



## First Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY280454
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 September 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Karen Cooper
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<b>Registered person</b>	Shireland Language College
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 good. 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 Neighbourhood Nursery opened in 2004. It operates from a building on the campus of Shireland Language College in Smethwick, Sandwell. The nursery is situated on the ground floor and comprises two separate children's areas, one with an adjoining sleep room, toilets, changing area, kitchen and office. There is a fully enclosed play area available for outdoor play.

There are currently 42 children from 0 to 5 years on roll. Of these ten children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The nursery also provides a crèche facility for parents attending courses at the City Learning Centre. Children with disabilities and special educational needs are welcomed at the nursery.

The nursery is open every week day from 07.30 until 18.00hrs all year round.

There are ten staff working with the children, all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. The nursery receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by staff recognising and reducing possible risks. The children are cared for in warm, clean premises, where they are taught the importance of personal care, for example, washing their hands after craft activities, toileting and before eating. This helps them to understand how to keep healthy. The staff take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection by wearing gloves when changing nappies, aprons when serving food and providing wipes and tissues for children to use. There are good arrangements in place to care for children who are ill. In the event of sickness staff ensures they are comfortable and cared for sensitively while waiting to be collected by parents. The written sickness policy is made available for parents which ensures children's health is protected. Staff are trained in administering first aid and have appropriate permissions and records in place regarding accidents and medication.

Children are provided with a wholesome, nutritious and balanced diet. Meals are freshly prepared using fresh fruit and vegetables. Menus are produced to give parents information about meal choices. Children are encouraged to enjoy food and through discussion and are helped to understand why some foods are healthy and others are not. Meal times are relaxed social occasions when children and staff sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each other's company. The children are provided with regular drinks and water is always available. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents and staff record details of any specific requirements or allergies.

Children make good progress in their physical development. Babies are learning to acquire physical skills, such as crawling, climbing and balancing because they have regular access to a wide variety of small and large soft play apparatus. Older children confidently use push-a-longs, pedal cars and climbing equipment on a daily basis to help them develop their physical skills.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children play, eat and rest in well-maintained premises and use a range of toys and equipment that are of good quality and safe. These support enjoyable activities that stimulate and challenge in ways appropriate to the needs of the children. Equipment is kept clean and is regularly checked for safety. Indoor and outdoor space is used effectively, creating a child friendly environment which enables children to explore while being appropriately supervised. Babies and older children can access resources independently from tables, drawers and shelves at child height, which also helps to create a stimulating, learning environment.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They can move freely around the available space and are protected from harm because staff carry out rigorous safety checks and risk assessments. There is a high ratio of staff to children present and staff are appropriately

deployed, ensuring children are always well supervised. Effective security systems ensure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised and there are clear procedures to ensure only authorised people collect the children. For example, passwords are used when necessary for extra protection. Children are beginning to learn about their own safety through discussion and explanation. They gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire and regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures to ensure they are aware of where to go to stay safe. This helps children to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others. Thorough procedures are in place to ensure children are safe when on outings and the staff ensures parents give written permission for their children to be taken for walks around the local community and to be transported in a vehicle.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibility to protect children. They regularly attend child protection training to ensure their knowledge and skills are updated and are aware of appropriate procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy, know the routines and are keen to join in with the activities. They are well settled and enjoy their time at the nursery. They are sociable and close and caring relationships with staff increase their sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of belonging. The children have access to a good variety of resources that are suitable to their age and stage of development and which help them to make progress in their development.

Older children enthusiastically explore the texture of flour as they let it flow through their fingers and develop their hand and eye coordination when using various tools to make patterns in it. Babies and toddlers respond well to the stimulating environment. They enjoy practical activities, such as sand and eagerly look for rattles hidden in shredded paper. Babies show their excitement squealing with delight when joining other children in the well-equipped outdoor facilities. All children benefit from a range of activities outside the setting. They go for walks to the local park and shops and frequently visit the library to join in 'story time'. Staff use the framework 'Birth to three matters' effectively to involve children and further their development.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and early learning goals. They regularly attend training to ensure their knowledge is kept up to date. They plan an interesting and exciting range of activities around the children's interests, which encourages them to develop positive attitudes towards learning. The children are interested, excited and motivated to learn, they are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Although, there are some missed opportunities during daily routines and activities to encourage children to make progress in their mathematical, literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Staff work well as a team and are very calm, patient and tolerant and manage the children's behaviour well. Children are encouraged to be kind to each other and resolve disputes. Staff use positive behaviour strategies such as, explanation and praise, as a result children behave well.

Planning is clear and covers all areas of learning in the curriculum. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is monitored using a learning journal and regular observations are carried out on each child's capabilities. However, activities are not evaluated therefore information gained is not used effectively to inform future planning, which could have an impact on the children's learning. Staff with responsibility for children with learning difficulties and who use English as an additional language have a sound knowledge of the procedures to follow and have developed good relationships with parents and other professionals so that all children are included in all aspects of nursery life and make progress in their development.

Children are eager to participate in activities. They have formed good relationships with each other and staff and are beginning to understand right from wrong. They share and willingly take turns such as, when using the computer and the interactive white board. They talk happily about their play, make decisions about what they want to do and are confident to ask for what they need. For example, asking for their coat when they become cold playing outdoors. However, their independence is not always encouraged because of adult intervention, particularly during snack time when children could be encouraged to pour their own drinks and spread their own toast at tea time. The children regularly take part in activities that raise their awareness of similarities and differences of others and have access to a wide range of resources that promote a positive view of our wider world.

Most children engage easily in conversation with each other and staff. They eagerly join in 'news' sessions when they exchange information about themselves and their families. They enjoy looking at books and listen with interest to group stories such as 'the Gigantic Turnip', which is linked to the current theme. The children join in with the words and actions of favourite songs and learn to recognise letter sounds as they look at pictures and repeat letters using a Jolly Phonics book. However, opportunities are missed during daily activities for children to see their name in print. They explore mark making in a variety of ways for example, using their fingers to draw onto the interactive white board.

Children develop mathematical skills through both planned and spontaneous activities. They confidently count each other during circle time counting up to eight and join in with familiar number rhymes. Most children can recognise and name simple shapes and use mathematical language to compare size and position when building sand castles. However, opportunities are missed during activities for the more able children to extend their understanding of simple subtraction. They learn about colour and matching when sorting through construction bricks to build a wall.

Children learn about the living and growing world around them through planned activities, such as growing beans and cress. They dig up vegetables, enthusiastically chat about what is their favourite, wash them and discuss what is going into the stew to be cooked. They are developing their knowledge of technology and use the computer and peripherals with confidence and skill. They enjoy designing and constructing using a variety of malleable materials such as, sand, water, corn flour and dough. They have a sense of place and talk about significant events in their lives on a daily basis. They are learning about the cultures and beliefs of others through a varied range of resources and celebrating festivals.

Children demonstrate an awareness of space and others and move around the nursery inside and out, with control and co-ordination. They learn to manoeuvre pedal cars and push along toys and eagerly join in with racing games. They can stop, start and adjust their speed to avoid obstacles and each other. They are developing skill in control and co-ordination when using small tools. For example, glue spreaders, paint brushes, crayons and cutlery. The role-play area allows children to express themselves with increasing ability through imaginative play. Crayons and felt tips are freely accessible to encourage children to express their ideas. Group time provides opportunities for children to be creative through music. They listen to audio tapes and confidently play various instruments to the music.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are learning to respect the needs of others through a range of positive image resources and planned activities. They are helped to understand the similarities and differences of others when taking part in celebrations of different festivals from around the world such as Diwali and have tasted food from other cultures. Where relevant, staff foster positive links with children's own culture and language involving parents. The nursery welcomes all children and ensures that they can access and participate in all activities offered. Staff involve parents in the development of their child's individual education plans and liaises with outside agencies where necessary to learn the best strategies to help a child.

Children play happily and are well behaved. Staff manage behaviour in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. They make sure children are not bored or frustrated, but are busy and contented. Babies respond positively to the staff that ensures their behaviour is managed with the use of praise, explanation and distraction. Older children are encouraged to show consideration for others and respond with enthusiasm to requests from staff to tidy-up. Children are listened to and staff value what they say, which helps them to feel good about themselves. This ensures that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. All children benefit from the availability of staff to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. A progress sheet ensures they are informed of their child's daily events and parent's evenings ensure they are informed of the progress their child is making towards the six area of learning. Detailed information about the nursery is issued to parents before their child starts and they are kept informed of current themes via letters, children's homework packs and the notice board. Policies and procedures are clear and available and parents can access the nursery's website for further information. Staff regularly asks parents for feedback and suggestions, often using questionnaires to evaluate their practice. Any suggestions are seriously considered. Parents are requested to complete a child information sheet on entry to the nursery which enables appropriate care to be given, including initial baby routines.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are grouped effectively and staff operate a key worker system to ensure children receive appropriate care. This enables children to build effective relationships and help ensure they feel secure and confident with their carers. All staff hold early years qualifications and children throughout the nursery benefit from the settings long term commitment to encourage all staff to undertake any relevant training and workshops which ensures their skills and knowledge are regularly updated. The environment, both indoors and out, is organised creatively so children can choose to access areas and resources which help to extend their play.

Documentation is used well to support the care of the children. However, children's welfare is being compromised as the fire evacuation procedure is not specific and the child protection policy does not state procedures to follow with regard to an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff. Children's records are clear, up-to-date, easily accessible and stored securely. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and shared with parents.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The management have a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement of the nursery and are committed to improving the care and education of the children with the support from other agencies. Staff understand their role and responsibilities in developing children's learning and are encouraged to work together to help all children make progress in their development by regularly monitoring each others performance. Staff are happy, motivated and work well together as a team. Overall children's need are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider was requested to ensure the procedures for sleeping children on cushions promotes their health and improve the process of recording medication to protect confidentiality. Children's well-being is now protected because they are provided with individual bedding which is labelled with their name and is washed on a regular basis. Medication is now recorded on individual sheet to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.
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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 that the child protection policy includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff and that the appropriate fire procedure is displayed

##### **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):

- improve and extend the programme for literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development to include more opportunities for children to recognise their name, develop their understanding of simple subtraction and improve their personal independence during daily routines and activities
- improve planning to show how activities are evaluated and how the information gained is used to inform future planning

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