

Inspection of Little Steppers Pre-School

Smethwick Cape Hill Children's Centre, Corbett Street, SMETHWICK, West Midlands B66 3PX

Inspection date: 1 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are confident, keen learners, who thoroughly enjoy the time they spend at the pre-school. They develop strong and trusting bonds with the nurturing staff who care for them. Children form firm friendships, share and happily take turns. They behave well and display positive attitudes to learning.

The environment in this welcoming, inclusive pre-school is vibrant and busy and children are keen to explore. Children are eager to join in planned activities that link to their learning needs and interests or happily choose their own play. Children are highly motivated, inquisitive investigators, who develop into confident and sociable individuals. Children find an insect and take turns to use a magnifying glass to explore its features and discuss what they see.

Children develop good speech and language skills. They join in lively singing and dance sessions, and take part in interesting discussions throughout the day with staff. Children's early mathematical skills are developing well, and children are learning to count, recognise numbers and make comparisons. Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities especially well. They work closely with other professionals and follow their guidance when targets are set to help these children to reach their full potential.

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

- The manager and staff provide a well-thought-out curriculum that builds on what children know and can do already. The manager closely monitors children's progress from the outset. She quickly identifies any gaps in children's learning and takes swift action to put targeted support in place. The manager ensures additional funding benefits the children for whom it is intended. Children gain the necessary skills and attitudes for the next stages in their education, including their move on to school.
- The manager and staff strive to make continuous improvements that benefit children and their families. The manager involves parents, staff and children to help to identify where improvements can be made. For example, the manager is currently liaising with parents about the provision of hot food at mealtimes.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents receive daily feedback about their children's learning in the pre-school along with ideas and resources to continue this at home. Parents say their children 'absolutely love attending'. Parents talk about the positive impact the staff have had on their children, such as their greater confidence, speech and language development and effective toilet training.
- Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They implement effective behaviour management strategies, which help children to learn right from

wrong.

- Staff plan activities and experiences that match children's interests and build on what children already know. However, on occasions, staff overly direct children during adult-led activities, reducing opportunities for children to lead their own learning and explore, test and try out their own ideas.
- The strong focus on promoting communication and language is highly effective. Staff are attentive when children talk and show a genuine interest in what children say. Staff use their good questioning skills when communicating with children to extend discussions and build on children's vocabulary. Staff promote literacy well. They involve parents in different local initiatives to help their children develop a love of books. Children use pens and chalks to make marks, and they communicate to staff what they are writing. Children learn to recognise and write their own names.
- Staff teach children to wash their own hands before meals and use the toilet independently. However, staff do not consistently give children opportunities to further develop their independence, because some staff do not consistently encourage them to do things for themselves.
- Staff provide children with plenty of opportunities for children to develop their physical skills, indoors and outdoors.
- Staff support children's mathematical development well. Children learn to count, compare sizes, recognise shapes and calculate simple addition and subtraction.
- Staff recognise the diverse cultural backgrounds of the children who attend. Staff provide a variety of activities and experiences involving children and their families to help children learn that families differ.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have a secure knowledge of safeguarding. They know the possible signs and symptoms of abuse, and where to refer any concerns they may have about a child in their care. Staff carry out daily checks of the toys, resources and the environment to help to ensure children can play safely. Children learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they respond promptly when the weekly fire alarm sounds. Children know to stop what they are doing and line up at the door. The manager has robust recruitment procedures in place to help to deem staff suitable to work with the children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen staff teaching to enable children to incorporate more of their own ideas into adult-led activities
- enhance opportunities for children to manage more everyday tasks by

themselves to further develop their self-help skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2571063
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10239175
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	38
Name of registered person	West Smethwick Enterprise
Registered person unique reference number	2571060
Telephone number	07514238943
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Steppers Pre-School registered in 2020. The provider employs six members of childcare staff, and all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term times only. It operates from 8.45am until 3pm and provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Karen Laycock

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager led the inspector on a learning walk and told her what she wanted the children to learn at the pre-school. The manager and the inspector carried out a joint evaluation of an activity together.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with the director, manager and staff throughout the inspection. She looked at relevant documentation, including qualifications and first-aid certificates, and viewed evidence of the suitability of those working with children.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day. She also spoke to children about their experiences in the pre-school.

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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