



First Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	314628
Inspection date	06 February 2007
Inspector	Christine Tipple
Setting Address	The Drill Hall, 72 a Middle Street South, Driffield, YO25 6QF
Telephone number	01377 241117
E-mail	
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 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?

First Steps Pre-School has been registered since 1999. It operates from two rooms in a single storey building in Drifffield town centre. It is managed by a parent committee and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. There is an enclosed outside play area.

The group is registered for a maximum of 26 children under five years at any one time. There are currently 85 children on roll, of whom 44 are in receipt of nursery education funding. The opening times are Monday to Friday, from 09.05 to 11.35 and 12.35 to 15.05, during term time only. A lunch club is provided for the children attending the Friday afternoon session. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas. The group currently supports children with physical disabilities and learning difficulties.

Seven members of staff work with the children overall, four have a Level 3 qualification and one has a Level 2 qualification. There are currently two staff who are working towards a qualification. The playgroup have completed the Pre-School Learning Alliance Quality Assurance Accreditation Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's physical development is good, they have access to a well resourced selection of equipment both inside and outside. The children go outside on a daily basis all year round which ensures they have regular fresh air. The children are able to practise climbing, balancing and have positive boisterous physical activities. Children move with control and coordination when manoeuvring around furniture, and when using the sit and ride and wheeled equipment. The varied selection of smaller tools offer the children regular opportunities to refine and develop their fine motor skills, such as cutting and using utensils to shape, mould and construct with.

The standards of health and hygiene are very good. The children use the facilities for their personal care independently and all the provision for hand washing is at child level for easy access by them. Children are good with the routine of when they wash their hands and why, this is reinforced with a photographic display of the right way to wash you hands to ensure they are clean. The premises are well maintained and surfaces are cleaned appropriately after activities and before food is served. Clear details are in place for the care of children when they are ill, to minimise cross-infection at the playgroup.

The children are provided with daily snacks at playgroup. These promote healthy options for the children as they receive a selection of three different fruits each day, such as pears, apples and oranges. The children taste other foods and vegetables, such as pumpkin soup. The children also bake and use fresh ingredients. The drinks offered to the children are mainly milk or water, which is available throughout the session for the children to access as they want.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children come into the playgroup confident and keen to access the range of resources and equipment provided. The facilities in place are child centred and well presented, clean and welcoming. The use of the space enables resources to be set up which promote access and self selection for the children. The quality and range of the equipment and resources provided are very good. These offer the children positive learning experiences.

The safety and welfare of the children is managed efficiently by the staff who are vigilant in their approach. Risk assessments are in place, as are clear policy and procedures. These cover all areas of the playgroup to ensure effective steps are taken to prevent accidents occurring. The promotion of safety with the children is managed in a variety of ways. For example, the outside area is set out with road safety resources which the children can practise, this knowledge

is then used when on walks out in their community. Staff discuss safety with the children when using tools and ask them to walk not run when inside. There is safety clothing provided in the role play areas. Fire drills and the evacuation procedure are regularly practised and discussed with the children.

The children's welfare is safeguarded by the clear details outlined in the policy statement on the protection of children. Staff attend training to ensure their knowledge and information is relevant and kept up to date.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children enter the playgroup with smiling faces, they are relaxed and confident in their surroundings. The younger children are well supported by the staff in developing their self-esteem and communication skills. Staff are developing their approach in working with the younger children by using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, the organisation and timetabling of the session at times limits the children's continuous access to the resources and activities offered. The children are motivated and show a real interest in the activities and resources set out for them. Children's needs are valued and this promotes an inclusive approach in accessing all areas of the playgroup as they choose. Staff are sensitive in their handling of the children and respond to them through positive praise and ongoing encouragement.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff are confident and knowledgeable in the use of the early learning goals and stepping stones in their planning and assessment of the children's progress. The staff have a good understanding of how they are deployed in the group to meet the varied needs of the children. The range of resources and activities provided ensures the children have a stimulating environment both inside and outside, which offers them a range of learning experiences through their play. The children engage with each other and the staff very well and this is encouraged through informal questioning and the positive relationships established. Children have time together in their key groups and this enables them to extend their language, literacy and mathematical skills. The children are confident in the use of phonics and this is supported with excellent visual props. Puppets are also provided in the book area and are linked to stories, such as the Gingerbread Man. Numbers are displayed around the playgroup and the children are confident in their recognition of numbers and the sequence they follow. There are good opportunities for mathematical language to be used in the children's everyday activities. Children made a chart on the different types of traffic that passed on the road which they observed and recorded. The children bake and use materials and equipment that effectively support the children to understand weight, volume and shape.

Children have regular opportunities to explore and investigate their surroundings. The children plant and grow seeds and they have a compost tub, this supports their understanding of changes, such as the seasons. The children have experience of more exotic animals through the visit of the zoo lab, and they have fish and a hamster as playgroup pets. Children have good access to computers and other programmable equipment on a daily basis. Excellent examples of the children's design skills are displayed, such as the Chinese dragon and Space theme. The children

have good access to a range of tools and equipment that effectively promote their physical skills. Children enjoy being creative, they are able to explore colour, texture, shape and form through the varied selection of resources provided. Good use is made of the role play area and small world resources to develop the children's imaginary skills. The children enjoy singing and using musical instruments and match movement to music, such as action rhymes.

The children's key-worker ensures their children's files are informed and provide good evidence of what the children know and can do. Staff have established individual play plans for each child. This provides a clear picture of what the children do next and how they are challenged and supported in future planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff know the children and their families well. They are made welcome and time is given for each child to settle in. Children have opportunities to learn about diversity and the wider world through well planned activities and a good selection of resources and positive images displayed. There are links with the community, and parents are able to contribute, such as with the Chinese New Year celebrations. Staff promote an inclusive environment where children's needs are identified and well supported. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good. They are happy and relaxed in their surroundings. The children respond to the routines and boundaries in place which reflect the children's level of understanding. Staff provide a caring and supportive place so the children gain confidence and effectively build their self-esteem in a positive way. Children are developing their skills to share and negotiate with each other to take turns. Positive emphasis is placed on the children and staff as role models in using their manners and in being kind to each other. The approach by staff with the children is consistent which promotes their confidence and understanding.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The playgroup provides a range of detailed information for parents on the care and provision offered for their children. This is shared through the policies and procedures and the parents handbook. News items and other information of interest are placed on the noticeboard or in the regular newsletter. Parents are able to see what activities and learning opportunities their children access when attending the playgroup, as these are also displayed. Daily contact with key-staff is available and valued by the parents. The funded children have their own bags to take home which has their work in to share with parents. Links with home are established before the child attends. A home visit is set up by the staff to collect information on the child's likes and dislikes, family structure and their routines. Children and parents are able to visit the playgroup prior to attending, which is effective in supporting the child to happily settle at playgroup. Parents have access to their children's progress and assessment files and receive a report by their child's key-worker. Open evenings are established to provide parents with additional opportunities to talk with the staff. The playgroup is managed by a parent committee and this enables them to take a more direct part in the operation of the playgroup.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children's care and learning is enhanced by the efficient and effective management of the playgroup. Staff work well as a team and this is reflected in their daily operations. The children's safety and welfare is well supported and managed in all areas of the care and provision. The recruitment and selection procedures are informed and ensure the suitability of staff working with the children. The policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure information recorded is relevant and up to date. Records and documentation are well maintained and ensure confidentiality.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff are motivated and committed to the development and progress of the children attending. Staff and the management committee promote a child focused approach and are active in their involvement within their community. There is an effective training programme in place for all the staff which is supported with regular staff appraisals. Staff meet each week to share planning and progress of the children in their key-worker groups. The committee offer additional support through ensuring funds are available for the ongoing development of the playgroup. There is a yearly action plan which provides appropriate details of what needs to improve and develop in both the care and education. Both staff and the management committee work together to continually improve the range of learning opportunities for the children, and work closely with parents to involve them in the playgroup and their children's learning. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care report recommended that the playgroup extend their safeguarding children policy to include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, and ensure the times of arrival and departure for children and staff are recorded.

The playgroup has extended their safeguarding children policy to include a clear procedure to be followed if allegations are made against staff. The playgroup has a suitable system in place that records the attendance of the children and staff on duty on a daily basis.

The last funded education report recommended that the playgroup provide more regular opportunities for the children to use counting in everyday situations, particularly larger numbers for the more able children.

The children have good opportunities through their everyday activities to use numbers and counting. They are confident in the sequence of numbers 1-10 and older children count to 20 with confidence.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 can be seen 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):

- review the organisation of the session to provide the children with ongoing access to the activities and resources to ensure they maximise their play and learning opportunities (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the care section above.

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