



Childcare Inspection Report on

Little Steps Childcare Centre Ltd

**1a Herbert Street
Pontardawe
Swansea
SA8 4EB**



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Description of the service

Little Steps Child Care Centre Ltd was registered in October 2006. The service provides care for a maximum of 46 children aged under 12 years on Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 6:00pm. The service operates from a converted building in the centre of Pontardawe. The service is overseen by the responsible individual Karen Jones on behalf of Little Steps Child Care Centre Limited. The persons in charge are Karen Jones, Tanya Heskins and Kelly Harris. The service is an English language provision, however, promotes the use of the Welsh language.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Overall, we Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) found that children at Little Steps Child Care Centre Ltd. are happy and settled. They have access to a good range of resources and activities to promote their overall development. Overall, leaders ensure the safety of children and meet their individual needs. The environment offers plenty of areas for children to play, learn and rest. Staff are qualified, experienced and caring. The business is well run and leadership and management is good. However, some areas require some improvement.

2. Improvements

During the course of this inspection and as a result of being notified that they were not compliant with regulations, the provider has taken immediate action to:-

- forward a formal notification of significant events to CIW;

The provider has also:-

- confirmed that a Prevent Duty training course has been booked for all the remaining staff to attend;
- updated the parent involvement policy which clearly outlines the responsibilities of the nursery and parents/carers.

The provider has also as a result of the recommendations made at the previous inspection:-

- undertaken a risk assessment of the artificial grass surface of the outdoor area;
- registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO);
- further developed the range of toys and resources available for older children.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We recommended that the provider should:

- ensure that all existing injury records are countersigned by the parents/carers where necessary/appropriate;
- attend an advanced refresher child protection course;

- consider methods to keep rooms at the recommended temperature and
- ensure that staff are vigilant during outdoor play when mixed age ranges are together.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are happy at this service. They have good relationships with the staff who respect their individual choices. Children participate in a good range of activities and overall enjoy their play very much.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children on the whole make choices and decisions are listened to.

Overall, children had a voice and were listened to at the service. They confidently moved from one activity to another and expressed their views quite clearly. For example, children told staff they wanted to relax on the large bean bags instead of playing outdoors. Children had free play opportunities within their base rooms, with some children choosing to play outdoors on the slide, use the ride on toys and play in the water trough or chalk on the easel. Children had a choice of a buffet style snack of muffins, a selection of fruits and cucumber, we saw younger children point to what they wanted and were shown the milk or water to make their choices.

Children have a good voice.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children are happy, relaxed and well settled at the service. They form positive attachments. Many children are forming friendships with others and show affection to the staff who care for them.

Children are happy and well settled. We saw that children had good relationships with the staff caring for them, they were at ease and relaxed. We saw children confidently approach staff for cuddles and reassurance, to ask for various play resources and to ask to go to the toilet. Older children told us they enjoyed attending the service and “had fun”.

Children are evidently safe and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children play well together, they co-operate and are beginning to be considerate to each other.

Children played and interacted well with each other. They were busy playing with the selection of resources available to them. We saw that the mixed age range of children playing outdoors played well together, sharing the items and taking turns. We saw them take turns using the chalk boards and water trough. However, we did see some older children play with and use younger children’s resources inappropriately. We also saw

children being considerate of each other for example, they shared a magazine and looked at the articles and photographs together. Overall, children's behaviour was good.

Children interact well with each other.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children engage in age appropriate play based activities and are active and curious.

Children enjoyed their time at the service. They freely moved around their base rooms and the activities. Children enjoyed their outdoor play session, they had fun on the slide and used the balls and hoops. Children told us that they really enjoyed attending and spending time with their friends. Younger children were engrossed in floor play activities, using age appropriate and soft toys.

Children enjoy their play.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children do things for themselves and they have good opportunities to develop their skills.

Older children visited the toilets independently and younger children were appropriately supported to do so. We saw that younger children had opportunities to feed themselves. Older children independently helped themselves to the drinks from the water station. Children decided to open the outdoor classroom and sat together in the shade. We heard them discuss their school's magazine and talk about the activities they had completed such as the sporting events. They happily showed us photographs in the magazine of the medals and certificates they had achieved. Children developed their physical skills by using the climbing frame and enhanced their creative skills using the chinks, crayons and paper which were within easy reach. Children worked together to successfully complete the word searches within the magazine. We heard younger children counting and repeating some Welsh words.

Children are developing well and becoming independent.

2. Care and Development

Summary

This inspection did not focus on care and development on this occasion because the inspection focused on a concern received in relation to leadership and management. This whole theme will be considered at future inspections.

We did, however, see staff engage with children in a positive manner. We saw that they joined in with children's play and met their needs appropriately, such as when the children needed a drink or a toilet visit. However, we saw that staff needed to be more vigilant when older children played with resources that were suitable for younger children. For example when older children played on ride on toys that were too small or ran up the wrong side of the slide when younger children were climbing up the slide steps. The staff to child ratio was correct at the time of the visit. We saw that staff had a good rapport with parents, sharing information at collection time.

3. Environment

Summary

This inspection did not focus on environment on this occasion because the inspection focused on a concern received in relation to leadership and management. This whole theme will be considered at future inspections.

We did, however, note that the premises were secure and that a selection of toys and resources, which were clean and in good order, were available to the children. New flooring had been laid throughout the ground floor areas. However, the temperature in all rooms, especially the baby sleep area was very warm. The room thermometer reading exceeded the max temp shown on the room thermometers.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Overall, leaders are committed to developing the service and strive to meet and maintain the regulations and national minimum standards. Leadership is strong and the management of the business is effective. However, some improvements are required in some areas.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leaders are organised and have good systems to endeavour to comply with the relevant regulations and national minimum standards. However, some areas require some improvement.

Children's records were comprehensive and fully completed. We sampled records such as the contract, information form, parental consent forms, accident, incident and medication records. Leaders maintained detailed records of any incidents that occurred at the service and when children arrived at the service with an existing injury, such as cuts and bruises. Staff were vigilant, recorded and acted upon any concerns they had. Staff followed the correct procedures and reported any concerns to the service's safeguarding officer. Although records were detailed, on some occasions, some entries had not been properly completed, countersigned by the parents (where necessary) and referred in a timely manner to the relevant agencies. Leaders had produced a safeguarding policy and procedure in line with the All Wales Child Protection Procedure, which contained signs and symptoms, reporting procedures and the contact information for the relevant agencies. The policy and procedure had been reviewed in May 2018. Of the 14 staff employed, 6 held valid child protection training certificates and 4 held advanced child protection training certificates. Leaders told us that the advanced training was a six hour course delivered by the council for voluntary services (CVS) in conjunction with the local authority. Leaders told us that they had not discussed thresholds and reporting procedures during the training. We noted that the service's safeguarding officer's certificate was dated 2014. Leaders told us that five staff members had undertaken the Prevent Duty e-learning course and other staff were due to complete it in the near future.

Leaders on the whole effectively run the service but some improvements are needed in a few areas.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

As this was a focused inspection, we did not inspect this key area. However, the whole of this theme will be considered at future inspections.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

As this was a focused inspection, we did not inspect this key area. However, the whole of this theme will be considered at future inspections. We did, however, find that the staff to child ratio was correct and that staff had been deployed effectively.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

As this was a focused inspection, we did not inspect this key area. The whole of this theme will be considered at future inspections.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We recommended that the provider should:

- ensure that all existing injury records are countersigned by the parents/carers where necessary/appropriate;
- attend an advanced refresher child protection course;
- consider methods to keep rooms at the recommended temperature and
- ensure that staff are vigilant during outdoor play when mixed age ranges are together.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a focused inspection brought forward following a concern about the service's leadership and management.

Two inspectors visited the service on 9 July 2018 for approximately 3 hours. We:

- inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- observed practice;
- spoke to some children and some staff and
- provided feedback to the registered person and person in charge on the day of the inspection.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Karen Jones
Person in charge	Tanya Heskins Karen Jones
Registered maximum number of places	46
Age range of children	0 to 12 years
Opening hours	Monday to Friday 7:30am to 6:00pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	25 and 27 October 2017
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	9 July 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. This is because the service is situated in a primarily English speaking area. Basic Welsh and signage is used. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's More 'Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Additional Information:	