



## First Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY337006
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 November 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Cook
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<b>Registered person</b>	First Step Day Nursery & Big Steps Out of School Club
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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 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 Day Nursery incorporating Big Steps Out of School Club is a privately owned childcare facility, with the present owners taking over the registration in 2006. It is situated to the rear of Carlton Miniott Business Park just outside Thirsk in North Yorkshire. The nursery offers full day care for babies and children up to five years of age. It is open from 07:30 to 18:00 Monday to Friday 51 weeks a year. The out of school club provides before and after school care and holiday care. A morning and afternoon school-run service is provided to and from local schools. Lunch time nursery class collections are also arranged.

First Steps is registered to provide nursery education for children of eligible age and receives the support of the local authority. There are currently 73 children on roll throughout the setting of which 11 receive funded nursery education. The setting welcomes children with special

educational needs and /or disabilities. There are no children attending who speak English as an additional language.

The joint owners employ 13 members of staff of whom, three hold relevant childcare qualifications and a further five 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 routines. Staff ensure all children wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet. Older children develop their independence as they confidently attend to their own personal care needs. Staff implement good hygiene routines ensuring tables, work surfaces and nappy changing areas are kept clean by using anti-bacterial sprays. Children are generally well protected from the risk of cross infection because they are provided with liquid soap, individual means of drying their hands and there is a clear sick child policy. At least one member of staff who holds a current first aid certificate is present at all times. Systems are in place for the recording of medication and accidents, however, entries are not always signed by parents this means children's good health is not fully safe guarded.

All children have regular opportunities to take part in physical exercise. They access the outdoor area most days and enjoy being in the fresh air, they also enjoy physical activity indoors. There is a wealth of outdoor equipment for children of all ages to enjoy. These include a good selection of wheeled vehicles, climbing frames, swings, slides, trampoline, bats, balls, skipping ropes and bean bags. Children confidently express themselves as they pretend to be trees moving in the wind and move like butterflies.

Children are well nourished due to the healthy and nutritious meals and snacks provided. For example, at snack time they enjoy chopped fresh fruit, such as banana and pears or cheese and bread sticks. There is a choice of main meal each day and the meals are cooked on the premises and served with fresh vegetables. Drinks of milk or water are provided regularly throughout the day. Children begin to learn the benefits of a healthy diet. Staff sit with the children when they are eating, providing a relaxed social occasion. They talk to the children about the foods that are good for you and encourage them to eat their main courses before having desserts.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment; the entrances to the premises are secure and the outdoor play area is appropriately fenced and gated. Risk assessments are completed covering, indoors, outdoors and outings further ensuring children's safety. There are effective procedures in place for the collection of children and a record of visitors is maintained. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe as they are provided with regular opportunities to practise the emergency evacuation procedure and are taught about road safety on trips out. Older children were made aware of stranger danger when a local policeman visited the setting

to talk to the children. However, while staff remain vigilant in monitoring children's safety they do not consistently explain to the children the reasons behind the behavioural boundaries which are in place. For example, children are told not to run indoors, to sit on chairs properly and not to wave their fork about. However, they are not given explanations of why this is important which limits their understanding.

The environment is made welcoming for children; their work and educational posters are displayed. Resources are maintained to a good standard and most are stored to be accessible to the children. This enables them to develop their independence to a good level as they choose what to do and access resources for themselves. The available resources cover all areas of learning and provide sufficient challenge for children of all ages.

Children's welfare is protected because key staff attend child protection training and are aware of the different types of abuse and likely signs. There is a clear child protection policy in place for them to follow should they have concerns.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children in all age groups are confident and display good self-esteem, which is largely due to the actions of the staff who evidently know the children well. They are consistently good role models for children, listen to what children are saying and clearly value their contributions. Children approach staff freely and are constantly reassured with praise and encouragement. As a result, all children develop warm trusting relationships with staff and are relaxed and settled. Independence is generally well promoted throughout the nursery; children use their initiative and select their own resources and activities.

Staff in the nursery have begun to use the Birth to three matters framework to plan activities for babies and young children which are stimulating and support their all round development. They provide opportunities for them to explore natural and man made objects which feel and sound different. They also enjoy a range of craft activities. For example, they made collages for Halloween from brightly coloured textured material and enjoy finger painting.

Older children who attend after school benefit from being able to bring their own ideas and make choices in what they would like to do: this promotes a feeling of ownership and encourages independence as they make choices. The range of resources has been extended since the new owners took over the facility earlier this year, ensuring school age children can be active or enjoy more restful pastimes according to their individual needs and interests.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The person in charge has a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. She supports less experienced staff well. While she has only been in post for a short period of time she is starting to introduce a programme of interesting activities which cover all areas of learning both indoors and outdoors. There is a limited amount of planning documentation in place, however, these clearly show learning objectives linked to the stepping stones. Staff make observations of children's progress

and there is a newly developed assessment system being introduced. However, the links between planning and assessment need to be strengthened as the systems do not clearly identify the individual children's next steps in learning. The room is organised well and resources are accessible to all children for self selection. Staff develop very good relationships with the children and use open questioning techniques sensitively to extend children's thinking and learning.

Children enjoy the activities provided and take part enthusiastically. They persevere well to complete tasks and spend considerable amounts of time creating the effects they desire in their art work. Children's communications skills are developing well and are keen to share their experiences with staff and their peers. They are beginning to understand that print carries meaning, as they pretend to write shopping lists in the role play area, and take messages when answering the phone. They begin to recognise their name in print as part of the arrangements for snack time. Older and more able children label their own work and younger and less able children show emergent writing skills as they form some recognisable letters.

Most children count confidently to five and beyond, for example, when they count the number bricks in the tower they have built and when counting pennies in the shop. They learn about different shapes through the planned topics and confidently use mathematical language when they talk about bigger, smaller, under and over. However, there are fewer opportunities provided for children to complete simple problem solving exercises in the daily routines and this limits their understanding of more and less.

Children use their imagination well and particularly enjoyed the role play area which had been turned into a toy shop. They demonstrate an awareness of information technology as they use the till to take money, swipe credit cards and pretend to ring people on landline and mobile phones. They recognise and correctly identify the colour of the paints they are using. They extend their gross motor skills well through the regular use of a wide variety of outdoor play equipment and show particular skill when manoeuvring wheeled vehicles. They develop good hand eye co-ordination as they use scissors, pencils, paint brushes and cutlery at meal times.

Children are very well behaved and are appropriately supported by staff as they are encouraged to share, take turns and generally show respect for others. They are beginning to learn about their own culture and that of others as they celebrate festivals as part of the planned activities. They become aware of their local community when they enjoy walks out. They collect leaves and seasonal fruits to use in their craft activities. Children develop their self help skills as they independently attend to personal care needs, put on their aprons for messy play and their coats before playing outdoors.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are highly valued as individuals. They are treated with equal concern and staff use the registration forms and talks with parents to gain all the information needed to meet each child's individual care needs. A daily diary is completed for the under two's which goes home with the child at the end of the day. Parents are encouraged to make entries ensuring the children's individual needs are recognised and met.

Effective arrangements are in place to care for children with learning difficulties and or disabilities. Some staff have attended training and all children are welcome at the setting, regardless of ability. Children develop respect for people's similarities and differences, through the planned themes and topics and learn about the wider world and their local community. They celebrate festivals from their own and other cultures and have visitors to the setting. They access a satisfactory range of books and resources that promote equality of opportunity. The children benefit from links forged with a local school, the reception class teacher visits nursery, helping the children to prepare for their next steps in life. Children behave very well. They take turns, learn to share toys and regularly show care and consideration for the needs of others. Staff generally support children to help them begin to understand right and wrong and provide effective role models. Staff use positive methods to manage children's behaviour and children constantly receive praise and encouragement to reinforce positive behaviour. As a result children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The children benefit as parents and staff build positive relationships. Parents who contributed to the inspection process: state they are very happy with the care provided and that their children are happy, settled and look forward to coming to nursery. They are appreciative of the improvements that have started to take place, in particular, the refurbishment of the out of school area and the increase of resources for the older children.

Partnership with parents and carers in regard to nursery education is satisfactory. Children's assessment files are kept on the premises which parents are welcome to access at any time on request. However, there is no structure in place for parents to routinely contribute to the assessment process and no method for recording their contributions. Informal verbal discussions ensure parents are aware of the areas of learning and associated planned topics but no written information is available.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The environment is well organised, staff know their roles and responsibilities and effectively implement routines to give children of all ages a broad range of experiences. Children benefit from well deployed staff, who constantly interact with them providing support and encouragement. This ensures children settle well, are relaxed and feel secure in the familiar environment and regular routines.

Effective recruitment and induction procedures are in place; this ensures children are cared for by suitable staff who have been vetted. While a staff appraisal system is being introduced this is not yet fully implemented. The new owners demonstrate, through discussion, they have a clear vision of future developments and improvements they intend to introduce to further enhance the quality of care provided. They have established a good rapport with the local authority development worker who is supporting them in achieving their goals. They are particularly keen to enlist her help in introducing a system of self evaluation to cover all aspects of the provision. Since taking over the provision earlier this year they have started to make improvements. For example, they have refurbished the out of school provision and purchased additional resources, increased the resources in the outdoor area and provided a more hygienic wooden floor in the baby unit.

Most of the requirements of the National Standards for documentation and record keeping are met and stored appropriately to maintain confidentiality. However, the registration system does not accurately record children's attendance. There are a range of clear policies and procedures in place and available in the entrance for parents to access. These are currently being reviewed to ensure they reflect current practice. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The staff's training needs have been identified and unqualified staff members are in the process of gaining a childcare qualification to increase their knowledge of how children learn. The management are supportive and encourage staff to attend on-going training to increase their knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning. There is currently no system in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the educational provision and its impact on children's progress towards the early learning goals.

#### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

#### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 complaint 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 parents signature is consistently obtained on accident and medication records
- increase children's understanding of safety by ensuring they receive age appropriate explanations of the reasons behind the behavioural boundaries which are in place
- keep an accurate record of children's attendance.

## **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):

- strengthen the links between planning and assessment to clearly identify children's individual next steps in learning
- increase the opportunities for children to complete simple problem solving exercises in fun and practical ways
- ensure parents are provided with opportunities to contribute to their children's assessments and are provided with information about the Foundation Stage and associated areas of learning.

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