

# Inspection of Steps Ahead Day Nursery and Nursery School

Steps Ahead Nursery, Wiltshire Drive, Bradley Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14  
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Inspection date: 11 July 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
The quality of education	<b>Inadequate</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development	<b>Inadequate</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

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

### **The provision is inadequate**

Breaches to requirements have a negative impact on children's health, safety and learning. Leaders and staff do not work in partnership with parents and other professionals to meet children's needs and to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders put procedures in place for some children with dietary and medical needs, but not for all. The key-person system is not always effective. For example, leaders and children's key persons do not follow parental advice when managing children with additional needs. In addition, when professionals give advice and specialist equipment to aid children's engagement and learning, staff do not use these to help children to make the best possible progress. Their failure to act impacts on children's ability to thrive and develop.

Although staff have mandatory training on subjects such as child protection and paediatric first aid, leaders do not ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to help them meet children's needs effectively. Furthermore, staff do not understand how to implement their curriculum so that all children engage in purposeful play and learning. Staff also do not recognise how to identify and reduce risks to children, which leaves them vulnerable to accidents.

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

- Staff do not do enough to assess and minimise the risks that some activities present. For example, staff do not consider that bubble mixture will make surfaces slippery, and children slip and fall when staff blow bubbles next to climbing equipment. Staff do not understand the risks when smaller resources are accessible to the younger children, especially those who are known to put toys in their mouths.
- Although leaders and staff identify where some children have delays in development and refer them to other professionals for support, staff do not consider how to meet children's individual learning needs during their time at the nursery. Some children with SEND do not receive the help and support that they need to access an effective curriculum to help progress their learning. Some children are left in bouncy chairs or propped up with a pillow with no resources within their reach as staff do not recognise how to help these children and engage with them. This is despite other professionals providing appropriate resources for children to be able to be involved in activities. For example, specialist equipment is left in the meeting room rather than in the playroom where children need it.
- Although leaders and staff recognise the importance of managing children's dietary needs, and they do this for most of the children, they do not follow professional advice or access training to help them to meet all children's needs.

Some children struggle to eat the food provided, and the alternatives given are not nutritious or healthy. In addition, leaders and staff do not follow health professionals' advice to promote children's health and well-being.

- Staff do not support children to follow good hygiene practices. Older children finish playing and eat without being reminded to wash their hands. The youngest children are encouraged to wash their hands in a bowl of water that is shared between all the children in the group. This does not promote children's good health and well-being.
- Leaders do not identify weaknesses in the provision, and staff lack the skills that they need to carry out their roles effectively. Staff do not implement the curriculum to provide children with the challenge and engagement that they need. Children are keen to be involved in activities. However, due to weaknesses in the delivery of activities, children are left waiting and do not receive appropriate support to help them to learn. Although leaders recognise that children have delays in their communication and language development, staff do not use opportunities to promote children's language. For example, staff watch children eat snack in silence and do not recognise opportunities to support children's language and communication throughout the day.
- Although the key-person system supports some children, it is not effective for all. Leaders and staff do not use the information that they receive from parents and other professionals to meet children's specific needs.
- Overall, children are happy and have good relationships with their peers and the staff who care for them.
- Staff understand some procedures in place to safeguard children. For example, they understand the importance of monitoring existing injuries and the potential significance of injuries to non-mobile babies.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

There is not an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:**

	Due date
ensure that staff understand how to identify and reduce risks to children	12/07/2024

ensure that there are effective arrangements in place to support children with SEND and that all staff understand how to implement strategies to promote children's development	02/08/2024
ensure that information from parents and carers regarding children's dietary needs is acted on appropriately	12/07/2024
ensure that information about children's health and care needs is acted on and appropriate steps are taken to support good hygiene practices, to keep children safe and well	12/07/2024
ensure that leaders provide effective training, support and guidance for all staff, to ensure that children have their individual needs met	02/08/2024
ensure that staff understand how to implement a curriculum that offers children challenge and targets their learning effectively	02/08/2024
ensure that the key-person system is effective and that staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals to meet all children's individual needs.	02/08/2024

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145881
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10353852
<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>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	100
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	187
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Steps Ahead Nursery Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP535246
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 719110
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 August 2018

## Information about this early years setting

Steps Ahead Day Nursery and Nursery School registered in 2000. It is open from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays and one week at Christmas. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6.30pm. The nursery employs 44 members of staff, most of whom work directly with the children. Of these, one member of staff holds qualified teacher status, and 31 members of staff hold relevant qualifications at level 2 to level 5. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspectors

Victoria Nicolson  
Tracey Cook

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery 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 nursery.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The deputy manager and one of the inspectors had a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspectors talked to staff, parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to one of the inspectors about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspectors carried out joint observations of group activities with the managers.
- The inspectors looked at relevant documentation and reviewed 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.

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