



First Steps

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY255445
Inspection date 10 August 2005
Inspector Cheryl Langley

Setting Address 2 Cheshunt Park Farm, Park Lane Paradise, Cheshunt,
HERTS, EN7 6PZ

Telephone number 01992 635416

E-mail

Registered person First Steps

Type of inspection Childcare

Type of care Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Steps Private Day Nursery registered in March 2003. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas and operates from a cottage on a farm in Cheshunt.

There are currently 30 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting will support children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week, all year round, except for Bank Holidays and two

weeks annual leave, for which six months notice is given to parents. Sessions are from 08.00 to 18.00.

Six members of staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contributes to their good health. They play in the garden area and walk regularly around the farm to benefit from the fresh air. Children experience a variety of physical activities to help them develop control of their bodies. They use both large and small equipment. For example, they have fun playing with a broad range of pushing and pulling toys, bikes and sit-on rides and climbing equipment in the garden area. Inside they push, pull and turn buttons and switches on activity toys, play musical instruments and complete inset puzzles. Children have the opportunity to be active or rest according to their needs.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. They are cared for in a welcoming, clean environment where they understand the importance of regular cleaning routines to keep them safe and healthy. Children have a clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after playing in the garden, stroking animals or using the toilet. They learn about keeping their bodies healthy through discussion and topic based activities. For example, children know that to look after their teeth they need to brush them regularly.

Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They are aware of which types of food are good to eat. Children have access to drinks throughout the day and eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. The staff take account of the wishes of parents and work with them closely to provide nutritious snacks and meals that appeal to the children as well as meeting their dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe environment. The organisation of the toys and equipment allows children to move around safely and freely. They can access most of the resources available independently. Children benefit from safety measures. For example, they know to take turns on the play equipment so they do not fall or hurt others. They develop an awareness of how to keep safe near the road when they go for walks around the farm and join in with activities and topics to learn about the dangers of water. Children practise evacuation from the building regularly so that they may be able to keep safe in an emergency, such as a fire. However, fire safety records lack some of the required detail.

In most areas the children's welfare is safeguarded. Regular risk assessments are

carried out to identify hazards to the children and appropriate action is taken to minimise any risks. Staff are aware of child protection procedures, although training in this area is not up to date.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a variety of play which is child led and there are some organised activities. They receive adult guidance to give them extra support if needed. Children are relaxed and confident in the setting. They enjoy playing with the water, smelling the scented bubble bath and watching the water tumble through the watering cans. They have fun with gardening, raking leaves and planting sunflowers. Children join in singing songs with staff whilst they are completing puzzles. Their confidence and self-esteem is promoted by the appropriate praise given by the staff and when they share their creations with their parents. Children become independent as they choose between different toys and they are keen when given responsibilities, such as helping the staff prepare tables for painting.

Children learn some new skills and knowledge through everyday play and routines. Staff ask the children to collect different numbers and colours of objects and sort them into groups. They colour in pictures of letters and numbers to help them recognise the symbols. Children learn about weight and measure and different textures when they cook fairy cakes. They enjoy learning about the natural environment as they walk around the farm or observe wild animals from the garden area. Topic based activities help them learn about mathematical language and opposites. They create pictures of play equipment to show how you go up the ladder and down the slide. Children have fun practising this on the equipment outside. Regular use of creative materials such as pencils, crayons and paint encourages the children to represent their ideas in a variety of ways. However, there are very few books available to the children which may limit the development of their reading skills and the enjoyment of using these resources.

Children make positive relationships. They play happily together, initiating games with each other in small and large groups. The children take turns and wait patiently for others to complete their tasks. Children are encouraged to form good relationships and consider others needs, for example staff use sensitive reminders for older children to play carefully near babies so that they are not harmed. Children show an interest in their play and are always occupied. Babies enjoy making noises by banging drums and older children use the home play corner for different types of role play. The children are content and happy to join in with activities and the other children as soon as they arrive at the nursery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a positive attitude to others. They gain some understanding about the world through the toys available, cooking activities and celebrating different

festivals.

Children are valued as individuals and the staff know them well. This helps them feel secure and at ease. Children behave well. They understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and the examples set by the staff. Children take turns, consider others when they play and are learning to be polite.

Children benefit from the partnership between the staff and parents. They exchange information regularly. Staff talk to parents at the end of each session and keep a daily diary for babies. They share the children's achievements and experiences with them. This helps the children settle well and become confident with the staff who are aware of their likes, dislikes and daily routines.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children's needs are met through the staff's organisation. Children can access the toys available easily and safely. They can move around areas of the nursery freely to experience different types of play. A balance of child led activities and organised play ensures children have a range of enjoyable experiences. They benefit from routines which make them feel safe and content in the setting. Children play, eat, sleep and rest as they need to.

Documentation is stored securely and information shared appropriately with parents. Most of the required policies and procedures are in place to help keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. For example, three members of staff have current first aid certificates and information regarding child protection is to hand. Overall, the needs of all the children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the staff agreed to implement a number of policies and procedures and obtain consents from parents to safeguard the welfare of the children.

Parents are requested to provide consent for staff to seek medical treatment and advice to act in the children's best interests in an emergency. Their signature is provided to acknowledge any medication administered, along with the staffs' to ensure the correct dosage is given as required.

The television has been placed on a purpose built stand and risk assessments carried out regularly to minimise any potential hazards to the children.

Staff and parents are aware of procedures should any child become lost or not be collected, through the policy document devised. Behaviour management strategies are set out which include dealing with bullying. Both staff and parents are aware of the steps that will be taken should an allegation regarding child protection be made against a member of staff. The register includes an accurate account of staff

attendance should this information be required in an emergency.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was raised in relation to staffing ratios (Standard 2: Organisation); a lack of structured activities (Standard 3: Care, learning and play); and staff changes that Ofsted may not have been informed of.

Ofsted investigated this concern by carrying out an unannounced visit on 17/02/05. The following actions were raised as a result of the visit:

Standard 1 - Ensure that all staff undergo appropriate vetting procedures to determine their suitability.

Standard 2 - Keep accurate records of children and staff attendance on a daily basis.

Standard 2 - Ensure that the minimum adult:child ratios are adhered to at all times.

Standard 3 - Make sure that staff observe and record what children do and use these observations to plan the next steps for the children's play, learning and development.

Standard 5 - Ensure that children are provided with a stimulating range of activities and play opportunities to enable them to make progress in all areas of development.

Standard 14 - Ensure that Ofsted are informed of any changes in members of staff at the earliest opportunity.

Standard 14 - Make sure that records are always available for inspection and that they are retained for a minimum of 2 years.

A recommendation was made under Standard 12 to provide parents with written information about daily routines and activities provided for children.

The provider has completed all of these actions and remains qualified for registration.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should

take account of the following recommendation(s):

- record fire drills and certificates and ensure this information is available at all times to the Fire Safety Officer
- ensure that the designated member of staff who has responsibility for child protection issues attends a child protection training course
- provide a suitable range of books to meet the developmental needs of all the children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk