

Inspection of Little Steps Nursery

Metasi House, 521 West Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 3PA

Inspection date: 10 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive at the nursery happy and excited. They receive a warm welcome from the friendly and caring staff team. Children have strong bonds with the staff and they settle quickly. They remove their coats and bags, hang them on their pegs and go off to find their friends.

Children's imagination and sensory experiences are promoted through interesting, well-planned activities. For example, baby room staff create a teddy bears picnic and invite babies to feed their teddies with porridge oats. Staff introduce a wide range of vocabulary. For example, they describe the texture and sound of the oats and introduce mathematical language through counting and naming shapes and sizes. Babies practise the skills they require to become independent, such as learning to feed themselves.

Staff support children to develop a good understanding of the nursery rules. Children are well behaved. They listen to instructions, share and take turns. For example, when staff shake the tambourine, children stop what they are doing and listen to the instructions for tidy-up time. Children demonstrate that they understand why rules are in place and the impact that their behaviour has on others.

The nursery is recovering well from the challenges faced with staff retention and recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is now a stable staff team in place. This helps to support the delivery of consistently good-quality teaching and learning.

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

- Since registration, leaders have made changes to the organisation of space. For example, children aged from two to four years are now grouped together. Staff are beginning to make good use of the small nurture groups to help support individual learning. The very youngest children are supported by their peers to access the wide range of learning experiences available to them. However, sometimes, staff do not deploy themselves effectively in the large open-plan space. This means that there are occasions when children are not engaged in meaningful play and learning.
- Leaders have a strong vision for the nursery and continually strive to support the developing staff team. Staff receive coaching and supervision to improve their practice. However, this is not consistent. Weaknesses in the practice of less-experienced staff are not always identified and improvements targeted, to help to strengthen the quality of education and ensure that children acquire the intended skills.

- Overall, the quality of education is good. Staff plan exciting activities to stimulate children's imagination and curiosity. Pre-school children explore blocks of ice which contain cucumber, herbs and fresh mint. As the ice melts, children expertly use tools to scoop up the mixture and smell the herbs and mint. Furthermore, staff extend children's vocabulary as they encourage the children to describe the textures and smells. Children say they are making 'soup'. Children make links in their play to build on what they know and can do.
- Staff encourage and talk about kindness with children. They model how to be polite and recognise when children are considerate to one another. When children are upset, they are cuddled and soothed by staff and told that it is all right to feel sad when their mum has gone to work. Children are developing empathy and an understanding of their feelings and those of others.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Staff are patient, nurturing and attend to children's needs. They work with parents and other professionals to implement tailored teaching and care routines. All children make good progress and are developing their skills for future learning.
- When outside, older children enjoy playing group games. Staff organise a game of 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' Together, they count out loud their small and large steps. Children scream in excitement as they run away. They talk about running fast and being out of breath. Children develop their physical skills and an awareness of the impact this has on their bodies.
- Partnership working with parents is strong. Parents speak highly about their children's experiences at the nursery and how their learning and development are supported. They know who their child's key person is and feel well informed about their child's progress. Parents comment positively on how the nursery provides support for the whole family and the impact this has on their children's well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children are safe at the nursery. The premises are clean, safe and secure. Staff are qualified to administer first aid. They have additional qualifications in the use of the defibrillator, which is held in the reception area. Leaders and staff have a good knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. Effective systems are in place to record and monitor accidents. All staff have completed safeguarding training and demonstrate a good understating of what to do should they have concerns about children's safety. There are robust recruitment procedures in place and new staff are monitored throughout their induction period.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide all staff with effective supervision and targeted opportunities that support their ability to consistently deliver a high-quality curriculum
- improve staff deployment in the open-plan room to help provide all children with consistently good levels of support.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2623749
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10264727
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 10
Total number of places	73
Number of children on roll	75
Name of registered person	Little Steps (West Street) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2623748
Telephone number	01270582263
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Steps Nursery registered in December 2020 and is situated in Crewe, Cheshire. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. Wraparound care and holiday clubs are also provided for children aged from four to 11 years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Anita Dunn

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 nursery.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about the curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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