

Inspection of Step By Step Nursery

2 Park Avenue, BUSHEY WD23 2DD

Inspection date:

8 February 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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children of all ages are excited to arrive at this friendly nursery. Babies smile and hold out their arms to their nurturing key staff. Older children greet staff and managers enthusiastically before joining their friends and exploring the interesting learning environment staff create.

Children of all ages demonstrate high levels of confidence. They engage extremely well with visitors, chatting to them about their families and engaging them in play. Staff use well planned group sessions to encourage children to develop a sense of pride in their skills and abilities. For example, babies delight at the praise they receive during song and dance sessions. Older children proudly show off pictures and discuss the adventures they had when they took the class cuddly toy home.

Children of all ages develop a love of stories to support their literacy development. Babies explore books with their key staff in the cosy reading area. They follow the story by selecting puppets of their favourite characters, giggling at the funny voices staff use. Toddlers explore their favourite stories during engaging activities, which staff skilfully plan. For example, they have recently been reading 'The Little Red Hen'. They recall the characters and discuss what they learned from their actions while baking their own bread to enjoy with soup for tea.

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

- Staff use age-appropriate methods to support children's mathematical development. For example, babies use scoops to fill pots up with flour and pasta in a sensory activity. Toddlers learn about concepts such as shape and size in a farm activity. Staff encourage them to explore which animals will fit into the different barns and enclosures. Pre-school children use various vessels to measure out quantities of water. They identify numbers on the cylinders and count out how many pipettes it takes to fill them.
- Children behave well in all areas of the nursery. They are kind to one another and cooperate well in activities. For example, children independently set up their own florist in the role-play area. They work together to sell flowers to their friends, complimenting each other on the beautiful bouquets they create.
- Staff are skilled at implementing strategies to support children's understanding of managing risks in their play. For example, children in the toddler room will be making jam tarts to take home this week. Staff have set up a similar activity using modelling dough to familiarise children with behaviour expectations. Children discuss the importance of washing their hands to minimise the spread of germs. They learn to identify possible hazards when using sharp implements and ovens.
- The newly established management team reflect well on all areas of their

practice. They seek feedback from parents, staff, and other professionals and use their findings to make well-informed changes. For example, the nursery is currently developing the outdoor play area. This will enable children to have continuous access to high-quality learning opportunities outside.

- Parents speak highly of managers and staff. They discuss the positive impact recent changes in management have had on the nursery and the care it provides. Parents value the high-quality communication they receive about their children's development, both verbal and via an electronic system. They comment on how this enables them to further support children's development at home.
- The management team place a sharp focus on staff development and supporting their well-being. They conduct regular appraisals on all staff to identify their aspirations and interests as well as areas for improvement. Staff have access to numerous online and face-to-face training opportunities to keep their knowledge up to date. However, methods of coaching are not yet sufficient to enable staff to consistently identify gaps in their practice.
- Staff make good use of assessments to gather up-to-date information about children's development. They have strong knowledge of children's abilities, interests, and future learning goals. Staff use this comprehensive information to plan age-appropriate activities to support children's progress. However, staff are not consistently observed using this information to support children's learning in sessions of free play.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Management and staff demonstrate robust knowledge of the signs and symptoms that could indicate a child is at risk of harm. They have a clear understanding of the correct process to follow when reporting concerns to the appropriate authority. Staff complete comprehensive, daily risk assessments of the setting to ensure the environment is safe for all children. The management team have robust recruitment processes in place to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. Comprehensive training opportunities mean all staff complete first-aid training and confidently explain how they manage emergency situations in the nursery.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure staff consistently use their detailed knowledge of children's next steps to support their learning
- enhance methods of coaching to support staff to identify areas for development and raise the quality of their teaching to a consistently high level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY295902
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10265183
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	49
Number of children on roll	37
Name of registered person	Step By Step Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP525107
Telephone number	01923 639333
Date of previous inspection	26 May 2017

Information about this early years setting

Step By Step Nursery registered in 2005. The nursery employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Antonia Campbell

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 inspector considered the views of parents by speaking to several during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including evidence of the suitability of all staff.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children during activities.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching to assess the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector and manager completed a joint observation of an activity to assess the quality of teaching.
- The inspector held discussions with staff about the monitoring of learning and development in the setting and tracked the progress of several children.

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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