

Inspection of Step Start Mountnessing

281 Roman Road, Mountnessing, Brentwood CM15 0UH

Inspection date:

20 November 2024

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 happily arrive, eager to explore the activities provided. They are greeted by happy, friendly and enthusiastic staff, who help them to settle quickly into an activity of their choice. Children demonstrate curiosity and engagement as they explore the well-considered learning environment. There is a sharp focus on creating a homely, calm and exciting place to learn. The staff are positive role models. They are kind and attentive, which supports the ethos of the nursery for children to be independent learners and to develop kindness to and empathy for others. The effective key-person approach ensures that children form secure attachments and settle well. Emphasis is placed on ensuring smooth transitions to new rooms as children progress, and effective systems are in place to support this.

The ambitious curriculum is understood by all. Staff support children's interests and plan in the moment according to what captures children's curiosity. The nursery ethos of supporting limitless potential and creativity underpins all experiences and invitations to learn that are provided. The consistent, positive acknowledgement of achievements from staff helps children to understand the expected behaviours. Children play well with their peers and have made friendships with others attending.

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

- The quality of teaching is good. Children show a strong sense of self-worth. They are positively encouraged to make choices about their day. For example, they choose when to have snack or lunch. Therefore, play is uninterrupted.
- All children attending make good progress. Staff are fully aware of children's individual needs and interests, including those who require additional support. Activities are provided with a precise focus on supporting each child's individual needs.
- Through the daily routines, children learn skills they need to be independent. They are encouraged to take care of their personal needs, which is fully supported by the attentive staff. The importance of a healthy lifestyle is also embedded within the routines. For example, children are encouraged to put their hands over their mouth when they cough, and they know to wash their hands afterwards. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise in the garden daily.
- Children learn about the natural world and wider community through planned outings and activities. For example, they enthusiastically observe stick insects they have watched grow. Children show fascination as they learn about their habitat and eating habits.
- Children make good progress in their speech and language development. They show sustained concentration when participating in daily phonic activities. Staff engage children in meaningful conversations and children use words that

challenge their vocabulary, such as 'carnivore' and 'herbivore'. Makaton is also used throughout the nursery to ensure all children can communicate.

- Babies' routines are respected and discussed with parents before they attend. Babies demonstrate they are very happy, confident and secure in their homely and cosy environment. They have fun using bubbles and water play. They enjoy cuddles and reassurance from the calm and nurturing staff, who are intuitive of their needs. For example, they are offered comforters when they need them, and they are gently soothed when they become tired.
- Parents' comments are positive. They say that communication is good as staff share information with them about their children's learning. They appreciate the ideas about how to continue their child's learning at home. Parents say that their children's language development and confidence have improved since attending the nursery.
- The management demonstrates a genuine dedication and passion to provide children with learning opportunities within an inviting environment to spark curiosity. They have a clear understanding of the importance of monitoring practice and supporting staff's well-being, as this has a positive impact on the outcomes for children attending.
- Training is positively encouraged. Staff's individual skills are valued to further enhance the curriculum. Staff morale is very good. They are enthusiastic and feel inspired. They comment how supported they feel in their own professional development.
- Children are skilfully supported with their ideas and to initiate their own play. They access quality, open-ended resources from easily accessible units. There is a hive of activity within the nursery as children are engrossed in their play. However, they are not consistently encouraged to develop a deep understanding of how to take care of the things that they use when they have finished with them, such as resources, including books.

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:

- help children to understand how to take more care of their environment and resources, particularly when they are leading their own play.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY547550
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10367361
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	125
Name of registered person	Step Start Nurseries Mountnessing Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP547549
Telephone number	01277 572001
Date of previous inspection	5 February 2019

Information about this early years setting

Step Start Mountnessing registered in 2017 and is situated in Mountnessing, Essex. The nursery employs 22 members of childcare staff. Of these, 16 hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 2 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year, from 7am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for children aged between nine months and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- The manager and deputy showed the inspector around the areas that children access, and they discussed how staff organise the nursery and plan the curriculum and experiences for children.
- The inspector and nursery manager carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the nursery documents. This 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.

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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