



First Steps Moorlands

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY287532
Inspection date	12 September 2006
Inspector	Sue Vernon
Setting Address	Moorlands Infant School, Moorfields Road, Bath, Bath and North East Somerset, BA2 2DQ
Telephone number	01225 317123
E-mail	firststepsmoorlands@hotmail.com
Registered person	First Steps Centre for Children and Families
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Steps Moorlands was registered in 2004. It is a full day nursery and Children's Centre, managed by First Steps Centre for Children and Families, which runs two other nurseries in the city. It operates from a sole-use building in the grounds of Moorlands Infant School, Bath and has its own car park. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area. Children under two have their own separate enclosed area.

The nursery is open from 08.00 to 17.30 Monday to Friday all year round except for Bank Holidays and five in-service training days. The nursery provides both full-time and part-time places.

The nursery building provides separate play space for babies under two years, two-year-olds and for three to five-year-olds. The nursery is registered for 50 children at any one time. There are currently 77 children on roll. Of these, 29 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 child-care members of staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications. Other staff include administration support staff and a qualified cook.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from staff working closely with parents to support any special dietary needs or medical requirements. Staff preparing meals ensure they are aware of individual needs such as a vegetarian diet. This ensures children feel secure. Drinks are offered within the daily routine and babies' routines for bottles are respected. Healthy eating is encouraged, with children enjoying a variety of fresh fruit such as grapes, apples and pears on a regular basis.

The risk of infection is reduced by the staff following established procedures that support satisfactory hygiene practices. For example, they use plastic aprons and gloves when changing nappies. A clear policy on sickness and medication is shared with parents and appropriate records are kept, noting any administration of medication. This supports consistency of treatment for the children.

Opportunities for a variety of physical play are offered on a daily basis. Children practice their physical skills by peddling trucks and cars or using hoops. They jump, crawl and balance indoors on a selection of soft play shapes or balance-beams and tunnels.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is bright and welcoming for both children and parents alike with good information boards and children's work displayed. Children play in an environment where risks have been mostly addressed and minimised. This enables children to move safely between rooms and different areas of the nursery, for example when exploring play opportunities offered in different rooms during free-play sessions. Some hazards, such as garden brambles are not consistently monitored. Rooms and toy storage are safely organised and children benefit from age-appropriate play

equipment which is attractive and checked regularly. All parental permissions such as those for outings are in place.

Rooms are generally well-organised in order to meet the care and play needs of the children. For example, there are separate areas for all children to sleep or to enjoy messy creative play. However, the baby room does not have a soft area for quiet play and rest.

Staff are aware of the fire drill procedures and fire safety equipment is in place, though some elements of fire safety such as keeping fire doors closed are not consistently applied. Children are protected by the staff's awareness of the child protection policy and the procedure to be followed if concerns arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily and settle well due to the relaxed relationships they develop with the staff teams. Children are known as individuals and staff greet them and their families which builds children's self-esteem. Children confidently explore the play opportunities offered. They move between base rooms to access creative play, for example making tissue paper collages or imaginative play in the home corner, set out as a soft play unit. However, staff do not monitor that all children try the full range of play resources. This restricts overall learning development. Staff work closely with the children, for example helping babies and toddlers enjoy tactile play with flour and water mixture.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff have a general knowledge of the Foundation stage which is used to record observations on children's learning through play. Activity planning is linked to the stepping stones and shows some learning objectives but does not identify how activities could challenge more or less able children. Children's progress is monitored using profile records but these are not always up-to-date or used to identify individual learning needs.

Children develop personal independence by helping with clearing tables for snack time and being the daily helper. They take pride in taking responsibility for jobs such as collecting plates and pushing a small trolley back to the kitchen. They confidently describe their family experiences, such as going on holiday and respect other children by listening to each other in circle time. Many children recognise their name cards and know letter shapes but opportunities for linking letters to phonics are not offered consistently. Children enjoy mark making within play and attempt writing their names on work. Children count within circle time and confidently use simple mathematical language such as bigger, smaller when comparing toys. However, few opportunities are offered to link numbers to numerals or solve simple mathematical problems. Children learn to enjoy books through selecting from the book area and joining in story times.

Children learn about changes in the world around them as they grow and nurture vegetables such as carrots in outdoor compost containers. They explore natural materials, gathering leaves and plants to make 'garden collages'. Children enjoy expressing themselves creatively, exploring a variety of media such as salt dough or painting in various forms, such as bright colours on tin foil. They confidently sing favourite songs and action rhymes, using musical instruments to follow rhythms.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff work closely with parents to ensure that they have good information on each child's individual needs. For example, staff know younger children's patterns for sleeping and support them within the daily routine. This helps children feel secure and helps them settle well in the nursery. All children are encouraged to try all the play opportunities, with both boys and girls enjoying dressing-up and cooking activities such as making 'smoothies' from fresh fruit and milk. Children learn the value of diversity through a good range of play resources such as musical instruments, books, dolls and play people. Staff work closely with parents and visiting therapists to support children with learning or behaviour difficulties. This builds good consistency of care for each child.

There is a positive approach to managing behaviour with staff being good role models. Staff use praise consistently to help promote good behaviour and children enjoy receiving stickers for their helpfulness or good listening skills. Clear boundaries are set and staff use good techniques including distraction and discussion. This helps children learn why they should share or say sorry.

Parents are welcomed and share information on their child during settling-in visits. Staff use contracts and various records to ensure all information such as accident records are shared with parents. Interesting notice boards welcome parents, offering good information on both the nursery and local services for families. Good daily feedback is offered to parents in both written form, with daily information sheets and verbal discussions or meetings. This helps parents feel supported and involved in their child's day.

The partnership with parents for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive information through discussions on their child's progress through the Foundation Stage. They can approach staff at any time to review their child's work, however there are few opportunities for parents to be involved in the learning process and little information is offered on the planning and topics covered.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children happily talk about their own family experiences and learn about other cultures through looking at different festivals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's well-being and education is supported by staff who are suitably qualified. Staff continue to develop their skills through attending additional training. Appropriate systems are in place to monitor the suitability of new staff members who benefit from a clear induction system. This builds consistency of practice. Staff ratios are appropriate and staff teams for different age rooms supports continuity for the children. Satisfactory policies and records are in place such as those recording accidents and daily attendance. Individual children's records and details are stored carefully and with regard for confidentiality.

As a Children's centre, the nursery offers a range of support from visiting staff such as play workers, family support workers and health authority staff such as speech therapists and health visitors. This promotes consistency of care for both children and their families.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

Staff benefit from regular staff meetings and an appraisal system that is linked to their learning needs and development. Several changes in staff over the past year have meant that regular reviews of the delivery of the curriculum have not been taking place. Consequently, gaps in consistency regarding planning and effective use of children's profiles have not been addressed. However staff are supported in gaining advice from the local authority support teacher and accessing additional training.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care and nursery education inspection, the nursery was asked to develop the outdoor space. This area has been completely re-done and now provides a large safe space for children to explore nature and develop their physical skills using bikes, tunnels and simple balancing equipment. The safety surface means children can enjoy this at all times of the year to develop their physical skills.

The nursery was asked to keep an up-to-date incident record and develop learning plans covering all areas of the curriculum, with resources easily to hand during activities. The incident record is up-to-date and plans that reference different areas of the curriculum are used, however full details are not included and resources are not always prepared fully in advance. This can prevent children from settling quickly to new learning activities. The nursery will continue to further develop these areas.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was raised in July 2006 regarding the suitability of a member of staff. From information provided by the setting we found that there was no evidence that the National Standards were not being met and the provider had co-operated fully in ensuring that children were not placed at risk while investigations were undertaken by the provider.

The member of staff was dismissed from the setting.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- ensure children under two years of age have access to a suitable area for resting
- provide consistent access to a full range of play provision, for example imaginative and creative play for all children
- ensure all fire officer requirements are in place and fire doors are kept closed; minimise all hazards such as mats and garden brambles.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop staff awareness of the Foundation staff so links between planning, activity evaluations and children's profiles are used to consistently move all children through the stepping stones; extend opportunities to link letters to phonetic sounds, numbers to numerals and use mathematics for simple problem solving
- develop the partnership with parents to include information about the Foundation stage and how they can be involved in the partnership in learning.

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