

Inspection of Step Start Nurseries Heybridge

The Club House, Bentalls Complex, Colchester Road, Heybridge, Maldon CM9 4NW

Inspection date: 26 January 2024

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 really keen and active little learners. They enter the nursery excited about their day ahead. Babies stretch their arms out to be held by their key persons, showing that they feel safe, secure and settled. Children wave goodbye to parents and carers and happily go with the key person to their base rooms. Staff create a welcoming and exciting environment. They make really good use of the resources and furniture to provide well-planned spaces that capture children's interests. Children are kind, caring and polite towards each other. They form small friendship groups and invite other children to join their games.

Children behave well. Staff use extremely positive, clear language to help children to express their feelings and engage in purposeful conversations. Their expectations of the children are high. Staff are skilled at asking pertinent questions and allowing children time to consider their responses. As a result, children's communication and language are promoted effectively. Babies receive warm and loving care from their key person and all staff working in the baby room. Their individual needs are expertly met to ensure that babies settle well and enjoy their nursery experience.

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

- There is an effective management team at the head of this nursery. The manager is well supported by an area manager. She in turn supports her staff superbly, creating a caring and highly effective team of childcare practitioners. Staff speak about really enjoying their job and feeling valued.
- Parents speak very highly of the manager and staff. They comment on the effective communication between staff and parents and how well informed they are about their child's day. The senior management team listens to parents and works hard to resolve any concerns. It takes on board parental and staff suggestions. For example, opportunities for parents to visit the nursery to speak to their child's key person are organised during the day on a Saturday as a number of parents found the evening meetings difficult to attend.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. There are effective measures in place for staff to work with other professionals to support these children. Money from additional funding is used well to support children and to help close gaps in their progress and development.
- Children are excited to participate in planned and clearly enjoyable phonics sessions. They sound out letters to spell simple words and enthusiastically join in with songs and rhymes relating to sounds.
- Older children enjoy being able to free flow between the base room and the outdoor area. Staff make good use of the garden to extend the children's

spontaneous and planned learning. Children invite adults to purchase ice cream from their ice-cream shop. When a mint ice cream is asked for, they confidently tell staff that they 'have made a good choice'.

- Managers are highly effective at monitoring staff practice and knowledge. Where identified, appropriate training is swiftly put in place to support any staff who need it.
- Children enthusiastically free the toy dinosaurs from the frozen ice they have been caught in. They use appropriate tools proficiently to hack away at the ice and chat to staff about the names of the dinosaurs and how they are freeing them. Staff interactions are highly effective at enhancing and extending such conversations.
- Staff are very knowledgeable about children's dietary and medical needs. Well-presented, clear care plans are in each of the rooms, ensuring that all staff, including bank or cover staff, have access to important information about the children's diets or medical conditions.
- Children have opportunities to experience fresh air and outdoor learning daily when they visit the nursery garden. There is, however, less provision for children's knowledge of the wider community to be enhanced. Managers and staff do not make effective use of the local environment to extend children's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- review and enhance the provision for extending children's understanding of the world, especially their knowledge of the local and wider communities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2660131
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10326235
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 3
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	99
Name of registered person	Step Start Nurseries Heybridge Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2660132
Telephone number	01621 488001
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Step Start Nurseries Heybridge registered in 2021. The nursery employs 17 members of childcare staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one member of staff who holds qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7am until 7pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

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 viewed all areas of the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager led the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about what they want children to learn.
- Children shared their views with the inspector.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024