

Inspection of Small Steps Day Nursery

Kaleidoscope Childrens Centre, Exeter Close, Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire
OX5 1AB

Inspection date: 15 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 happy and content learners. Younger children develop positive attachments with their key person. They explore the environment, happily knowing they can return for cuddles and reassurance if needed. When growing in confidence, younger children babble, smile, wave and bring toys to visitors.

Children enjoy the wide range of stimulating activities that staff plan for them. They behave well. They demonstrate kind and caring behaviour toward their friends as they reach out to comfort them. They follow routine expectations for behaviour and receive lots of praise and encouragement.

Children demonstrate high levels of engagement and enjoyment in their activities. Younger children laugh and giggle as they listen to nursery rhymes and begin to babble names of the animals in them. Older children cooperate with others well. They take turns as they play ball games, developing control as they throw, catch and kick balls. They dance enthusiastically to music with shakers. They enjoy taking their 'babies' on 'shopping trips' during their imaginary play.

Children are supervised well by staff, who routinely risk assess play spaces to keep them safe. They are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

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

- The manager recognises the impact on children's personal and social development following the COVID-19 pandemic. To help children develop secure bonds with their key person, she implements tailored settling-in procedures. This enables children to spend time in the nursery with their parents in a safe manner prior to attending. This has helped children to develop good attachments from the outset.
- Staff have supported parents promptly during the pandemic when they have struggled to access professional advice, such as the health visitor. For instance, they have provided guidance in relation to sleep routines and also transitions, such as when children are ready to learn to use the toilet. Parents are very complimentary about the support they have received.
- Staff help children to learn how they are unique. They begin to learn about similarities and differences between themselves and others. For instance, during celebrations in the calendar year, children listen to songs from other cultures. Staff also promote opportunities for children to learn about the wider world, through discussion about where they visit on their holidays.
- The manager ensures that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in nursery life. For example, staff work with parents to ensure they are meeting children's nutritional and medical

requirements. They swiftly implement advice from relevant professionals, such as occupational therapists, to help children have equal access to all areas of the environment.

- Key people have a good understanding of what they want children to learn next, and they implement this well. However, on occasion, they are not fully effective in recognising when they can spontaneously teach children new skills or develop their knowledge to extend their learning even further.
- Staff support children's conversation skills effectively. For example, staff use their interactions with older children to help them extend the narrative of their imaginary play. This helps children to learn how to use conversation to draw others into their play.
- Staff ensure that the curriculum promotes children's physical development. For example, staff support younger children to learn to climb up steps on the slide. Toddlers develop their hand muscles as they grasp paintbrushes and make marks on the floor. Older children proudly share pictures that they draw with pencils.
- Staff recognise the importance of helping children to understand their feelings and emotions. The manager has used funding effectively to purchase a range of equipment, such as books, figures and visual resources. Staff use these with children successfully to help them learn to describe how they are feeling.
- Children are quick to follow staff instructions and they behave well. However, on occasion, staff do not fully recognise the lack of flexibility in routines, such as snack time. This means that sometimes they interrupt children's learning for snack and at other times children who are hungry wait until they can be accommodated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers implement a range of robust policies to help keep children safe. For example, children practise the fire evacuation procedure. Staff also have a lockdown procedure, which they would follow in the event of an emergency. Staff ensure that the premises is safe and suitable each day. They demonstrate this when they complete regular health and safety checks of the outdoor area and of floor spaces to ensure that they are free from obstacles. Staff share a good understanding of local safeguarding partnership procedures. They are able to explain signs and symptoms of abuse, such as neglect, emotional abuse and radicalisation.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to more effectively identify spontaneous opportunities where they

can teach children knowledge and skills, which they can then apply to their future learning

- review the organisation of routine times and ensure all children can participate when they wish and their learning is not interrupted.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2578823
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10239521
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	29
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	Small Steps Day Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2578822
Telephone number	01865 377844
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Small Steps Day Nursery registered in 2020. It is based in Kidlington, Oxfordshire. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, from 8am until 5.30pm, for 48 weeks of the year. The nursery employs nine members of staff, of whom seven hold qualifications at level 3 and above. The nursery accepts funding for the free provision of education for children aged two-, three- and four-years-old.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lisa Dailey

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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Children shared their learning with the inspector during the inspection. They enjoyed talking about their activities with her.

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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