



First Steps Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	108454
Inspection date	20 November 2006
Inspector	Margaret Moffat / Samantha Hunt
Setting Address	The Methodist Church, Woodlands Park Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 3NW
Telephone number	01628 829328
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Registered person	First Steps Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Steps Pre-school is a committee run group, which opened in 1988. It operates from two rooms in the Methodist Church in the Woodlands Park area of Maidenhead. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school operates during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 to 13:25 on Monday, Tuesday Wednesday and Friday and until 12:30 on a Thursday. Children have access to secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children aged from two to under eight years on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-organised activities and routines. They wash their hands at appropriate times and deal with their own personal needs. Children roll up their sleeves before washing hands for the cooking activity and visual displays by the water bowls, prompt younger children in the hand washing routine. Staff reinforce and discuss with children the importance of hand washing and give good explanation about germs. Relevant documentation to record accidents, medication and health are available, however parental consent to seek emergency medical treatment or advice for the children is not in place, this does not promote children's welfare at all times.

Children engage in a range of physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Children enjoy taking part in indoor games such as 'what's the time Mr Wolf'. They show excitement as they run off when the wolf shouts it's dinner time. They access a range of tools and use them with assurance in everyday activities for example scissors, rolling pins and glue sticks. Children take part in physical education, music and movement sessions and use large equipment such as ride on toys and climbing frame.

Children benefit from the healthy snack times and staff encouraging parents to provide healthy lunches. Parents are asked to provide the setting with fruit for snack time. This ensures children have daily access to different fruits throughout the week and develops their healthy eating habits and introduces them to a range of new foods. Staff take account of the wishes of parents to meet children's individual dietary needs. Snack and meal times provide children with the opportunity to sit and talk together.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. They benefit from playing in a spacious environment; this allows them to move around freely and safely.

Children are cared for in a safe environment. There are good security systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of the children and to protect children from unwanted visitors. Staff carry out regular risk assessments in each room and outside to minimise hazards and ensure the safety of the children. Children are developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the rules of the setting for example, no running indoors and discuss with staff why they should not go near the cooker.

Staff are aware of the child protection policies and understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child. They receive clear information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse. This supports children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled within their environment. They settle well into the pre-school routine and leave their main carer with ease. They are confident in their relationships with each other, staff and visitors and they express their needs confidently to adults. Children are curious about visitors to the setting and ask questions such as 'why they are there' and 'what are they doing'. Staff reassure younger children of the daily routine to help them understand timings for example when their parents will return. Children are secure and confident and are eager to participate in the range of activities, which staff set out before they arrive at the setting. For example, a choice of floor and table top activities. Staff have an awareness of the Birth to three matters framework and are beginning to incorporate this into their practice to support the under three year olds who attend.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this well to plan the curriculum. Activities are planned around the stepping stones and observations of the children, along with their individual play plans are used to promote their individual learning. The organisation of the environment and resources effectively supports children's learning in all areas. Staff act as good role models for the children

Children are beginning to link sounds to letters. As they play the alphabet lotto game, they join in enthusiastically naming the sounds and finding the pictures on their cards. They are beginning to understand how letters link to words by finding their name cards such as at snack time. Children have opportunities to mark make and many children can write their own names. However, this is not extended to include labelling of their own work. Children are competent in using the computer. They access age appropriate programmes and games and competently move the joystick to help them complete the activities. For example, when playing a shape game, children co-operate with one another and give instructions as to what they have to do next 'move the button which is the same as the colour of the shape'. Children also use other forms of everyday technology such as a camera and telephones. Children have good opportunities to develop their creativity and imagination through arts and crafts, role-play and dressing up. Children enjoy cooking activities and show delight as they roll out the dough and cut out cookie shapes. Children have good relationships with their peers; they play harmoniously together, co-operate well and enjoy talking together. Children are developing a sense of right from wrong and are fully aware what is expected of them. They respond well when given instructions to line up and when they hear the music for tidy up time. Children gain confidence and self-esteem as they talk about home experiences. The weekend Ted book provides the children with much enjoyment as they take Ted home and draw pictures, take photographs and parents write about what has been done. The children enjoy looking at this book with staff and one another. They remember and talk about the significant events that happened to them as they recap on Ted's adventures over the past months.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging as staff warmly greet them on arrival and the positive interactions which are consistently provided. They develop an awareness of other cultures and traditions through planned activities and a good variety of toys and resources, which promote positive images of the wider world such as cooking utensils, books and puzzles. Parents are invited into the setting to share their cultures and traditions with the children. There are effective procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff liaise closely with outside agencies and parents and individual play plans ensure children are progressing towards their individual stage of development. This contributes to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development being fostered.

Children's behaviour is good, they respond to staff who use positive and consistent behaviour management techniques. Children work co-operatively in small and large groups listening and helping each other when they are playing games. For example, when playing lotto sounds game children help others find the pictures on their card. Children have good manners and use please and thank you at appropriate times. This is reinforced as they sing the 'please and thank you' song.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive clear information about the pre-school as policies and procedures are readily available to them and a resume is contained within the prospectus. Notice boards and monthly letters ensure they are aware of the activities their children will be involved in during the term at pre-school. Staff ensure parents are kept informed on how their children are progressing and developing through regular daily feedback, meetings and reports. Staff actively seek parents' views about their child's interests. They are asked to complete child profile forms before the child starts at the setting. This successful partnership contributes to children's development and ensures continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The environment is suitable and space is effectively used to maximise play and development opportunities for the children. Rooms are attractively presented and the high ratios of staff allows children to move around freely and comfortably, initiating their own play and learning. Policies and procedures which contribute to children's safety and welfare are in place. However, the setting is in breach of conditions as they are operating as full day care and accepting children outside the conditions of registration.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff members are aware of roles and responsibilities and key worker systems ensure children's individual development is fostered. Effective vetting and recruitment procedures ensure children are protected and cared for by staff with a good knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff regularly consider ways to improve the provision through self evaluation and discussing at staff meetings. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the pre-school was asked to: - update lost and uncollected child and complaints procedures to ensure they were part of main policy document and contain appropriate information; make the book corner more appealing to encourage children to take an interest in books, display books and posters, which reflect diversity, provide opportunities for children to use junk modelling and have opportunities for outdoor physical play. They were also asked to use assessment to plan activities for older and more able children to extend their learning and ensure they had opportunities.

An action plan was put in place to address the recommendations. Policies and procedures have been updated, are part of the main operational plan and contain all relevant information. Observations and evaluations of activities are used to inform future planning for the children and extend their learning. The book corner has comfortable soft seating and books are displayed attractively. Books and resources available in the setting reflect diversity and promote equality of opportunity. Physical play and opportunities for children to use malleable materials for junk modelling are planned within the curriculum. This contributes to the safety and development of the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required 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.

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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):

- obtain written parental consent to seek emergency medical treatment for the children
- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations and set in place a procedure to notify Ofsted of relevant matters with particular regard to conditions of registration.

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):

- encourage children to further develop hand writing skills by labelling their own work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk