

Inspection of STEP Childcare

648 Manchester Road, Stocksbridge, Sheffield S36 1DY

Inspection date: 16 May 2025

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 arrive happily and are ready to play and learn. Staff welcome families warmly and invite parents into the rooms to hand over. Staff build excellent rapport with parents and children. They spend time getting to know children well so that they settle easily. Staff observe children and identify their interests and next steps in learning.

Older children start the day in group time. They greet each other saying, 'good morning' or 'bonjour.' Staff are interested and interactions are authentic. Staff ask real questions and encourage children to think and explore language. For example, children eagerly explain why they like Fridays.

Children develop a love of reading and stories. Staff read and children practise making the sound of the train. Staff sit among children so that they feel safe and have a sense of belonging. Staff sing gleefully with babies. Children take it in turns to choose a song from the bag and enthusiastically copy actions and sounds.

Leaders create an ambitious curriculum that focuses on equality and communication. Staff adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of every child. They develop a nurturing, positive and happy environment, where children make choices and follow their interests. As a result, children feel confident and develop excellent communication and language skills.

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

- Staff create a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities for children to enjoy and explore. They recognise children's interests and stages of development, skilfully adapting activities so that all children are included.
- Staff plan activities so children can learn together in small groups, providing good opportunities for children to develop their communication and social skills. For example, staff share a recipe and encourage children to talk about their favourite foods. However, on some occasions, children do not understand what they are intended to learn and are unsure about what is expected. Some children become distracted and lose focus as a result.
- Children have lots of opportunities to develop independence and do things for themselves. They learn to dress themselves, use the toilet and clear their plates. Even the very youngest children take their empty cups to the sink. However, staff sometimes do things for children that they could be learning to do for themselves. One example is wiping children's noses.
- Staff promote healthy lifestyles and children enjoy free-flow access to outdoors. Staff create opportunities for physical play and exploration. Children climb, balance, ride bicycles and role play. Children collaborate and use language to

share their ideas and act out familiar stories. They organise themselves and take it in turns to cross the troll's bridge.

- Staff skilfully embrace spontaneous learning opportunities that ignite children's interest. For example, children find a caterpillar, they excitedly watch how it moves. Children use language to speculate about where the caterpillar came from and where it lives.
- Children help to feed guinea pigs and learn about animal care. Staff recognise that pets help children to feel a sense of belonging and promotes their language development. Parents share photographs of children, families and pets so that children know they belong. As a result, children feel valued and confidently share their thoughts and feelings.
- Children form strong bonds with staff. This helps them to feel emotionally secure. Two-year-olds gather for a story and ask staff for a cuddle. Staff sit among children as they rest so that children are calm and happy.
- Staff work closely as a team to support children, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They collaborate with other professionals, develop individual learning plans and share ideas with parents to support learning at home. Leaders spend additional funding wisely to support all children.
- Parents speak glowingly of the setting. They receive information about children's progress in daily conversations and on an app. Parents trust staff and work in partnership to build strong links between home and nursery. Parents are involved and say that staff skilfully support children to become confident communicators. They say that children love coming to the setting.
- Staff have regular supervision meetings with leaders who support their well-being and professional development. Leaders say that the setting is evolving, and that staff share insightful ideas about how the setting could further improve. Staff say that this is a good place to work.

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:

- review the organisation of planned group activities so that children can understand, focus and achieve with fewer distractions
- provide more opportunities for children to develop their independence and self-care skills, such as wiping noses.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY386602
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10392866
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	52
Number of children on roll	97
Name of registered person	Step Development Trust
Registered person unique reference number	RP518887
Telephone number	01142836930
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2019

Information about this early years setting

STEP Childcare registered in 2008. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff, including the nursery manager. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two at level 5 and one at level 4. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, from 8am until 6pm. The setting offers the government-funded places for childcare and receives specific funding for disadvantaged children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Caroline Brooks

Inspection activities

- Leaders showed the inspector the areas used by the nursery. They explained the curriculum and how the provision is organised.
- The inspector held a number of discussions with leaders and staff.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation.
- The inspector observed interactions between children and adults.
- Leaders participated in joint observations of staff with the inspector.
- The inspector observed planned activities and play both inside and outside.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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