

Inspection of Second Steps Day Nursery (Colchester) Limited

179 Shrub End Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 4RG

Inspection date: 12 October 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 are central to everything the nursery staff do. Leaders organise the curriculum, childcare space and staff arrangements with children's need for consistency in mind. They carefully consider how they arrange staffing to increase children's ability to spend quality time with those they are most familiar with, including their key person. This helps children to feel safe, secure and at home when they are at nursery.

Babies and toddlers thrive. They show confidence to explore. This is because well-trained staff, who get to know the children's individual personalities, support them very well. Staff tailor their interactions to the individual needs of each child. Consequently, new children settle very quickly and show that they feel safe and secure. They begin to explore their calm environments, knowing that they have people they can trust to help and guide them.

Children actively explore outdoor areas. Staff provide resources, such as magnifying glasses, and encourage children to talk about what they find. This helps to enthuse children in their learning. Staff create games with the older children, which they play in their groups. Children negotiate the rules and learn to help one another, led by staff's positive role modelling.

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

- Managers design a purposeful curriculum. This helps children to gain new knowledge and skills as they explore and learn about what interests them. They ensure that, as children get older and more able, the levels of challenge increase.
- Staff share conversations, stories and songs with children and engage with them about their play throughout the day. This helps children to develop their communication skills, and it develops their knowledge of a variety of subjects. Children gain a good vocabulary as a result of the frequent interactions they have with staff. Babies begin to copy the words that staff use, such as commenting that the slide is wet.
- Parents report that they are happy with the care and education provided at the nursery. They say that their children look forward to attending. Staff involve parents in their children's learning in several ways. For example, they give parents regular updates and hold parents' evenings to discuss their child's progress. Staff invite parents to collect natural resources, which their children then bring into nursery. Staff help children to further their learning about what they have found.
- Staff ensure that children spend plenty of time outside, where they can move freely and get exercise. This encouragement to be physically active from birth

helps children to develop habits for a healthy life. Additional sessions further help children to enjoy exercise and movement. For example, a football coach visits and leads a weekly session for older children.

- Staff show that they understand their roles and responsibilities. For example, when a member of staff needs to leave for their break, they inform another member of staff about children's current learning, ensuring effective handover. This enables the member of staff to understand how they can continue to support children's learning.
- Staff offer close support for children who are still learning key skills such as putting on their shoes or washing and drying their hands. This means that all children learn the skills they need and develop their abilities in relation to self-care.
- Leaders and staff recognise that, at times, children can benefit from time spent with adults who closely guide and instruct them in planned activities. For example, staff often cook and bake with the children. However, these times are not always planned well enough to deliver the key information clearly and in ways that help children to remember it.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by knowledgeable staff, who work closely with other professionals. Clear support plans are in place for staff to follow, which leads to good results for these children.
- Staff report high levels of support for their well-being. Managers value the work that staff do, offering frequent thanks. The work environment is happy, and this reflects in the positive ways that staff and children interact with one another.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Appropriate action has been taken by leaders after they identified weaknesses in their practice relating to safeguarding. Leaders have improved how they work with other agencies to promptly address any concerns that may arise about adults working with children. They have strengthened their knowledge of safeguarding issues through the completion of further training. Leaders reflect on all areas of their practice, including that relating to safeguarding, in order to continue to develop it. Recruitment procedures are effective to ensure that only suitable adults work with the children. Staff know how to recognise and respond to information that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen planned learning experiences so that staff can purposefully deliver key information to further strengthen children's knowledge.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY555918
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10312596
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 11
Total number of places	69
Number of children on roll	123
Name of registered person	Second Steps Day Nursery (Colchester) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP555917
Telephone number	01206 545671
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Second Steps Day Nursery (Colchester) Limited registered in 2018. The nursery employs 21 members of childcare staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery is open from 7am until 7pm, Monday to Friday, throughout the year. The nursery provides funded early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kate Hipperson

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 deputy manager, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of planned activities with managers.
- Children spoke to/communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The deputy manager, manager and inspector discussed the leadership and management of 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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