programme has already commenced. The managers regularly check staff's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures is accurate and current through questioning, quizzes and it being a regular agenda item at team meetings. There is a robust recruitment and selection process in place to make sure suitable persons are employed to work with children. Processes, such as supervision meetings and appraisals, ensure the ongoing suitability of staff.

Staff are effectively deployed throughout the setting. As a result, children are well supervised, which ensures they are kept safe and their needs are met. An additional member of staff is employed for the lunchtime period to ensure the level of supervision remains constant at all times. The premises are very clean and well-maintained and security is closely monitored by staff.

The managers have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and their responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements. Staff development is of high importance and they are encouraged to maintain their continuing professional development. They share knowledge gained from attending training courses and good practice with the team. This ensures that the knowledge of all staff is enhanced to inform their practice. As a result, all children are supported effectively to make good progress in their learning and development. Through effective monitoring of the educational programmes, the managers ensure children are provided with a wide range of challenging experiences to support their good progress towards the early learning goals. The nursery has invested in a computer programme to further improve the monitoring of children's stage of learning and development and their progress. As a result of this, gaps in learning are identified promptly and staff are supported by the managers to narrow these achievement gaps. The managers and staff team demonstrate that they are fully committed to the continual improvement of the nursery provision. Self-evaluation is rigorous and all staff strive towards the same vision, which is to continuously improve the service they offer. Meetings are held with the company's other nursery staff to share good practice. There is a nursery action plan in place, which is continuously reviewed and amended. Staff, parents and children are all involved in the evaluation process. For example, a panel of pre-school children have regular meetings with the managers to put forward their ideas for improvements. As a result of parents' comments, a choice is now given as to whether they prefer nursery communications to be in a document format or sent to them via emails. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been addressed appropriately because staff check the premises and equipment on a daily basis to promote children's safety.

Effective partnership working arrangements with other early years providers and professionals are well-established and contribute strongly to meeting children's needs and preparing them for the next stage of their learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have specific requirements are fully supported to help them achieve their full potential. The nursery establishes positive relationships with parents and operates an open-door policy where parents and carers are clearly welcomed into the nursery on a daily basis. Parents and carers are very complimentary about the

nursery and make clear that they extremely pleased with the progress their children are making. They talk about the special relationship their child has with their key person and how staff are prepared to 'go the extra mile' to support their children's progress.



## 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY346027
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	954531
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	45
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	68
<b>Name of provider</b>	Small Steps Day Nursery (Wirral) Ltd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23/02/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 625 6127

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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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