

Inspection of Second Steps Day Nursery (Althorne) Ltd

Suite 1 Winterdale Manor, Winterdale Manor Enterprise Centre, Southminster Road,
Althorne, Chelmsford CM3 6YH

Inspection date: 8 November 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

The management and dedicated team of staff are committed to providing children with a most homely, calm and inviting environment in which to learn and have fun. Great care has been taken to ensure the environment and curriculum is designed with the children in mind. The nursery offers rich learning opportunities and is welcoming for all children. Children are the centre of all decisions made to ensure they feel safe, secure and thrive at nursery. Therefore, children leave their parents with ease and quickly engage in their play. Planning in the moment and supporting children's interests influence the activities provided. Appropriate, quality resources are accessible to enable children to self-select and initiate their own games.

The gentle, nurturing staff are skilful in their interactions. They understand children need time to explore and investigate for themselves, but are on hand to support their curiosity and extend learning. They provide children with praise and encouragement for their efforts. Children are confident. They have a sense of belonging and self-worth. Children listen with intent and follow staff's instructions, for example, when it is time to tidy in preparation for lunch. They thoroughly enjoy participating in board games. Children concentrate as they listen carefully to the rules and learn to turn take and generally demonstrate good behaviour.

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

- The management, and team of staff ensure the curriculum is well planned. Planning in the moment is fully understood and children can lead their learning fully supported by knowledgeable staff. These opportunities are embedded across all areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors.
- The staff know the children well and have a good understanding of child development and where children are in their progress. The quality of teaching is good. The education programme ensures learning for all participating. This means all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve good outcomes and are prepared for their transition to school.
- Parents speak very highly of all aspects of nursery. They are keen to express their complete gratitude for the support and kindness their children receive. Parents comment they feel completely reassured their children are in safe hands and are making good progress.
- Children learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle through daily routines. They have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise as they play in a well-equipped garden. They often walk in the local environment or develop large physical skills as they use climbing equipment in the local park. They have opportunities to learn football skills and ball control as they participate in weekly football club.
- Babies individual routines are respected and fully discussed with parents. Babies

demonstrate they are very happy, confident and secure in their homely and cosy environment. They enjoy cuddles and reassurance from the staff and are offered comforters when they need them.

- Staff enthusiastically talk about their role at nursery. They say they feel fully supported through supervision and that their well-being is considered. They say their own professional development is positively encouraged. They are able to access an online provider to complete webinars and training that interest them and develop their practice.
- Children are confident speakers. For example, they confidently and excitedly tell visitors to the nursery about their new babies at home. They ask questions and show an interest in what is happening during the inspection. Staff engage children in conversation and have a clear comprehension of how children develop their conversation skills. However, on some occasions, some staff do not give children time to respond to questions and to think critically and solve problems for themselves.
- Overall, children's behaviour is good. They have formed friendships and play well together. They understand the expectations of staff who are good role models. Children are spoken to respectfully. They have established close bonds with their key person. While staff are aware of the importance of supporting children's emotional development, there are fewer focused opportunities for children to learn about emotions, how to regulate their feelings and learn the vocabulary they need to express themselves.

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:

- strengthen the use of effective questioning skills to give children more time to think and respond to questions and enable them to share their thoughts and ideas
- include more focused activities within the curriculum to support children's understanding of emotions and develop their vocabulary further, to enable them to express how they feel.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2689574
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10367290
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	62
Number of children on roll	88
Name of registered person	Second Steps Day Nursery (Althorne) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2689572
Telephone number	01621502258
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Second Steps Day Nursery (Althorne) Ltd registered in 2022. The nursery employs 19 members of childcare staff. Of these, 16 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round, from 7am to 7pm. The nursery provides funded early education for children between nine months and four years of age.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- The manager showed the inspector around the areas that children access. They discussed how staff organise the environment and plan the curriculum and experiences for children
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the nursery documents which included evidence about staff's suitability and training.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children, and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.

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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