

# Footsteps Day Nursery and Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY340790
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 August 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sally Wride
<b>Setting Address</b>	73 Timothy's Bridge Road, Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 9BG
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<b>Registered person</b>	Footsteps Day Nurseries Ltd (5046074)
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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?

Footsteps Day Nursery and Pre-school opened in 2007. It operates from purpose built premises situated on an industrial estate in Stratford-upon-Avon. The setting serves the local area and has links with local schools. There is a fully enclosed play area and an outdoor classroom available for outside play.

A maximum of 100 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 80 children from 11 months to four-years-old on roll. This includes 14 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens six days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:00 until 19:00 on Mondays to Saturdays.

There are 14 full-time and one part-time member of staff who work with the children. The vast majority of staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 2, 3 or higher. There are six members of staff currently working towards a recognised early years

or higher level qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a care environment that is clean and well maintained. All equipment and resources are regularly cleaned to ensure that they remain hygienic for the children to use. There are excellent procedures in place for if children become unwell whilst in attendance at the setting and five well stocked first aid boxes are readily accessible. All of the required health documentation is in place. However, although parents are issued with duplicate copies of their children's entries, some do not clearly demonstrate that they have been signed in acknowledgement. Children are well protected from the sun. They wear sun hats and sun cream when they play outdoors in the warmer weather and dress in their outdoor coats and wellington boots to play outdoors in the poorer weather. Children independently access clean and well-maintained toilet facilities, which promotes their self-care skills. They use good quality hand washing resources and have a clear understanding that they wash their hands to remove the germs and keep them healthy and well. Children benefit from daily opportunities to enjoy the fresh air in the outdoor play areas. They use an excellent range of toys and equipment that promote their physical development well.

Children gain a good understanding of a healthy diet. They enjoy a wide range of home-made meals and snacks with plenty of fresh organic fruit and vegetables included in the menus. Children with food allergies or requiring special diets are well catered for. Suitable menus are planned for the whole setting to ensure that all children are able to enjoy the same meals, regardless of their individual dietary requirements. Positive steps are taken to reduce the spread of infection, for example, children have their own named cups when having a drink. Parents are well informed about the quantity and types of food that their child has enjoyed whilst at the setting and their views and wishes are sought with regard to the foods offered to children. Children's independence is fostered as they serve their own meals and snacks. Children receive a certificate of achievement award when they have eaten five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Children explain that eating fresh fruit and vegetables will help 'make us grow strong'.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit greatly from a care environment that is safe, secure and very well maintained. They enjoy well presented care rooms according to their age and stage of development. Throughout the nursery, attractive displays of their artwork create an inviting feel and are a pleasure to view. Children's independence is fostered as they make decisions about what they would like to play with from the extensive range of toys that are available. Low-level storage units create different areas of play for children, as well as providing children with the opportunity to self-select and make decisions about how they would like to spend their time. All toys and equipment are very well maintained and are regularly cleaned to ensure that they remain hygienic for the children to use.

Detailed written risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they identify all perceived risks to children. Staff are vigilant in their daily visual checks to ensure that the environment, both indoors and outside, is safe and free from hazards. The

premises are secure and children are well supervised at all times. There are excellent procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children, including information regarding named persons who are able to collect the child. Photographs of these people are held in children's individual records to ensure that they are easily recognised by staff. The outdoor area is checked for its safety prior to its use and is secured with fencing. The children use a well-maintained grassed area for their play and also a paved outdoor classroom.

Children's welfare is safeguarded through comprehensive child protection policies and procedures. All staff have an excellent understanding of the known indicators of child abuse and Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) referral procedures. The child protection policy is openly shared with parents, which ensures that they are well informed of the action that would be taken in the event of a concern. Children have frequent opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe. They regularly practise the fire evacuation procedures to ensure that they are aware of the action that they should take in the event of a fire. Children learn about road safety as they use the 'stop, look and listen' technique when using role play road crossing equipment outdoors.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Throughout the nursery, children are happy and settled and have great fun during their time there. They have excellent opportunities to develop their independence skills, as children of all ages select what they would like to play with and how they would like to spend their time. Children are very interested and consistently involved in a wide range of imaginative and worthwhile play opportunities both indoors and outside, which promote all areas of their learning and development. Warm and trusting relationships with staff ensure that children feel secure in their care environment. Staff work directly with the children and consistently involve themselves and interact in their play. They shower praise and encouragement on the children, which develops their self-esteem. Children behave very well. They are willing to take turns and share with little or no prompting.

Play and learning opportunities for the younger children attending the setting are enhanced due to the exceptional implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff carefully plan and provide a wide range of activities which are appealing to the children and focus heavily on their individual needs and stages of learning and development. This ensures that all children are able to participate at a rate best suited to their needs. Younger children's assessment records are well detailed and link directly to planning to ensure that they are specific to individual stages of learning and development. Observations and assessments in line with the aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework are conducted on each child under the age of three-years-old every month. They are readily available for parents to view. Children throughout the nursery enjoy playing with natural materials, which provide sensory learning opportunities. They have regular access to the sensory theatre room within the nursery where they explore and experience sounds, lights and a range of playthings. Younger children benefit from the introduction of basic Makaton signs, which supports them in their early communication skills. They enjoy a wide range of art and craft activities and free play with a vast range of quality toys and resources.

#### **Nursery Education:**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan a wide range of activities which appeal to the

children. Long term and medium term plans systematically take into account all six areas of children's learning, incorporating themes which are meaningful to children. Weekly plans detail a full range of activities that cater for all six areas of learning, which are equally weighted. An activity is chosen each day as a focus activity, during which staff observe and assess the progress that children are making in their learning. Planning documents do not, however, differentiate how activities can be adapted to cater for children's varying abilities or individual children's learning needs. Observations of children's progress are made during focus activities and also spontaneously as they play. These observations are used to inform children's assessment records, which also include examples of children's work. They are well presented and are openly shared with parents, both at formal parents meetings or at any time that parents wish to view them. Staff are enthusiastic in their work with children and readily involve themselves and interact in children's play. Children enjoy their company and benefit as staff ask them questions and talk to them as they play, which helps to develop and clarify their thinking and understanding.

Children show a strong sense of belonging and develop good self-esteem. They enjoy looking at photographs of themselves and proudly point to their completed art work on display. Children are interested, keen to learn and actively and purposefully engaged in activities. They play co-operatively together, show concern for others, and are able to take turns and share tasks such as tidying up. They respond well to clear instructions given to them by staff and sit very well for circle time activities, absorbed and involved in conversations. Children have excellent opportunities to develop their independence skills. They access toileting facilities independently and confidently serve their own meals and snacks. Children are becoming very active communicators and listeners. All children are very interested in books and listen intently to stories, and join in with familiar action rhymes and songs. Children are able to recognise their names and the vast majority are able to write these with increasing confidence. All children are displaying increasing ability in using and recognising letter sounds. They use magnetic letters on boards to spell out words that they see around the room.

Children see numbers displayed in their base rooms, which aids their early number recognition skills and helps to develop their concept of number. There is a dedicated maths table with objects for sorting and matching, in addition to building and counting. They engage in familiar number rhymes and songs, such as 'Ten in the Bed'. During these they learn simple subtraction skills as they take one away and find the new total. Children have the opportunity to compare differences in size as they measure themselves and their peers to find their heights and display the results on a height chart. Children have many opportunities to sort, match and compare objects. They sort their playthings into different coloured groups and sort clothes into clothes that they would wear in different seasons. They also pack these clothes into a suitcase, using their problem solving skills to work out how to make the many objects fit.

Children show a keen interest in the weather as they complete the weather chart and calendar each day. They tend to their organic vegetable patch in their on-site allotment, planting seeds, tending to them and watering them each day. Children have the opportunity to taste their produce, as their vegetables are used for meals and snacks by the nursery cook. Children have excellent opportunities to access Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment. They use computers and simple programmes that often link to other areas of learning, such as colour and shape recognition skills. They demonstrate good mouse control and are becoming familiar with words associated with computer equipment, such as touch pad. Children explore and investigate a range of natural materials as they use peat, sand, water and dough both inside and outdoors. They use their senses as they explore the feel of items, such as cork, bark, gravel and wood, as they play outside. They explore ice and watch with interest as it begins to melt.

They make lolly pops and observe the changing effects of freezing the liquid that they have poured into the lolly pop containers.

Children talk about their pet guinea pig with affection. They proudly explain that they feed Smudge each day with carrots, apples, hay and specialist food. They also ensure that his water bottles are well stocked. This develops children's understanding of taking care of other living things. Children are able to take 'Bruin the Bear' on holiday with them. They complete a diary of enjoyed activities with their families and share these upon their return to the setting with their peers. A wall display of a map of the world shows where Bruin has been on holiday with the children. French lessons are provided each Thursday. A French teacher visits the setting and introduces the children to French artefacts and language.

Children use a wide range of creative materials. They paint and draw freely, often ascribing meanings to their work. They engage in complicated role play, pretending to be doctors and other familiar characters and use costumes and props to enhance their play. Children have great fun as they play together cooperatively. They giggle as they tickle their friends and actively seek each other to join in with their play. Children enjoy dancing along to music playing in their room. They have easy access to range of musical instruments and are enthusiastic as they join in with familiar rhymes and songs.

Children make very good progress in their physical development. They access the outdoor area each day and benefit from exploring the changing seasons throughout the year. They dress in their outdoor clothes in the poorer weather, splashing in puddles whilst wearing their wellies. In the warmer weather they enjoy the shade of the outdoor classroom and enjoy activities such as art and crafts whilst also benefiting from the fresh air. They use their senses as they explore a wide range of natural materials provided in the outdoor environment. This provides excellent sensory learning opportunities for children. In the garden, children use a range of sports equipment that support them well as they extend and develop their physical control. Indoors, children regularly access the activity studio where they are able to enjoy soft play with an excellent range of indoor equipment. Their fine motor skills develop as they handle construction toys, malleable materials, writing and other tools with increasing control and coordination.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children are valued and fully included in the life of the setting. They participate in a range of activities and events that promote their understanding of others within the group and the wider outside community. They regularly participate in events that help to develop their understanding of different cultures and festivals through a range of practical activities. The displays and equipment provided create a colourful, enriched environment where children can see an extensive range of images that promote positive images of diversity. There are excellent procedures in place to identify and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support is available for children who speak English as an additional language. Staff are proactive in obtaining information from parents about familiar words that children use at home in their home language. Strong partnerships between staff, parents and external agencies effectively promote children's well-being and help each child develop to their full potential.

Children are enthusiastic to play and learn, and are busy and well occupied during their time at the setting. This has a positive impact on their behaviour, which is exemplary. They are well settled, happy and eagerly participate in play with both the staff and their peers. They are very well supported by staff as they play and work together during games, developing an

understanding of agreed rules, fairness and sharing. Children benefit from the calm and supportive approach of staff, who take time to develop children's understanding of desirable behaviour through careful explanation and consistency. Warm praise and encouragement develops children's self-esteem. Children display good manners and thank staff as they provide them with their drink, snack or lunch. They make choices and decisions about their care and play activities which develops their self-confidence and self-esteem, and helps them develop a sense of belonging. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered

Excellent, open and honest relationships between parents and staff ensure that everyone involved in children's care are well informed of children's changing needs. Daily verbal exchanges of information occur at the start and end of each day and staff are always available and eager to talk to parents. Parents of the younger children attending the nursery also receive a written account of their children's day, including information about activities that they have enjoyed and their individual daily routines. Parents are provided with a well written and attractively presented prospectus that details the aims and services of the provision, in addition to information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents have easy access to the setting's operational plan and range of policies and procedures. This ensures that they are well informed about how the care of their children is organised. A parent's concierge service is provided within the nursery. This includes services such as an on-site essentials shop, a dry cleaning and laundry service and postal and parcel delivery services. The setting is able to organise and offer children's birthday parties on-site in the activity studio within the setting, providing themed parties, catering and staff supervision. A qualified hairdresser visits the nursery each month for parents wishing to access this service for their children.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive excellent information about the setting and how the planning for nursery education is organised. Planned activities, events and daily play opportunities are displayed on notice boards for parent's attention, to ensure that they are well informed about the play and learning opportunities provided to their children. They receive well written and attractively presented information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning. They receive regular newsletters and benefit from daily discussions with friendly and approachable staff about the care and progress of their child. A flexible induction programme ensures that parents are welcome to stay with their children as they settle into their new care and learning environment. Observation and assessment records are readily available for parents to view at any time and are more formally shared at parent's evenings held throughout the year. Parents are always welcome to come in and play with their children or share any particular skills that they may have. Parent's views and wishes are sought through ongoing discussion and through the use of a suggestions box. Parents are provided with information at the start of each theme, which provides them with ideas about how they can help to support their children's learning from home. A graduation event is also held at the end of each school year. Children dress up in their graduation gown and cap and are awarded certificates of achievement as their parents watch.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced due to the good organisation of the setting. They benefit from a committed, enthusiastic and highly motivated staff team, who work together very well and support children to the highest level in their play and learning. They actively engage in children's play, asking them questions to encourage their thinking and implementing new and enjoyable ideas. Throughout the nursery, space and resources are very well-organised and children benefit

from this. They have easy access to their playthings and can freely and easily move between the available play space. Robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are in place, ensuring that children are cared for by suitable and well informed members of staff. An effective key worker system is in operation throughout the nursery and as a result, children have strong relationships with familiar and trusted members of staff.

All of the required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place, carefully stored and well-organised. The vast majority are maintained to an exceptional standard, with the exception of the accident record which has a few omissions in written acknowledgments from parents. They are frequently reviewed and are only accessed by staff to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. The range of policies and procedures work very well in practice and are frequently reviewed to ensure that they continue to reflect current good practice and professional advice. They are fully understood by staff and are openly shared with parents to ensure that they are aware of the organisation of the setting. Children's observation and assessment records are well detailed and are continuously updated to ensure that a true picture of children's progress is maintained.

The leadership and management is good. The leadership of the setting is of high quality. The leaders are passionate about their work and act as positive role models to both children and staff. They are actively involved in working within the nursery and alongside staff to carefully monitor their progress. Yearly staff appraisals are undertaken and are offered more frequently for newer members of the team. This ensures that their progress is carefully monitored and also identifies training needs. All staff have excellent opportunities to undertake both short courses and more formal studies. This ensures that staff are able to personally develop and also ensures that children are cared for by well informed and highly trained practitioners. Well detailed evaluation systems are in place for monitoring the strengths of the setting and areas for further improvement. The delivery of planned activities and events are evaluated to ensure that children's learning and progress needs are monitored. In addition, observations and assessments of children's progress ensure that they make good progress in all areas of their learning. Staff work together as a strong and committed team. Staff meetings are frequently held and daily liaisons between staff ensures that effective communication systems are in place. All children are supported appropriately to achieve their full potential. Staff know their starting points and work in partnership with parents and carers to support their progress. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **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 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 all entries in the accident book are signed in acknowledgement by parents

#### **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):

- develop the planning system to ensure that differentiation is identified for different groups of children to ensure that children's varying abilities and individual learning needs are catered for.

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)