

First Footsteps Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY255561
Inspection date	19 July 2007
Inspector	Sheila May Price
Setting Address	Fairwinds, Broad Lane, Norris Green, Liverpool, Merseyside, L11 1AD
Telephone number	0151 256 8485
E-mail	
Registered person	First Footsteps Ltd
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Footsteps at Fairwinds is run by an organisation that operates a number of registered childcare provisions in the north west. This setting is a day nursery offering full day care for children aged from birth to five years and is located in the Norris Green district of Liverpool.

The nursery operates from 7.30 to 18.00 Monday to Friday all year round except for bank holidays. Children are cared for in three age related groups in a number of rooms on the ground and first floor of the building. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. The provision is registered to care for a maximum of 40 children at any one time.

There are currently 58 children on roll of whom 11 receive nursery education funding. Children attend for whom English is their second language. There are 16 childcare staff of whom all but two have relevant childcare qualifications. The nursery is supported by a teacher from the local authority early years team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children follow healthy routines and participate in a good range of activities that support their physical and emotional development. For example, key staff for babies and toddlers obtain good information from parents about children's eating and sleeping routines in order to help children settle in comfortably. This is monitored with a daily shared written record. Early learners make good use of outdoor facilities to get plenty of fresh air, and they exercise well on wheeled toys. The programme of physical activities for all children takes good account of children's individual capabilities so that there are challenges at each step of the way. Preschool children gain especially good coordination using tools, such as tongs to pick up food at meal times.

The staff follow good hygiene practices and adhere well to a clearly written and understood medication, emergency and sickness policy. This contributes well to children's good health. All staff are qualified to administer first aid, and the location of first aid boxes is clearly signposted for swift access. Parents are given leaflets about contagious illnesses and a summary of the nursery sickness and medication policy, so that they are able to contribute to minimising the spread of infection. Children learn why they must wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet and follow these routines rigorously.

The nursery carries out a shared healthy eating policy involving all concerned with the children's welfare. This ensures that children are well nourished and begin to appreciate that what they eat and drink affects their bodies and their good health. The cook uses good knowledge of nutrition to create well balanced and varied menus that take account of children's preferences and individual needs. Children learn about healthy choices by collecting coloured stickers for each category of food they eat during the day and parents can also see what they need to give at home for a balance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The entrance area and care rooms are colourfully decorated and display is used extensively to create a warm welcome for children and parents. Children are eager to enter their rooms, where there is a good range of safely maintained equipment suited to their differing ages and capabilities. They confidently select resources that are easily accessible to them in low level storage systems, or set out for them on the tables. Children use outdoor facilities well, but access to the grassed area outside is restricted because this is not kept consistently well maintained throughout the year.

The staff keep children well supervised and set consistent parameters within which children learn to take responsibility for their own safety and that of others. Older children set out and use knives safely on their own at meal times and younger children learn to move slowly and safely as they go up and down the steps daily to use the outdoor play area. Children's safety is assured through detailed risk assessments and daily checks carried out by the well trained staff.

There are good security systems keeping children protected. All staff have attended recent safeguarding training including whistle blowing procedures so that they are confident in identifying signs and symptoms of abuse and know what to do if they have a concern about a

child. Notices are displayed to remind parents of safeguarding policies so that they can share in the contribution to children's safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled at the nursery due to the confidence with which the staff cater for their needs and make them welcome. Staff use a key worker system to make observations that help to monitor how children are responding to different learning experiences. This information is mostly used well to inform planning.

Babies happily explore their environment with very competent staff, who encourage them to listen to and make a range of sounds, feel different textures, handle objects of varied shapes and sizes, and develop their physical strength and coordination. Toddlers aged over one follow a good programme of activities based on observations of their interests and capabilities. These encourage them to use their creativity and imagination and develop communication skills. For example they play with a range of objects from a heuristic play basket using all their senses to investigate their properties. They explore colour and paint imaginatively, and are supported well by staff to express what they see, hear and feel.

Early learners aged from two to three enthusiastically join in well organised group activities that are linked to specific aspects of development taken from the 'Birth to three matters' framework. For example, children have great fun making patterns in the shaving foam and noticing the shapes they have made. They watch and talk about the changes that happen as they mix together ingredients for playdough. Children enjoy playing with the good selection of resources that are set out into different areas of activity supporting all areas of development.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards early learning goals. Planning is thoroughly organised and covers a balance of child and adult led activities, good organisation of resources, identified roles for staff, clearly stated intended learning outcomes, and some variation for different capabilities. The six areas of learning are fully covered through activities linked to topics that are well thought out and relevant to children's experiences and interests. Staff evaluate what children have learned through their observations and record their progress towards early learning goals. These records, however, are not referred to in a systematic way to plan the next steps for children's individual learning, so some learning potential is lost.

Children enjoy sharing their experiences with staff who listen to them well and encourage them to talk with appropriate questions as they play in the sand tray. They describe how the sand felt 'squidgy' between their toes when they were on the beach, using some expressive vocabulary. When children are playing with toy animals they recall seeing a giraffe at the zoo and when asked about its size reach up high with their arms to show how tall. They draw the giraffe's long neck on paper to show the staff what they mean. Not all staff are aware of opportunities where they can challenge children to think and solve problems.

Children using the veterinary surgery in the role play area show caring attitudes and explain how they care for their pets at home. They are proud of the pictures they have painted of their pets. They contribute ideas for creating an environment for the dinosaur models. When making a construction with pieces of wood they learn by trial and error how different sizes and shapes

can be supported and balanced. Children use the computer with confidence, learning how to handle technical equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Inclusion is promoted well at the nursery. Children gain positive attitudes towards diversity through opportunities given for them to discuss similarities and differences during topics. Where children's first language is not English, their home language is displayed on posters, labels and in books to make them feel welcome. The coordinator for disabilities and learning difficulties has a good understanding of how to adapt the provision to meet children's individual needs and give support to staff.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children follow the good example set by the helpful and friendly staff in learning social skills such as taking turns and caring for their environment, to make a positive contribution. The staff carry out effective behaviour plans in partnership with parents to develop the good behaviour of those children with behaviour difficulties. Children learn respect for the cultures and traditions of others as they take part in activities linked to a number of different festivals.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Although there are good systems for sharing information with parents about the operational plan and the welfare of their children, there are limitations in the arrangements for discussing the progress of funded children towards early learning goals and involving parents in their learning. For example, there are no regularly planned meetings to share children's records of progress with their parents. Parents are also not invited enough to share information with staff about what children can do at home that would help in their assessments. The nursery has a good system for encouraging parents to make comments about the service and for dealing with complaints. This results in problems being satisfactorily resolved and good relationships maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are thorough systems for ensuring that those who come into regular contact with children are suitable to do so and for supervising visitors and trainees. This ensures children are safeguarded well. The high percentage of qualified and experienced staff put their expertise to good effect in the planning of stimulating activities. Procedures are followed diligently for children's good health. Records are well maintained for children's safety and protection.

Leadership and management is good. The manager and room leaders are well qualified and are given good support by the knowledgeable nursery coordinator. There is a very good induction procedure to ensure new staff understand policies, and meetings to ensure established staff keep up to date with changes. Staff continually update their knowledge through regular training opportunities linked to their appraisal. This helps them learn to be reflective in their practice.

The providers take account of advice given by the local authority and other agencies to improve the service. There is, however, no system yet in place for reviewing if outcome targets for children are being met, so that improvement can be measured more effectively. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection of nursery education. There were two actions and one recommendation arising from the last childcare inspection. The actions related to the temperature of the baby changing room and the procedures within the child protection policy. The recommendation related to how well staff were being deployed.

The actions have both been met. Facilities for babies have been improved with the introduction of a heater to bring the room temperature up to the required level for their comfort and safety. The safeguarding children policy has been significantly revised following updated training on whistle blowing procedures. This means that children are better protected should there be a concern or an allegation were made against a member of staff.

Staff are now deploying themselves more effectively through balancing the timetable so that there is more time for child led activity and have organised the resources so that they are more easily accessible to children. As a result children are having more choices and gaining more independence.

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 complaint 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):

- improve maintenance so that children can always make full use of all outdoor areas.

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):

- further develop systems for planning next steps and reviewing if outcome targets are being met for individual children (also applies to childcare)
- further develop methods for involving parents in contributing to children's learning and development, and sharing records of progress.

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