

# Inspection of Little Steps at St Georges School

28-30 Priory Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 4HR

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Inspection date: 27 January 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is good

Children confidently choose activities and equipment that interest them. They spend long periods immersed in their play and exploration. Children welcome the involvement of the attentive staff. They giggle when staff pretend that food made from play dough is 'spicy'. Children repeat their actions to help maintain the interaction and respond well to the descriptions and reactions that staff introduce. This helps children to strengthen their personal and social development. Children begin to understand that their feelings and opinions matter. When deciding which theme or topic the group are going to focus on, children take a vote on the choices. They respect the final decision and understand that a fair system has been used to justify that decision.

Babies and children develop close and trusting bonds with their key person and other staff. They seek cuddles for reassurance and comfort, helping them settle and feel secure. Babies follow familiar routines from home, including when and where they sleep. This contributes to a smooth transition from home to nursery. Children enjoy dancing and moving to music, helping to strengthen their muscles and coordination. They sing along to familiar rhymes and songs, contributing to the language-rich environment. Children who speak English as an additional language are given opportunities to speak and listen in small groups, which helps them to practise and understand new words.

## What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The owner and senior staff value support and feedback from external professionals and organisations. They regularly introduce training opportunities for all staff to join in and evaluate the impact this has on the quality of education. This contributes to a culture of continual improvement.
- Structured programmes of support, including areas around children's oral health and speech and language, help staff to teach children effectively. Staff offer sound advice and resources to parents so that the good work developed in the nursery is continued at home. Information is regularly passed to parents in a variety of ways. In return, parents are able to share their own observations and news from home, using individual accounts in an electronic communication system.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Dedicated members of staff create care plans and individual learning plans that support children's needs. All staff carry small cards with visual clues to depict key routines and important requests, such as using the toilet. The cards also give reminders to help children regulate their behaviour, giving them time to think about what they are doing and the consequences.
- As children grow, staff carefully plan when and how children are introduced to

and move to a new group room. Key persons meet to discuss what children already know and understand, in addition to their likes and interests. Children spend short periods in their new group with their existing key person, before the final move is made. This helps to make transitions as smooth as possible.

- Room leaders and their staff team carefully consider how to set out equipment and areas within the rooms. Babies access a small climbing frame to help support their physical development. Older children have space around larger tables to complete art and craft activities. They chat to their friends and staff while they carefully stick tissue shapes in a purposeful way.
- Children enjoy their time outside. They run, take turns on wheeled toys and balance on coloured 'stepping stones'. However, staff have not embedded a strong and varied curriculum to help extend learning for all children outside. This means there is less focus on promoting children's learning in a meaningful way.
- When children first attend the nursery, staff gather information about children's home lives, routines, likes and interests. Staff only gather basic information about what children can already do and understand. This hinders staff's ability to support children's learning in a precise way right from the start.
- Staff talk to children about what they are doing. They ask questions relating to their play, adding mathematical language and concepts. However, many questions lack challenge to move children to the next stage in their learning or to trigger even deeper exploration.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to report any concerns they might have about children's welfare, to help keep children safe from harm and abuse. Regular discussions and clear reporting forms help ensure that any concerns are followed up and monitored. This includes issues around extreme beliefs and behaviour. Staff wear lanyards that contain key safeguarding information which they can refer to at any time. Staff complete regular safeguarding training and refresher courses to help ensure that their knowledge and understanding reflect the most up-to-date information.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review and strengthen planning for how the outside environment supports all children's continued learning through a purposeful and varied curriculum
- gather even more information from parents about what their children can already do and understand when they start at the nursery, to inform precise learning right from the start
- increase the level of challenge given to children during their play and activities, to swiftly move their learning to the next stage.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY297718
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10073474
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	60
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	99
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Plater, Patricia Rosemary Beverley
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP906743
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 661 471
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 June 2016

## Information about this early years setting

Little Steps at St Georges School registered in 2005. The nursery employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Katrina Rodden

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the principal and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed activities inside the nursery and in the garden. She spoke to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The principal and the manager took the inspector on a learning walk. They described how their curriculum is planned and delivered and how it impacts children's learning.
- The inspector and the manager carried out a joint observation. The manager described the quality of teaching he observed.
- Documents, including staff qualifications, records of complaints and self-evaluation, were seen by the inspector.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents. She took their views, and those of others contained in emails, into consideration.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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