

Inspection of Little Steps Pre-School

Luncies Hall, Luncies Road, Basildon SS14 1SA

Inspection date: 29 April 2024

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

Children are given the best start in life at this fully inclusive pre-school. Leaders have developed a curriculum that supports every child to make incredible progress and prepares them for the next stage in their education. The manager, who is passionate about her role, and her team show high levels of enjoyment and engagement as they skilfully bring the ambitious curriculum to life for all children through their highly effective teaching.

Children enjoy a range of experiences and activities that stretch and challenge their current skills and knowledge. For example, when throwing balls through hoops, staff raise the hoops higher and higher to continually extend the challenge. Staff organise the environments to consider children's interests, learning styles and talents. They use their expert judgement to decide when they should observe children and when they should step in and support learning. As a result, children remain highly sustained in their play and learning, showing positive attitudes and enjoyment.

Children have secure attachments with their key person. They demonstrate that they feel safe and secure in the pre-school. Staff value children's voices. When deciding on the 'promises', staff consult with children on the pre-school rules, which are written in children's words. This helps children to successfully know and remember the 'promises'. Consequently, children's behaviour is impeccable. They respect one another and show kindness and empathy to their friends.

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

- The manager has a clear vision that is highly ambitious for all children, but in particular those who are disadvantaged. The curriculum intent has been carefully designed to offer children valuable opportunity to achieve future success. It progressively builds upon children's start points through a shared and consistent commitment to high-quality and effective teaching. All children are making excellent and sustained progress.
- Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. There is a deep and universal understanding of the individual needs of children. The targeted support and shared understanding of the children means that they make exceptional progress and exceed targets. Positive partnership working and open communication further contribute to the excellent progress that children with SEND make.
- The curriculum for communication and language is of exceptional quality. The highest priority has been placed on supporting children to be effective communicators. Leaders have implemented a range of strategies to support children who are falling behind with language to catch up swiftly. Children enjoy

learning early letter sounds through songs. Mark-making opportunities are readily available across the provision as children scribe in notepads and draw plans in the construction area.

- Exceptional partnership working ensures that children who are at risk of, or are, falling behind are supported to catch up and close any gaps in their learning. Staff offer a service that supports the whole family and not just the children. This positive and supportive partnership working creates a seamless transition between the pre-school and home and consequently improves outcomes for children. Parents express their gratitude for the support and service the pre-school offers.
- Children show high levels of engagement in their work and play. Staff recognise the most appropriate times to step in and support and sustain children's ideas. They allow children time to think through solutions, test ideas and solve problems. As a result, children are becoming expert thinkers and problem-solvers. They apply their mathematical knowledge to a range of experiences such as counting spiders and describing patterns and sizes.
- The manager is inspirational. She uses her broad range of experiences to influence and drive changes that have a positive impact on children's learning and development. She is highly regarded by the team and fully supports them in developing their skills and knowledge to consistently improve the quality of teaching and experiences for children. This includes how they recognise and respond to any safeguarding concerns. Staff report high levels of support for their well-being.
- Children are valued members of the pre-school. Staff provide them with frequent choices, such as where to play, when to visit the 'cafe' for snack, and which songs to sing. Children are fiercely independent, putting on their coats and preparing their snacks. They are developing a keen sense of how to stay safe. They know how to manage breakages of glass in the 'cafe' and how to stay safe on walks.
- Children learn about the wider world through visits to the local woodland where they explore nature. Staff constantly extend and broaden children's experiences. For example, they visit the local church, travelling by bus, to deliver a poppy wreath they have made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY501700
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10335182
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	38
Name of registered person	Lorraine Porter and Vanessa Matthews Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP908140
Telephone number	01268 559222
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Steps Pre-School registered in 2016. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 9am to midday Monday and Friday, and from 9am to 2.30pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Clare Ford

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning and observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector spoke to several staff and parents during the inspection and took account of their views. This included discussions with the special educational needs coordinator.
- The manager and the inspector discussed the leadership and management in the setting. This included the manager showing the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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