

# Inspection of Small Steps Early Years Centre

108 Banks Road, West Kirby, Wirral CH48 0RE

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Inspection date: 12 December 2023

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## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is outstanding

Inspirational staff create a cosy and homely environment that children adore and thrive in. The environment is innovatively organised to invite children straight into purposeful play and learning. From the moment children first arrive, staff are warm and excellent role models. Consequently, children form secure and trusting attachments. Detailed information is gathered from parents, which helps staff to meet children's needs and enables them to build on their previous experiences exceptionally well. Children receive personalised and ambitious learning opportunities that ignites their fascination of the awe and wonder of the world. Children develop a joy for learning, which helps them to make rapid progress across all areas.

Supporting children's self-esteem and respect towards others and their surroundings are key features of the curriculum. Staff skilfully implement opportunities for children to develop an awareness of their feelings. Children display exceptionally positive behaviours. Staff ensure children have calm places to retreat to, which helps them relax. Family photos and children's artwork are on display to help them feel a sense of belonging and pride. Staff very effectively help children to consider the emotions of others. For example, they use resources and images to help children to understand how characters in stories are feeling. Staff offer lots of praise for children's achievements. This helps children to feel a great sense of achievement. It also gives them the confidence to keep on trying hard.

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

- Staff skilfully identify when the time is right to offer new learning or allow children to work things out for themselves, using their own talents. For example, following children's interest in trains, staff set up an exciting train track with objects placed around the track to encourage children to develop their language skills and talk about what they see on the train journey. They introduce children to new skills when they are most likely to absorb and remember them. Furthermore, children have time to practise and use their skills without interruption. This helps them to embed new knowledge more deeply.
- Staff are highly knowledgeable in how they break down small parts of learning, to ensure children retain knowledge and skills long-term. For example, staff extend children's awareness of numbers beyond ten from observations they make of children playing with an advent calendar. They use high-quality resources that enable children to master the concept of increasing number in a tactile and logical way. Children have time to practise and master their counting and numeral recognition in many ways through play.
- Children are empowered to be self-motivated and able to do things for themselves. For example, children know where tissues are stored, so they can

blow their own noses. They also know to use the broom to sweep up dropped tissues on the floor. Art materials, including paper and paint, are presented at children's level. As a result, children can decide when they want to be creative. There are many opportunities for children to practise getting dressed, for example during imaginative role-play opportunities. Furthermore, children quickly learn to select and put on appropriate clothes to wear outdoors. Children have impressive independence and self-care skills for their age.

- Staff have a huge impact on supporting children's speech and language development. They pose open-ended questions and give children time to process their thoughts. Staff closely monitor children's language development and share detailed progress with parents. This ensures children, including those who speak English as an additional language, are becoming increasingly eloquent talkers.
- Careful consideration is given to the books and stories that children access. Books are available everywhere in the setting. Staff structure the literacy curriculum very well, so that children can hear new vocabulary and stories to develop their understanding. Staff create various resources to help children to recall and order familiar stories or use the characters to create their own narratives. Children are making superb progress in their literacy development.
- Children absorb meaningful learning opportunities within the wider world. They make frequent trips out of the setting. For example, children go on regular visits to a local elderly care home, which helps them to learn about respect for others. Staff also use these visits to help children to gain a greater understanding of their place in society. Staff highlight to children how their actions, by singing and doing activities with others, makes others happy and boosts their own self-confidence.
- An exceptionally strong leader works with staff individually to identify required training. She offers targeted coaching to help staff to deliver high-quality teaching. Following recent training on supporting positive behaviour, staff nurture children's talents more. They suggest to children to 'use their beautiful drawing skills' to help to make decorations for the Christmas tree. These techniques successfully support children's positive engagement.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have in-depth knowledge of local safeguarding issues. This means they are alert towards potential abuse in children's lives. There is a strong culture of vigilance and ongoing monitoring to ensure children's safety is a priority. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the welfare of a child. They know the importance of acting swiftly on concerns, including if they have concerns about the conduct of a colleague. The setting is secure and exceptionally clean. As children play with fragile real-life resources made from porcelain and glass, staff are careful to ensure these resources are frequently checked for breakages and remain safe for children to use.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY491075
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	10305281
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	45
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	56
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Small Steps Day Nursery (Wirral) Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP526707
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 625 6019
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 February 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Small Steps Early Years Centre registered in 2015 and is situated in West Kirby. The setting employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 7.45am to 5.45pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Dee White

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector has taken this into account in the evaluation of the nursery.
- The manager led the inspector on a learning walk and explained how the curriculum is planned and implemented.
- Discussions were held with staff, parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector observed practice and evaluated the quality of activities together with the manager.
- The inspector looked at documents, including evidence to demonstrate the suitability of staff. Required training was checked and suitable.
- The inspector tracked the experiences of children to determine the progress they make.
- Meetings were held with the manager to discuss their evaluation of the provision and the impact on children's progress.

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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