

First Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY216311
Inspection date	08 May 2007
Inspector	Maralyn Chiverton
Setting Address	Caduceus House, Upper Warrengate, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF1 4JZ
Telephone number	01924 298290
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Registered person	Wakefield & District Hospitals Contributory Scheme
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Steps Day Nursery is privately funded and has been registered since 1994 to care for no more than 37 children aged from birth to five years at any one time. It is located in a purpose built building, close to Wakefield town centre.

The nursery provides care for children on the ground floor and children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The provision serves families from a wide area and parents of children who work in and around the town centre.

The nursery is open between 08.00 to 18.00 hours, Monday to Friday all year round. It is closed on bank holidays. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language.

There are 14 members of staff who work with the children, all of whom have a recognised childcare and education qualification.

The nursery receives support from the local authority. It achieved a recognised quality assurance kite mark in 2005.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean and well maintained environment. Staff members are very proactive in promoting good health and hygiene practices which allows children to thrive and be healthy. Children have a good understanding of the reasons for personal hygiene. They are independent in their personal care and know to wash their hands to keep them safe from germs. Children are provided with nutritious meals and snacks. These include fresh fruit and vegetables, a choice of cereals, chicken, turkey and pasta. Their understanding of a healthy lifestyle is well promoted through visits to a local dentist and planned topics, such as good food and not so good food. Children are well protected from infection through an effective sick child policy which includes exclusion periods for conjunctivitis and infectious diseases. Children develop a very positive attitude to physical exercise. They have regular access to a very good outdoor area which includes stepping stones, balancing beams and climbing frame. The setting has received a gold award for healthy eating.

Babies and young children under two years of age receive very good attention and support. This promotes and fosters well their emotional well-being. Mealtimes are a sociable occasion and children are encouraged to independently feed themselves. Children are made to feel special through a very effective key worker system, as well as established shared understandings between parents and carers. Younger children freely explore their own environment with confidence and independence, whilst babies learn to gain good control of their bodies.

Children in receipt of nursery education funding show good awareness of themselves and others. They move with good control and coordination and test their skills of climbing and balance through the provision of an excellent well resourced outdoor play area which encourages vigorous play. Children handle a range of small and large equipment with good control and competence. They display a very good understanding of the changes to their bodies after exercise. For example they talk about feeling wobbly, dizzy and their hearts beating faster.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe in a warm, very welcoming and secure environment which is monitored outside by close circuit television. All staff members are vigilant and promote children's understanding of personal safety through reiteration and discussion. Effective procedures for the arrival and collection of children and recording of visitors ensures no access to unauthorised persons. Children are provided with a wide range of toys, equipment and resources which are safe, suitable and purposeful. Any in need of replacement are purchased through a reputable company which complies with BS EN standards. Effective deployment of space, resources and staff ensures all areas are well supervised and allows children to move with freedom, safety and independence.

Children benefit from the high priority given to their safety through key worker's comprehensive understanding and implementation of detailed, well written policies and procedures including child protection. For example, all staff members have attended child protection training, and fire evacuation procedures. However, a list of designated workers who support the staff in the baby room is not included in the fire evacuation information.

Babies and young children under two years of age are provided with good opportunities to make safe choices. They are beginning to understand the need for a balance between freedom and safe limits through the implementation of clear, consistent boundaries. Shared information communicated on a daily basis between parents and key workers ensures the children are kept safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are provided with a wide range of stimulating resources and planned activities. These include the use of story bags to stimulate imagination, designing safety posters, visits to people who help us and the planting of vegetables and bedding plants. They play well together and individually. Children show very good interest and involvement in what they do. They are constantly supported through very effective interaction with all staff members. This enhances all aspects of children's play and promotes well their self-confidence and self-assurance. Children's attainment on entry to the setting are identified through the completion of an 'All about me book' which includes information about a favourite toy, food, recognition of numbers, colours and shapes. The information is used to build upon what children already know and further extend their learning.

Babies and children under two years of age receive lots of encouragement to respond to their environment in a creative way through painting and drawing. They are well supported by staff who provide lots of opportunities for children to be skilful communicators through participating in action rhymes and constant interaction. However, a limited supply of natural and interesting materials with regard to heuristic play restricts children from further developing their curiosity and becoming more competent learners in matching, sorting, classifying and categorising.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teaching is rooted in innovative teaching methods and a full understanding of how children learn and progress, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the Foundation Stage. This allows children to make excellent progress in all six areas of learning. Staff members consistently inspire and challenge children who are provided with activities and experiences which are exceptionally well matched to their needs and interests. Teaching highly motivates children so they are engrossed in their activities and make excellent progress. Assessment is rigorous and the information gained from snapshot as well as focused observations is used very effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning.

Children are exceptionally confident, independent learners, able to take turns and share. They are able to sit attentively and listen to others. Children work exceedingly well in groups and individually. A consistent approach to developing writing, reading and the linking of sounds and letters ensures children are able to write and recognise their names and have an excellent understanding of linking sounds to letters. Children are given lots of opportunities to explore a wide range of materials and have excellent use of the local environment as a learning resource. They are able to talk about past and present, and describe and express feelings about a significant event. Children's understanding of the wider world and diversity is well promoted through a wealth of resources, planned activities such as growing vegetables, and celebrating other festivals. They are offered lots of opportunities to develop their imagination, to explore sounds and use their senses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children play a full and extensive role in the setting. All staff place a high regard on children's individuality and have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of all children in their care. Children are provided with an environment which is rich in promoting diversity through a wealth of excellent resources, such as books depicting other children's religions, extremely positive attitude of all staff members and celebration of other festivals. Utmost priority is given to promoting children's understanding of their needs and those of others. For example, children take turns to care for two empathy dolls, they take them to the toilet and sit them down for lunch and snack time. Children display a very caring attitude towards each other. They share resources and are made to feel very special through the calm, positive and loving approach of all staff members.

Children are well behaved and are encouraged to actively contribute in taking personal responsibility for their actions. They are learning to use empowerment and handle situations by themselves with support from staff members. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive excellent care through two experienced and skilled coordinators who regularly attend external support groups. Children who do not have English as their first language are supported well. For example, key workers work closely with parents and learn appropriate words for everyday routines such as lunch time and use of the toilet. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Babies and younger children are provided with a very warm and caring environment. Constant, effective interaction allows children to feel valued and important. They are celebrated as individuals and their personal routines well catered for through an effective key worker system. This allows children to feel acknowledged, self-assured and to develop a sense of belonging.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are provided with quality information about the educational programme through open evenings and written information. They are exceptionally well informed about their child's progress and achievements. For example, they complete a monthly evaluation sheet and each month they are encouraged to take their child's progress file home and to add any comments they may wish to make. This gives parents an excellent opportunity to share their views about their child's learning and to be involved in a meaningful way. Parents are very supportive of the nursery and they are respected as their child's first educator. Their views and wishes are always taken into account and acted upon. This allows parents to feel they are making a positive contribution.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is extremely well organised and space is maximised to ensure that children have a warm, secure and very stimulating environment, according to their needs. Highly qualified staff know their roles and responsibilities and effectively implement routines that provide children with a wide range of activities and experiences. The nursery has a child-centred ethos which allows children to be self-confident and self-assured. Policies and procedures are of a very high standard. All documentation necessary for the efficient and safe management of the provision and the welfare, care and learning of children is maintained effectively. Staff take part in a continuous programme of training and self-development, ensuring that children receive optimum care and attention.

The leadership and management of the nursery are outstanding. This has a very positive impact on children's progress. The manager and all staff members are constantly striving for perfection. They have a clear vision for the future which steers the work of the setting and ensures a shared purpose and collaborative approach to children's care and education based on the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. The vision is to introduce languages and further develop the creative area in the under two's room. Training is seen as an essential part in promoting staff's knowledge and understanding of early years issues and each staff member is given five days training a year. The effectiveness of the nursery education programme is monitored and evaluated through feedback from parent questionnaires, team meetings and the local authority. The setting recognises that self-evaluation is the key to continuous improvement. Strengths and weaknesses are identified as well as areas for improvement. Clear, realistic targets are set which are then evaluated on the impact of children's well-being and learning through the actions taken. The setting is fully committed to promoting an inclusive environment where every child matters.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection recommendations were in place to improve children's health through ensuring children are able to access drinking water on a regular basis, as well as ensuring the personal hygiene procedures to include nappy changing were reviewed.

Since the last care inspection the setting has taken very positive steps to improve children's welfare and safety. Children have access to a water fountain and the nappy changing procedure has been reviewed and further improved. For example, all staff members use disposable gloves and aprons when changing children.

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 they can see 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 fire evacuation procedure for the baby room to ensure the extra designated persons who support the baby room staff are included
- develop further the heuristic play to provide more opportunities for babies and young children to develop their natural curiosity and become more competent learners in matching, sorting, classifying and categorising.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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