

Inspection of Steps Ahead Day Nursery and Nursery School

Steps Ahead Nursery, Wiltshire Drive, Bradley Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14
0RR

Inspection date: 17 December 2024 - 8 January 2025

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children at the nursery are not getting the care and education they deserve. Insufficient progress has been made to address all of the actions identified at the last inspection. Weaknesses in leadership and management affect children's safety and well-being. For example, leaders do not work in partnership with other professionals to meet all children's needs. In addition, leaders have not implemented effective risk assessments for children with complex medical needs. These issues do not ensure children's safety.

Where practice is strong, children demonstrate levels of engagement as they play cooperatively with their friends. However, the curriculum does not always meet the individual learning needs of all children. Staff have awareness of what children need to learn and identify when they need support. However, leaders do not always ensure children get the tailored support they need. This has a detrimental impact on children's learning and progress, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Children who have been at the nursery for some time arrive happily and settle quickly to their play. Over their time at the nursery, children learn to be kind and considerate to their friends as they follow the lead set by staff. They look out for each other and are confident to ask for help when they need it.

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

- There are significant weaknesses in information sharing and working together with parents and outside agencies to support children's needs. For example, leaders do not make referrals to other professionals swiftly enough to ensure children with SEND get the tailored support they need and are entitled to. As a result, staff do not have an understanding of what strategies they can use to ensure that children make rapid progress. This has a detrimental impact on children's learning, progress, and school readiness.
- Risk assessments at the nursery remain inadequate. There are some children who require medical intervention and/or support that have no risk assessment in place to ensure that staff can keep them safe at all times. Risk assessments that have been created for other children contain limited information, and they do not give a clear enough overview about the child's needs or the potential risks to them. This means staff are not sufficiently informed to be able to keep children safe in their care.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have developed the curriculum to better support the progress children make. While the curriculum is broadly appropriate for some children, it is not ambitious enough for all. For example, staff do not provide sufficient support for children who are quieter or those with SEND. This

is because leaders do not ensure staff identify individual targets for those children or implement the strategies needed to ensure these children make enough progress. This mean that these children are not active learners, and do not engage in meaningful learning experiences with the input they need from staff.

- Despite weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum, some children enjoy exploring the resources available and leading their own play. Most children learn to be independent and confidently complete tasks for themselves. For example, they serve themselves at mealtimes and put their own coats on before going outside. These children also enjoy helping to tidy up. They confidently clear away resources after activities, ready for the next group of children to be able to take part.
- Overall, children enjoy spending time outdoors in the fresh air. Staff help some children to walk along balance beams and climb onto wooden cubes. Those children who are confident, jump off but know they must wait for their friends to move. Staff encourage these children to take turns on bikes to support them to work together and share. Children are respectful and kind to each other.
- Partnership working with parents is not effective. Not all parents are aware of what their children are working on at nursery. Parents do not receive key information, such as children's SEND support plans in a timely manner. This does not help parents to extend learning at home and has a negative impact on the continuity of care and learning.

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?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
ensure that leaders understand how to identify and reduce risks to children	15/01/2025

<p>ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for children with special education needs and/or disabilities so that all staff understand how to implement strategies to promote children's development</p>	<p>22/01/2025</p>
<p>ensure information about children's health and care needs is known and acted on and appropriate steps are taken to work with other professionals and parents, to keep children safe and well.</p>	<p>22/01/2025</p>

Setting details

Unique reference number	145881
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10365551
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 5
Total number of places	100
Number of children on roll	143
Name of registered person	Steps Ahead Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP535246
Telephone number	01225 719110
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2024

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 6. The nursery is in receipt of funding for free early education for children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Marie Swindells
 Chelsea Woollard
 Marie Swindells

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspectors completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspectors talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- One inspector carried out joint observations with the manager.
- One inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspectors spoke with the manager about the leadership and management of 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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