

Inspection of Little Step Day Care

Marshwood House, 56 Ravensden Road, Sports Complex, BEDFORD MK41 0JY

Inspection date: 28 July 2022

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

Children are very settled in the nursery. The atmosphere is calm and relaxed as they happily apply themselves to activities and learning. They build warm and close relationships with staff who guide them in how to behave and make friendships. Children follow routines and instructions, which helps them to manage transitions between outdoor and indoor play with ease. They make good friendships with their peers and happily share resources, including books.

Children engage in learning opportunities that are focused on supporting their communication and language. This is to help close any gaps in learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Children of all ages hear a variety of language during activities as staff talk to them and engage them in conversations. Children who speak English as an additional language make particularly good progress as they are encouraged and supported to use more than one language.

Children are free to make choices about what they want to do. Staff wait for prompts from babies, such as holding their arms up, to signal they are happy to be picked up. Older children make choices about what they want to do and confidently tell staff that they may change their mind later. This shows that they feel safe to express their views.

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

- Leadership of the nursery is strong. The owner has a clear understanding of the needs of the cohort of children present and the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on their learning and development. She has a clear focus on helping them to develop important skills, particularly language skills, and provides them with a positive and happy environment in which they feel settled. She has clear expectations of staff and identifies areas that she can develop further.
- The key-person system is effective. Staff build close relationships with their key children and know them well. Children comment that they will miss their key person when they leave the nursery to move on to school. Staff know children's abilities and closely monitor their development. They quickly highlight any areas where children may be at risk of delay and work together with parents to address those gaps. This means children have consistent and focused support to help them to continue their development.
- Parents comment positively about the nursery. They value the strong links and effective communication they have with staff. They are confident that staff know their children well. Parents know what staff are working on with their children which helps them to further support children's development at home.
- Children are focused and engaged in story and rhyme activities. Babies choose which nursery rhyme they want to hear. They enthusiastically listen and join in

with sounds and actions. Older children listen to stories. Staff pause to encourage children to finish then sentences from familiar stories. They ask children questions to which they eagerly respond. Children independently share books with their friends. They look at pictures and turn pages together.

- Children behave well throughout the day in the positive nursery atmosphere. Staff are good role models; they are polite and respectful towards children and each other. Children play cooperatively and are eager to take on small roles, such as being the helper at lunchtime. This encourages their sense of responsibility and independence.
- Staff interact with children positively throughout the day to support their learning. However, at times, they do not challenge children enough to deepen their learning. For example, staff do not always ask children searching questions to encourage their critical thinking skills. While the manager implements an effective system to help staff develop their practice, she does not give enough focus on helping them to enhance how they interact with children to fully extend their learning.
- Children do not have a wide range of opportunities throughout the day to practise their counting skills, or to explore number and other mathematical learning. While there is some evidence of mathematical learning going on, for example, children explore shapes and position when stacking blocks, this is not routinely implemented throughout the day.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a clear understanding of how to identify and respond to any concerns about children's welfare. They receive appropriate training, and the manager ensures they keep their knowledge up to date through ongoing discussions. Staff know that they must act and report any concerns about adults in the nursery. They have a secure understanding of wider safeguarding concerns that may impact on children's lives. The manager is professionally curious and understands her responsibilities to liaise with other professionals who act to keep children safe. She has secure recruitment processes in place to check all staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- focus the performance management of staff by guiding them to develop consistently high-quality interactions with children that inspire them and encourage their critical thinking skills
- use more consistent opportunities to enhance children's counting and number skills, in addition to learning other age-appropriate mathematical skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY493190
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10219450
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	48
Number of children on roll	45
Name of registered person	Little Steps Day Care Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP534865
Telephone number	07340956133
Date of previous inspection	31 August 2016

Information about this early years setting

Little Steps Day Care was registered in 2015. The nursery employs nine members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Julie Meredith-Jenkins

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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, who is also the owner, and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector spoke to children, to find out about their time at the nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nursery owner about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The inspector 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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