



The Step Up Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	314744
Inspection date	06 March 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Anne Marsh
Setting Address	Hook C of E Primary School, Garth Lane, Hook, Goole, North Humberside, DN14 5NW
Telephone number	01405 766953
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Registered person	The Step Up Group
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 good. 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?

The Step Up Group opened in September 1994. It is owned by a parent committee and operates from four rooms within a bungalow situated in the grounds of Hook Church of England Primary School in Goole. The group serves the local area.

A maximum of 18 children may attend the playgroup at anyone time. The group is open five days a week, term time only and sessions are from 09.00 to 11.30 and 13.00 to 15.30. There are currently 26 children on roll aged from three to five years. Of these children 23 receive funding for early education. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as a second language.

Four full time staff work with the children and all hold an early years qualification. The setting receives support from the North East Riding Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children fully enjoy a wide and challenging range of activities which enhance their physical development. They have daily opportunities to enjoy the fresh air whatever the weather. Well planned outdoor activities encourage children to experiment and move their bodies in a variety of ways. For example, children curl up small, pretending to be a seed, they listen to the rhythm of the music and carefully, slowly uncurl their bodies as they begin to stretch and grow. Children continue to show an awareness of space as they move their bodies, wiggling their fingers pretending to be the sun and rain. Children are learning the effects exercise has to them, they learn how to 'warm up' and 'cool down' and they feel their hearts beating after running round. There are plenty of opportunities for children to practise their balancing and coordination skills with small and large apparatus, such as beams, hoops, throwing, kicking and catching balls. Children's physical skills and confidence to further develop and strengthen their bodies are gained through weekly dance and movement workshops.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment, they stay healthy because staff implement appropriate procedures to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Children understand simple good hygiene practices and are very independent in their personal care. All children manage themselves in the toilet independently, they flush and wash their hands with little or no prompting. They use tissues for wiping their nose and dispose of them in the bin. Children wash their hands prior to a snack and understand that germs can make them poorly.

Children are suitably nourished and learn about healthy eating through the provision of mid-morning snacks which include a selection of fresh fruit, such as banana, grapes, apple and orange. Themed activities successfully introduces children to new tastes when they experiment with tasting food from around the world.

There are secure policies and procedures in place to ensure children are well cared for if they become ill or require medical treatment. Posters in the cloak room help alert parents to the dangers of infectious diseases, such as meningitis. There are gentle reminders to ensure children come appropriately clothed for the cold weather and to ensure they are protected in the sun.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained, welcoming and cosy environment, which is effectively organised to enable children to move around freely and safely. Furniture is of good design and conforms to safety standards. Although, the hot radiators early in the morning pose a hazard to children's safety. Children enjoy playing with a good range of well maintained toys and equipment that are accessible at child height or provided on carpeted areas. Careful consideration is given to ensure that activities provided are age appropriate and can be safely accessed independently by the children, or supervised by staff. The setting have good security systems in place to ensure children do not leave unsupervised. Careful monitoring of the exit door ensures unauthorised persons do not gain access.

Children are prepared for emergency situations, staff have discussed with children what would happen in the event of a fire and a procedure is practised regularly. The fire drill displayed includes photographs of the children following each step of the procedure. This is displayed at the children's level and is a very visual reminder to the children on the correct steps to follow in the event of an emergency. Annual visits from the local fire station further enhances the children's knowledge on safety as this visit includes the opportunity to look at all the fire equipment on the engine and listen carefully to the officers instructions on staying safe.

Children's safety on outings is high priority and children are well cared for. Prior to the outing staff arrange a pre-visit to assess areas of safety and shelter. Higher ratios of staff to children are always maintained and children practise their road safety whilst visiting the local community.

Children are well protected because staff clearly understand their role in child protection and the correct procedures to follow. These procedures are currently being updated to meet with requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, happy and sociable. They approach staff easily to make their needs known and staff respond warmly. Children feel free to explore their environment because they feel secure and have very positive relationships with friendly welcoming staff, which has a positive effect on the children's well-being. The caring key worker system works very well in helping children and parents settle in. Children show a sense of belonging and are familiar with the daily routine. They are comfortable in their environment which reflects the wider world and their local community.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress through the stepping stones because staff have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planning is becoming a team effort and staff implement effective long, medium and short term planning which is demonstrated clearly in weekly and daily plans. Planning is used effectively to reflect the needs of the children and is regularly altered and re-evaluated to ensure children will gain their full potential through the six areas of learning. Teaching is rooted in the staff's sound knowledge on how children learn and progress. The children's key worker system successfully monitors the children's daily progress and this is recorded clearly in the children's individual assessments, which indicate individual children's next steps to learning.

Children are confident, motivated and keen to participate. This is promoted by staff's enthusiasm and interest in individual children. There is a good balance of activities each session to ensure a good mix of adult and child-led activities. Although, some more able children show a readiness to manage developmentally appropriate tasks without adult support. For example, at snack time they show eagerness to want to clear everything away unaided. Plenty of opportunities through music, dance and role play are presented to children to allow them to develop their imaginations. For example, a large cardboard box in the middle of the room is soon converted

by the children into a boat and they seek the assistance of staff to help find some oars to help sail the boat across the sea.

The play rooms are a picture rich environment of children's creative displays and topical information, which creates a sense of belonging for them. Children are very independent in selecting and carrying out activities. They put on aprons for water and sand, competently dress and undress themselves for dance and movement. Many children are able to fasten their own zips, do and undo buttons. More able children independently put their jumpers on the right way and are able to turn clothing right side out. Children seek out others very readily to share their experiences, playing counting games and inviting friends to play with the train track. They show a lot of care for others, ask their friends if they are ok, hold their hat and gloves for them as they prepare for outdoor play. Without prompt children ask the inspectors name and politely introduce all their friends in the room by their names.

Children show an avid interest in number because there are many interesting activities which introduce them to shape, numbers and colours. For example, the children have recently completed a sponsored shape walk around their local environment where they were able to look at similarities in shapes that they saw. They are developing an awareness of shape properties when they construct a three dimensional rocket. Children show a developing understanding of addition and subtraction as they count their friends in the morning and count how many are missing. They confidently sing number rhymes, such as 'five speckled frogs' using finger puppets, putting away their fingers, one by one and understanding how many are left.

Children have increasing vocabulary and can describe things well. For example, they confidently explain the rules to the inspector for a spider game. Through their creative displays and activities about senses and transport, children are introduced to new words, such as prickly, crusty, gliding and wobbling. They use their body language and facial expressions when they listen intently to the stories and songs through the head phones and happily sing to themselves on hearing a familiar song. Plenty of opportunities are provided for children to mark-make, for example, they fully enjoy writing in the play corner diary, chalking and painting patterns on the stone floor outside. Some children are beginning to form letters of their name when they complete a 'get well' card and understand the sound of the letter at the beginning of their name. However, there are limited further opportunities for children to develop their growing interest in linking sounds and letters.

Children are regularly introduced to some everyday technology and are becoming confident in simple computer tasks. For example, they create coloured patterns controlling the mouse and are learning how to print their own designs from the computer. They learn a sense of time through a successful recent topic about transport introducing children to the past and present day as they compare bicycles and cars. All children fully enjoy participating in the fun, time associated game of 'What's the time Mr Wolf'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from staff who promote a positive and very friendly atmosphere in the playgroup. They are calm and consistent in their strategies using praise, distraction and above

all lots of encouragement. All children listen well as they share with each other their experiences and items bought from home during circle time. They enjoy respectful relationships with each other and staff which impacts positively on behaviour. Children have been included in devising their own playgroup rules for example, don't punch or bite, if you drop a toy pick it up. They encourage each other and adults to follow their rules.

Children relate well to their peers and have formed attachments. They help each other, hold hands and greet each other. Participating in an interesting range of activities and recourses helps children to develop a positive image of diversity. Their understanding of other cultures is being developed through themed activities, role play and food tasting from other countries. Staff have regard for the Code Of Practice, they show sound knowledge and skills in supporting children with learning difficulties. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff have developed strong relationships with parents and they work well together to ensure children's individual needs are successfully met. Parents speak very highly of the staff who they find very approachable. They feel the key worker system works well in settling the children and monitoring their progress. Information regarding the provision and the stepping stones is plentiful, provided within informative news letters, discussed and colourfully displayed at open evenings. A written procedure is in place to inform parents of the steps to take should they have any concerns and has recently been updated to meet regulatory requirements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare is promoted and they make good progress because the group is organised very well. All staff work cohesively as they ensure a happy and safe environment for children to flourish. Leadership and management is good. All staff are well qualified and understand policies and procedure in place to ensure the safe management of the provision. Staff are working closely with the local authority to ensure children's educational needs are met. They regularly meet with staff in school to organise transitional procedures to ensure children settle comfortably into school. Staff regularly monitor and evaluate the children's learning to identify their development and any areas of their planning that requires improvement.

Children benefit because they are grouped effectively with key workers which promotes consistency for the children. Documentation is well ordered and meets all regulatory requirements. This is stored appropriately maintaining confidentiality and security. The whole of the group benefit and feel supported by a committed voluntary parent committee that meets regularly and takes an active interest ensuring that the provision continually meets the needs of the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup agreed to improve and implement a large number of policies and procedures to meet the National Standards. All policies and procedures in place now meet

with the National Standards, they are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to comply and work in practice effectively. This enhances the safety and care 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- ensure the heating appliance does not pose a hazard to children.

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):

- extend children's early literacy skills with rhyme and alliteration
- increase opportunities for more able children to manage appropriate tasks.

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