

# Second Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY308855
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Greg Wolff
<b>Setting Address</b>	Durham Rd, Laindon, Essex, SS15 6PJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 410937
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<b>Registered person</b>	Sharon Anne Harrison
<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 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?

Second Steps Day Nursery opened in 2005. It operates from a purpose built building in Laindon, Essex. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 76 children from birth to eight years on roll. This includes 30 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens five days a week for 51 weeks per year. Sessions are from 07.00 until 19.00. There are 19 members of staff working with the children. Of these, 13 have qualifications to NVQ level two or above. The setting receives support from the local authority.

### THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

#### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to be healthy. They adopt good hygiene routines, such as hand-washing after toileting and before snack and after messy activities such as painting or construction with glue

and boxes. Practitioners record all accidents and obtain signatures from parents and carers to show that they have been informed. A number of practitioners have completed first aid training to help them respond to accidents appropriately and procedures are also in place to care for children should they become sick on the premises. Practitioners have also completed appropriate specialist training, such as the use of epipens for severe allergic reactions.

Children are able to have snacks and drinks at set times and in line with their dietary requirements. Drinking water is available for children to take for themselves if they become thirsty. Children have healthy snacks, such as a selection of fruit, and are further helped to become aware of healthy eating through planned activities and discussions. Main meals are well-planned and healthy and all relevant dietary information is made available to the nursery cook. She ensures that she knows the children's likes and dislikes and plans an interesting and varied menu in conjunction with the manager.

Children have daily physical play opportunities outside. They enjoy being active and are able to be energetic in a well-organised outside play space. They learn to move in different ways and use equipment, including a climbing frame, bicycles and blocks. All children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their small motor skills by using a variety of tools and other equipment.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a safe, secure and child-centred indoor and outdoor environment. Practitioners work hard to create an extremely welcoming room where children can freely and safely explore. It is bright and colourful with children's work and photographs displayed attractively around the walls. The baby room, in particular, is vibrant and stimulating.

Careful attention is given to ensuring that all potential risks to children are identified and minimised. For example, plug sockets are fitted with guards and practitioners carry out daily health and safety checks in the rooms and garden area. However, storage of large equipment and the organisation of seating during meal and snack times poses potential risks to children. Children's arrivals and departures are managed very safely. During each session the entrances to the premises and garden are kept locked so that children cannot leave the premises unnoticed and visitors cannot gain unauthorised entry.

Children remain free from harm because staff monitor their play vigilantly. Children use a wide range of suitable and safe equipment and resources that are appropriate for their stage of development. They are shown how to use equipment, such as scissors, responsibly and safely, learning about keeping themselves and others safe. All equipment is clean and hygienic and is checked for safety each time it is used to ensure there are no broken parts that could harm a child. Resources are stored at child-height so that children can choose and access what they want to play with independently. Children enjoy helping with the tidying up and begin to learn that a tidy environment is a safer one.

Children are well protected from harm and neglect because staff clearly have a secure knowledge and understanding of the setting's safeguarding children policy and procedures. All practitioners are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities to protect children, and know the correct procedures to follow should they have any concerns.

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

The provision is good.

All children benefit from access to a balanced range of activities and play opportunities that support their emotional, physical, social and intellectual development. Children do not have to wait for equipment as there is plenty available to allow them to play alongside each other. Practitioners are familiar with the best practice guidance described within the Foundation Stage. The baby room, in particular, is well-organised and staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure that children make very good progress before they move to the next room.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All practitioners have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The nursery's planning covers all six areas of learning and demonstrates an understanding of the need to offer appropriate challenge for the different ages of children present and their stages of development. All activities are suitably evaluated to ensure that planning for next steps is possible. All practitioners interact well with the children and are actively involved in the activities alongside them. They ask the children appropriate open-ended questions to confirm their understanding and prompt them to move on in their thinking. However, at times, due to the new layout downstairs, staff deployment is not always appropriate to ensure that all children are fully supported while they play and learn.

Children's development is observed and assessed thoroughly during daily activities. Notes are recorded centrally and then transferred to each child's record of achievement towards the early learning goals. By observing children and their achievements throughout the session and not only in particular activities, practitioners ensure that they know where each child's development is at any given time. There is a clear link between the assessment records and planning which shows how they are continuing to meet the children's developmental needs at all times and help them take the next steps.

The use of interesting themes ensures that children remain interested, are involved in all aspects of their education and play activities stem from these. For example, a number of activities stem from the theme 'People who help us'. Large displays of children's work are interactive, and practitioners use them to reinforce numbers during other activities.

Children are confident in their construction skills, using boxes and other 'junk' to make a number of different items. They are keen to show off what they have created and talk about what things on their models are.

Children are keen to learn and are actively involved throughout the session. They form strong relationships with each other and with practitioners. They make choices from the equipment available and are independent in their personal care. Children succeed in a range of skills. Circle time is good and used well by practitioners to promote the children's communication skills and counting. The children also learn to confidently share events and experiences from their home-life with others. The use of Freddie the Teddy, who travels home to spend the weekend with children also ensures that practitioners are kept informed about children's home lives.

Children enjoy reading books, and the library area is comfortable and furnished with soft cushions. Children use their knowledge of text to practise writing letters and making marks during other activities. They use numbers in songs and rhymes and are able to confidently predict what number comes next by both adding and subtracting one at a time. They are able to use mathematical language at the appropriate time whilst playing together. Children have

access to interesting and appropriate computer programs and they show impressive skills as they control the mouse to solve the problems they are faced with. Children celebrate festivals and learn about different faiths and cultures during their time at the setting. They have opportunities to try foods from different parts of the world and to be creative whilst learning about traditions of other people, for example at Chinese New Year.

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

The provision is good.

Children are able to access a number of appropriate resources that promote diversity and equal opportunity for all. There is a good acknowledgement of a range of faiths and cultures and practitioners use a multi-faith calendar to ensure that children experience a range of festivals and celebrations from different faiths, cultures and countries throughout the year.

Practitioners work very well with parents, carers and other professionals to support all children, including those with special needs. They take time to gather information about each of the children's needs from parents and carers, which ensures that they are well supported in meeting the needs of all the children attending the group.

Children are generally well-behaved. Practitioners have adopted strategies to teach the children to behave acceptably, and are consistent and positive in their approach to behaviour management. However, due to the change in layout of the premises downstairs, some aspects of unwanted behaviour are not addressed appropriately due to ineffective staff deployment when children need to use the toilets.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Practitioners keep parents and carers well informed through an abundance of information about early years, the Foundation Stage, planning and general practices in the group. This is made available on the large notice boards. Parents and carers are made aware they can see their children's development records and termly meetings with their key workers are offered. They are told about topics and themes through newsletters. Practitioners also give daily verbal feedback and often write about the children's learning and achievements on work that is sent home. Effective relationships allow parents and carers to work well with staff to meet all the children's developmental needs. The setting has a number of scrap books available to all visitors to the setting to show what has been undertaken by the children recently. In order to ensure that they are well-informed about children's home lives, practitioners use 'Freddy the Teddy' to encourage children to report on what they do at the weekends.

Overall children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

All required documentation, policies and procedures are in place. Ofsted is kept informed about practitioner changes and the required checks are completed for new members of staff. The group induct their practitioners well, and carry out appraisals regularly. Staff training is organised to meet individual needs as well as the needs of the group to continually improve the provision. Effective security systems ensure that unvetted persons are prevented from accessing the premises or having unsupervised contact with children and staff to child ratios are met at all times. Ofsted is kept informed of significant incidents, which are also recorded by the setting.

The practitioners mostly use the premises well to give the children plenty of space to play and learn and they provide a balanced range of activities. The outside area is used every session, and practitioners use it as a tool for learning, for example by talking about physical changes in their bodies during exercise with the children.

The leadership and management of the group is good. The registered provider and manager work well together to oversee all aspects of the setting and to ensure that practitioners working on the premises are appropriately trained and managed. Practitioners work well together to come up with ideas for planning which is then recorded by the room leader. All practitioners are confident in their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. The manager, in close conjunction with the registered provider, has implemented a system to monitor the provision of nursery education and this is proving to be effective in identifying areas for future training.

Overall children's needs are met.

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

At the last inspection, the setting agreed to ensure that the children cannot leave the outside play area unattended and reduce potential hazards on the premises regarding solid floor in the nursery room in order that children are kept safe. All gates to the outside play area are now kept locked and locks and latches are placed high up out of children's reach so that they cannot leave unattended. The nursery has been reorganised and there is now a carpeted area in the nursery room which ensures that children can play and move around safely.

The setting further agreed to develop and implement a system of observation which informs planning for the appropriate next steps for all children. The system for planning has been changed so that each activity and each child's performance within the activity is evaluated in order to inform the next steps. Personal evaluations are then transferred to children's individual folders and in this way, future plans are differentiated so that children can access learning at a level appropriate to them.

The setting also agreed to ensure that children are able to contribute to displays regarding equality of opportunity, the celebration of diversity and the wider world. There is now a full programme of activities regarding festivals and celebrations of a variety of faiths and cultures for children to take part in. The use of a cross-culture calendar ensures that children receive a good knowledge of the wider world, and are able to take part in activities and help produce displays which link to this. For example, the children did much work linked to the Chinese New Year and, though this is no longer evident in the nursery, pictures and photographs are kept in the nursery book which is made available to all visitors to the setting.

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

Ofsted received a concern on 03 July 2006 that a child had got lost whilst on a outing. An Ofsted Childcare Inspector conducted an unannounced visit on 06 July 2006 to investigate this concern in relation to National Standards 2 (Organisation), 6(Safety), 12 (Working in partnership with parents and carers) and 14 (Documentation).

As a result of the investigation the provider was given a Compliance Notice under National Standards (NS) 2 and 6 as follows:

NS 2: ensure there is a system for registering children and staff attendance on a daily basis. showing hours of arrival and departure

NS 6: demonstrate how steps are taken to promote safety within the setting and on outings and how proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

Also as a result of the investigation the provider was given 6 Actions:

NS 6: provide Ofsted with insurance documents for vehicles used for transporting children

NS 6 :ensure that the lost child policy includes what to do if a child is lost on an outing

NS 12: ensure the complaints policy is updated in line with the addendum to the national standards from October 2005

NS 12: ensure parents have access to all written information about their child, including details of any investigation in which their child is the subject. This is to ensure the registered provider informs the parents of full details of incident

NS 14: ensure all records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are maintained

NS 14: ensure that Ofsted is notified of any significant event at the earliest opportunity, but no later than 14 days after the event.

Compliance with the notice was monitored at a visit to the provision on 27 July 2006 where the provider was complying with the notice. A satisfactory response to the actions was received on 20 July 2006.

The provider continues to be registered.

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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **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 children's safety is maintained. This refers to the organisation of seating and resource storage in the nursery room

- ensure that appropriate behaviour management techniques are used throughout the nursery and that these are supported by suitable staff deployment.

### **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):

- ensure that staff deployment is appropriate throughout the nursery and that systems for hand washing and toileting do not adversely affect children's play and learning (also applies to care).

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)