

Inspection of Small Steps Day Nursery and Pre-School

9 Lang Lane, West Kirby, Wirral CH48 5HE

Inspection date: 31 January 2024

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

Staff warmly welcome children into this homely nursery. Children happily part from their parents and settle with ease because they are given reassurance by nurturing staff. Leaders centre the curriculum around children's needs and interests. They carefully organise what they want children to learn and experience as they move through the nursery. Staff give children lots of time to embed new learning at their own pace. Children make good progress.

Staff provide children with authentic and unusual resources that promote their awareness of the awe and wonder of the world. They engage children's interests and curiosity very well. Staff offer ideas to help children to recall and extend their knowledge. Older children practise their mathematical skills as they count and sort dried citrus fruit slices. They measure out potions into different sized glass bottles using water and fresh herbs. Toddlers play with bird ornaments which prompts them to think about what might hatch from the eggs. Babies experiment as they roll wooden balls down a tube, learning about cause and effect. Children develop their early literacy skills as they select trinkets from a cabinet to create stories to tell each other. This encourages children to use their imagination and think creatively.

Staff are good role-models. They show children and each other respect and sincerity. This successfully encourages children to have pleasant attitudes towards one another. Children's awareness of rules and the needs of others is very good. Consequently, they behave very well.

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

- Staff use a range of methods to make precise assessments of what children know and can do. When staff identify gaps in children's learning, the special educational needs coordinator creates a plan to support children more closely. She engages with external professionals to seek additional help as required. This helps children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve.
- Children learn about feelings and emotions. Staff help toddlers to acknowledge if they feel happy or sad. They explain to them what might be making them feel how they do. Older children learn wider vocabulary to describe their emotions. For example, they hold a 'worry stone' to express their worries with a listening adult and friends. This helps children to articulate how they feel. As a result, they are able to manage their emotions well.
- Children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills are developing well. Staff ask children thought provoking questions based on what they observe children are doing. They enable children to think for themselves and recall what they know. This makes children feel proud of their knowledge and eager to learn

more. Children are confident to speak their thoughts aloud.

- Staff support children to be independent. Children access equipment to clear up spillages. They know where resources belong, therefore they are able to self-select then tidy them away for others to use. Toddlers learn to dispense their own water to drink. They know to place dirty glasses in the allocated box. Older children are confident to scrape their plates and work together to clear up once they have finished eating. Children have respect for their surroundings and show great independence in managing their own self-care needs. Additionally, they learn healthy hygiene habits for the future.
- Overall, staff are alert to children's emerging ideas and inquisitiveness, which helps children to maintain interest in their learning. However, when staff work with larger groups of children, occasionally they do not switch their attention to balance their interactions between individuals and the wider group. During these times, some children lose concentration and do not engage in learning as effectively.
- Babies' physical development is very well understood by specially trained staff. Staff are highly aware of the sequence of learning that babies need to experience to develop their large and small muscles. Babies use mini climbing frames to pull themselves up and use their pincer grip to post sticks into a cardboard tub. Babies master their full range of physical skills early on and become confident movers.
- Staff are supported well by the knowledgeable management team. They have focused supervision meetings. They discuss their own well-being and training needs to maintain consistently good-quality teaching. Staff receive extensive coaching and support which helps them to complete their roles confidently.
- Parents say there is a 'lovely balance of calmness' in the nursery. They are included very well in nursery life. Parents are invited to meetings to learn about their child's progress. They have opportunities to learn about the curriculum and meet their child's new key person as they move through the nursery. Children benefit from the collaborative approach to their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to organise group activities in a way that enables children to engage and participate fully.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY346027
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10308214
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	46
Number of children on roll	63
Name of registered person	Small Steps Day Nursery (Wirral) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP526707
Telephone number	0151 625 6127
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2018

Information about this early years setting

Small Steps Day Nursery and Pre-School opened registered 2007. The setting opens Monday to Friday, from 8am until 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. There are 16 staff, of whom 15 hold qualifications from level 2 to level 6. The setting receives funding to provide free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The setting has a 'Curiosity Approach' accreditation and uses this pedagogy.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Dee White

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in their evaluations.
- The manager and deputy 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 arrangements were checked and deemed suitable.
- Meetings were held with the manager, deputy manager and nominated individual who is also the owner of the setting 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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