

Little Steps Day Nursery

1 Lancaster Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 4EP



Inspection date

14 November 2017

Previous inspection date

2 October 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- The management team is inspirational. Very high expectations motivate staff to work closely as a team to provide the highest quality of care and teaching. Staff work closely with management to evaluate and reflect on their practice. The views of parents and children are frequently gathered and incorporated into plans for further development.
- Staff have exceptionally close working partnerships with parents. Their input in their children's learning is highly valued. Staff regularly share information about children's achievements and their next steps in learning. They provide a wide range of innovative ideas that parents can use at home to further support their children's excellent progress.
- Children rapidly build close bonds with their key person. They thrive in the staff's care and are very happy in the nursery. Children flourish in confidence and develop their self-esteem. Staff rapidly respond to children's needs.
- Staff provide a wide range of activities that challenges the children in their learning. They delight in creating pretend birthday cakes for the nursery teddy using a range of natural materials, including mud and leaves. Children pretend to cook the cakes in the outside kitchen and find small sticks to use as the candles.
- Children have opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They fully engage in forest school activities and delight in climbing trees and finding a range of natural resources to use in activities. Children skilfully negotiate around crates when riding pedal bicycles. They enjoy the challenge of climbing equipment and negotiate with each other while playing a game of football.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to enhance the procedures for staff supervision meetings that focus on maintaining the excellent quality of the provision and outcomes for children.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector observed and discussed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery manager. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Michelle Baldock

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is outstanding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The management team puts children's safety and welfare at the heart of all they do. Children from a young age learn about risks. For example, they are included in decisions about whether they can safely climb a tree. Staff have extensive knowledge about the signs and symptoms of abuse. They know who to contact and the procedures to follow. The management team understands the importance of continuing to develop supervision meetings to help maintain the very high standards of care and learning. The manager and staff together identify training that helps enhance and develop their skills and knowledge even further. Staff have built excellent working partnerships with settings that children move on to.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve. They use information gained from their observations and assessments of children's progress. They evaluate and plan skilfully for the next steps in children's learning to support them in making really rapid progress. Children delight in developing their early writing skills as they explore creating with paint and writing birthday cards for the nursery bear. Staff expertly support children's language development. For example, they talk to children about what they are doing and repeat words back to them carefully to support their pronunciation. Young children enjoy singing their favourite songs and rhymes. They skilfully count down from five to one as they sing and do the actions to songs. Older children enjoy mathematical challenges as they work out how many more they need to make four and how many they would add to make 11.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Children behave exceptionally well. Staff support children to negotiate with each other in sharing and taking turns with toys. They promote excellent hygiene practices and children know to wash their hands after outdoor play and before mealtimes. Children enjoy planting fruit and vegetables in the nursery allotment. Staff talk to children about food that is good for them. This helps children understand about healthy eating. Children treat each other with respect. For example, during story time they patiently wait their turn and listen carefully to their friends' views and opinions. Children eagerly tidy up toys when they have finished playing without being prompted by staff.

Outcomes for children are outstanding

All children are making very rapid progress from their individual starting points. They are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage in learning and for their move on to school. Young children delight in exploring with vehicles and balls in paint. They squeal with excitement as they mix the colours together with their hands. Children enjoy creating flowers and presents for the nursery bear, using a range of building blocks.

Setting details

Unique reference number	123558
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1102986
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	46
Number of children on roll	57
Name of registered person	Little Steps Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP523454
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2014
Telephone number	01 727 856651

Little Steps Day Nursery registered in 1999. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, 13 hold qualification at level 3 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round apart from one week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.45am until 6.15pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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