

Alpha Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY376104
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Inspector Jennifer Liverpool

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Alpha Steps Nursery opened in 2008. The nursery operates from three rooms within the premises of a church. The nursery is situated in a residential area in Walthamstow within the London borough of Waltham Forest. It opens each weekday from 07.30 to 19.00 for 50 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 12 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places.

There are seven members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 and 3.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Children are welcomed and cared for in a safe and secure environment where resources and activities are accessible to all. The key person close working relationship with parents helps to ensure that children receive individual care. A suitable range of planned experiences and activities enable children to make sound progress towards the early learning goals. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The nursery is committed to undertaking relevant training and keen to work with other professionals to improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further improve the standards of hygiene in the bathroom, particularly with regards to making used hand paper towels inaccessible to children
- provide more opportunities for babies and young children to develop their independence at meal times and ensure that the cutlery is appropriate for their level of development
- further develop the procedures for planning to make clear how activities are tailored to meet children's individual needs
- make sure that the observational assessments on children includes all of the six areas of learning in order to help children progress in all areas

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff team is fairly new and management is providing staff with clear guidance that contributes to promoting the welfare of children. An organised induction process and regular staff team meetings help staff to understand their roles and responsibilities to support the care and learning of children. Children are

safeguarded because of the policies and procedures that are in place to keep them protected. For example, every child is assigned a key person, which makes certain that they always have appropriate supervision. Sound satisfactory recruitment and vetting procedures ensures that suitable, experienced and qualified persons look after children. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of the signs of abuse the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care.

The nursery strives to promote an inclusive practice in policies, procedures and in the care and learning for children. For example, there are appropriate systems in place to support children who have additional needs. Also the resources and display are non-stereotypical and show positive images of diversity. Management have begun to identify their strengths and weaknesses and subsequently have held in-house training and booked further training courses for staff. This helps to support children in the nursery. Regular support visits from other professionals is also helping the nursery to evaluate its provision to ensure that the welfare and the learning and development requirements are met and to improve the outcome for children.

Children benefit from the positive partnership staff have with parents. Relevant information, such as, children's medical needs, stage of development and their care routines ensures that each child's needs are known and that they receive individual care. Parents are given information about the setting through brochures, written procedures displayed on the notice board and at parents evening meetings; they are encouraged to be aware of the nursery's obligation for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their children. Parents are also kept informed of their child's care routine through the use of daily reports. In addition to this, staff ensure that parents know of their child's progress as copies of assessment reports are readily available. Whilst parents are made to feel welcome in the setting and the relationship is friendly and supportive, they are not yet involved in contributing to the ongoing improvements to the nursery.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children's learning and development is promoted through staff's sound knowledge of child development and the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a consequence of this, children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Information from parents about children's achievements and interests is used appropriately to plan and provide a suitable range of activities that appeal to children. For example, children who show interests in looking at pictures in books at home are read to independently, as well as in a small and whole group storytelling sessions. This helps them to develop a healthier interest in books and to enjoy stories. In addition to this, staff observe children at play and keep a record of the activities that children freely choose and use this information to inform future planning. Regular observation and assessments enable staff to find out what children can do and they are beginning to identify the next steps to support children in their learning and development. However, there are gaps in the assessment records particularly in children's physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Activity Plans clearly show what children are intended to learn from the activities on offer and there is some

indication of how children are grouped, though this mainly relates to the size of the group rather than children's individual or group learning needs.

Children develop warm relationships with staff that are responsive to their individual needs. They are helped to feel self assured and supported as staff ensure that their individual routines are in place immediately. For example, children's settling in arrangements is discussed between the parent and key person prior to admission and each child is gradually settled into the setting according to their individual needs. Staff provide babies with suitable materials and equipment that enables them to make connections through their senses and movement. For example, pop up toys, musical equipment, feely books and a mini ball pool is available to babies each day. Staff support babies' physical development through placing colourful objects close by to encourage babies to reach out and also younger babies are supported to practise sitting unaided. Babies and young children participate in hand and foot free painting, which enables them to explore the feel of paint and discover mark making. Staff read short stories to young children and encourage them to become engaged through asking them to lift up the flap to find Spot the Dog on the page.

Planned activities and topic work, such as, homes and families help children to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them. Children have opportunities to learn about numbers through songs and by counting objects in picture cards. More able children are beginning to recognise numbers one to five. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of size and quantity in practical activities, such as, sand and water play. For example, children are encouraged to compare the size of buckets and the amount of water collected in cups. Children learn about themselves and their environment through planned activities and themed topic work about their family and where they live. They are regularly taken out on trips to the local park for physical exercise and short walks in the neighbourhood helps them to learn about their environment. Children and staff practise the emergency fire evacuation procedures on a regular basis. This helps children to become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency.

Children have easy and safe access to a range of toys that allows them to make independent choices for themselves. Toys are carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for babies and all equipment conforms to safety standards. However, eating utensils, such as plastic knives, are not developmentally appropriate for toddlers. Food is freshly cooked on the premises and children are encouraged to eat healthily. Older children serve their own food and staff are on hand to help some children. However, some staff unnecessarily intervene when toddlers are demonstrating that they are capable of feeding themselves. Fresh drinking water is freely available for children to help themselves throughout the day. Staff follow babies' individual routines for eating and sleeping. This contributes to children's physical well-being. Children develop good personal hygiene through daily routines, such as, hand washing after toileting and before meals, and brushing their teeth after lunch. Whilst staff follow good hygiene practices that includes wearing protective clothing for nappy changing and preparing meals, wiping down surfaces before use and keeping the premises clean, children can access used hand paper towels and tissues in the bathroom.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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