

Alpha Steps Nursery

89 Vallentin Road, Walthamstow, LONDON, E17 3JJ

Inspection date	26/09/2013
Previous inspection date	09/02/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The children have developed good attachments with the staff, who provide calm and nurturing support, tailored to children's individual needs and routines.
- Children are very happy, engaged in their learning, and growing in self-confidence because of the motivating experiences provided for them.
- The nursery keeps parents well informed about their child's progress through daily updates and informative meetings.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The management team do not always work effectively together to support staff, monitor the provision and drive improvement.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's play and staff interaction, indoors and outside.
- The inspector and deputy manager undertook a joint observation of a teaching activity.
- The inspector talked to some of the staff from each room, parents and deputies, and held discussions with the QA manager and director.
- The inspector examined documentation including a representative sample of children's records, development plans and staff suitability records.
- The inspector discussed the staff records, and reviewed the risk assessments and read complaints records.

Inspector

Debbie Buckingham

Full Report

Information about the setting

Alpha Steps Nursery registered in 2008 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is situated in a residential area in Walthamstow within the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The nursery operates from three rooms in the church premises and children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6.30pm for 50 weeks of the year. They are in receipt of funding for free early education for three- and four-year-old children. The nursery currently supports children with special education needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. The nursery operates a breakfast and after school club each day from 7.30am to 8.30am and 3.30pm to 6.30pm. A holiday scheme runs during the school holiday and half term from 7.30am to 6.30pm daily. There are eight members of staff including the manager, who work directly with the children, seven of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop a more united management approach to the monitoring of the provision and support for staff, so as to foster a greater culture of continuous improvement

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The atmosphere in the nursery is calm and purposeful. Caring and enthusiastic staff use good teaching techniques. These have a positive impact on children's learning and development, so that children make good progress. Children clearly enjoy learning through play. All children enter happily, eagerly choosing what they wish to do from interesting and motivating experiences offered. Attentive staff support and enhance children's learning in all rooms providing individual attention. Staff move around the playrooms, working well together to be available to join in children's play. They talk to children clearly, and wait to be invited into children's play to extend their thinking and exploration. They extend children's vocabularies by describing what children do and in response, children's comments are recorded in speech bubbles that accompany their displayed pictures. Children playing in water are encouraged to wear aprons to protect their clothes, with staff modelling what to do, so that everyone including the youngest can understand and copy. Children hear words such as 'pouring' and 'filling' and excitedly exclaim in wonder as they empty the container in the water tray, showing their

enthusiasm for learning. Staff use clear language when speaking to children, providing good role models for children's developing speech. Older children help prepare the room for meal times and learn about the importance of cleaning and tidying tables to foster independence and healthy practices. Staff talk to children about washing their hands, giving them clear instructions about how many children may attend the bathroom at any one time.

Staff plan children's experiences to cover the seven areas of learning, indoors and out with planned documents detailing a broad programme of stimulating and challenging activities. The staff explain to the children during welcome time each morning what is happening. The learning environment offers a wide range of materials and resources that add depth to children's experiences. The nursery provides separate rooms for each age group, offering age appropriate resources and activities that excite babies and encourage young children's involvement. For example, staff sing songs and demonstrate actions, motivating children to join in songs with rhythmic movements.

Staff are well positioned around the rooms, working well together to join in children's play. Children respond enthusiastically to adults who understand when to intervene in play, allowing children to take the lead. Children are confident and creative play partners, motivated by supportive adults. Planning is adapted in response to children's individual interests, determined by both discussion with parents and useful observations of children's play. Staff establish what children can do when they first start through talking to parents during the settling in weeks. They use this information to complete an 'All about me' form, prior to children's entry to nursery. Key staff share regular and informative assessments of children with their room leaders during weekly meetings. This helps staff evaluate how to plan for children's future learning. Staff record children's achievements in a 'learning journal' that is shared with families during parents' meetings.

Children practise gaining good hand and finger control in number activities. For example, children use their fingers to competently count how many dots are marked on the back of the chairs to recognise numerals quickly. This helps children match their chosen number to a chair at meal times. They help themselves to knives and forks during meal times, and learn that these must be used with care. Children are encouraged to self-register when they first arrive at nursery and during snack time and recognise their written name. They practice sounding out the letters in their name to help children understand that writing carries meaning. Older children independently access books in the reading area, choosing and browsing through books happily. They handle books with care, turning the pages independently, as they pretend to 'read' stories and discuss the pictures animatedly with others. Staff place emphasis on the care of the nursery environment through a 'rules board' that children respond to well. Babies engage in exploratory investigation of the 'treasure baskets' provided indoors and outside. Adults ensure babies have objects within easy reach and the freedom to become deeply involved in activities that encourage their exploration. Staff use a high pitched 'sing song' voice to help babies recognise particular sounds. Babies' mouth and touch toys to help them make sense of what they play with.

The management plan well to help children who are learning English as an additional language. They offer words and displays in English and in their home language and provide books, toys and cooking experiences that explore their cultural heritage. As a

result this gives children confidence to communicate and play with others.

Children delight in using the outdoor areas, which help them extend their physical skills well, such as climbing and balancing. Children who prefer to learn outdoors do so daily.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

All children move around the playrooms happily including those who have only recently started, owing to the trusting relationships established with staff through the 'key person' system. In this small nursery, all staff know each child but they form particularly close bonds with the children and families for whom they take special responsibility. Establishing secure emotional attachments, helping children feel safe so they quickly develop confidence and independence. Staff help children to understand their emotions during group time using the 'emotion box' that helps children express their feelings using a lollypop stick face.

All rooms are well presented and maintained with adequate risk assessments that help staff identify and remove any faulty or damaged equipment. Access to the nursery is by buzzer only with written permission for parents regarding different adults to collect their child. This helps to ensure staff safeguard children, as they are only collected by those adults permitted to do so. As a result, only authorised visitors and families gain entrance to the premises.

An effective key person system is in place and parents and families feel valued and supported by the nursery. For example, new parents state 'the key person directed us in how to support our child's learning'. This enables children to form secure emotional attachments to help them feel safe and so quickly develop confidence and independence. In the baby room, staff organise themselves effectively. There is always someone available to provide support for babies' needs, such as a lap for a cuddle or help with nappy changes.

Clear notices displayed in hallway, shows the names and pictures of staff in order to support partnership with parents. At collection time, parents are provided with a summary of their child's engagement in their daily activities. Families and children benefit from a flexible settling in programme that responds to the needs of the individual child.

Fresh drinking water is available at all times. All children enjoy a hot meal each day, freshly prepared by the nursery staff. Children display highly developed self-help skills at meal times and serve their own foods. They understand the importance of washing their hands before meals and after the toilet. Older children choose a plate and metal cutlery, before serving themselves. Children's behaviour is very good during meal times, with the majority of children using utensils competently. Children learn about healthy eating when planting outdoors and harvesting the fruit from the plants. They help prepare snack and talk about the benefits of healthy foods.

Children's understanding of safety threads through the daily routines. They learn not to

run inside and to push chairs under tables. Children take part in monthly evacuation practises that help them understand the dangers of fire and how to leave the building. Children enjoy the nursery experiences and gain good skills in readiness for their move to school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children's well-being are well established and effective. The management places high priority on protecting children's welfare and uses robust procedures in appointing suitable staff. Staff have attended safeguarding and first aid training. They understand their individual responsibilities and the need to provide a safe play environment for children. The management work closely with outside professionals, seeking guidance and acting upon improvements to the provision and children's learning.

Risk assessments help to ensure that children can play and learn in safety. Staff ratios are met at all times and children are supervised effectively. The management and staff are aware of the need to notify Ofsted of any significant events, or serious accidents to children. Risk assessments are reviewed following accidents or incidents to ensure practice is robust.

The management is made up of a quality assurance manager and a deputy manager who is undertaking the role temporarily while recruitment takes place for a new manager and deputy. Currently although the nursery runs smoothly overall and outcomes for children are good, those in managerial roles do not always work cohesively to show a united drive for improvement. There is some assessment of what they offer children and families, using discussion with parents, and staff meetings, to help identify some areas for improvement. Parents complete questionnaires that provide valuable information to support this process. The management also responds to areas for improvement suggested by visiting advisors. For example, they are in the process of sourcing and installing a keypad lock on the entrance gate and close circuit television cameras in all rooms. These improvements will provide safer access for families and children and deliver added security for the safety of all children, staff and families throughout the day.

Staff development is targeted through regular supervision and appraisals by the quality assurance manager. They attend training courses regularly and gain additional qualifications to raise standards and improve practice.

The quality assurance manager monitors planning and evaluation through regular room observations and discussions with all staff each week. In-house training helps staff implement the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is reviewed in order to support staffs understanding. A self-evaluation document is used to evaluate the provision and this takes into the account the views of staff and parents. In discussion with outside professionals, the management have identified areas for improvement. These include developing a new sensory and sleep area for younger children and improving the outdoor area to provide more challenging physical experiences.

In preparation for transition to school, the children visit nearby schools prior to attending. Reception class teachers visit the nursery to help older children understand what school will be like when they start. Parents are helped to complete the necessary forms and provided with transition and profile documents to share with the school to aid continuity.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY376104
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	924366
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	25
Name of provider	Oladunni Aderemi Odetoyinbo
Date of previous inspection	09/02/2009
Telephone number	02085212071

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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