

# Sure Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY268451
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 January 2008
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<b>Registered person</b>	Sure Start
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Crèche

## 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?

Sure Steps Nursery is run by the local authority. It opened in 2004 and operates from four rooms in a multi-agency purpose built building. It is situated in the Limeside area of Oldham. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children have access to an enclosed play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from eight months to under four years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. A children's centre teacher is also employed for two and a half days a week.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is fostered well through the effective procedures that staff follow in minimising the spread of infection. The environment is kept clean, tables are washed with anti-bacterial spray and toys are routinely cleaned. The kitchen is maintained to a high level of cleanliness and effective routines followed by the cook ensure that the risk of cross contamination of food is minimised. Children develop a good understanding of their personal care needs as staff promote consistent and regular routines, such as hand washing before eating, after visiting the bathroom and after messy activities. For example, babies and young children are encouraged to wash their own faces after lunch with individual face cloths. Staff promote children's understanding of keeping their bodies healthy through discussions about wearing appropriate clothing for cold and wet weather and visits from the oral health unit promote their understanding about the care of their teeth. Good nappy changing procedures ensure that children's individual comfort needs are met and the risk of cross infection is minimised. However, this is not as effective for the toddlers as the area allows restricted movement and older children cannot access the toilet cubicles when needed. Procedures to care for children in the case of accidents, illness or the administration of medication are good. There is a wealth of written information available for parents, such as exclusion policies and 12 of the staff have appropriate first aid qualifications which further promote children's care and welfare.

Staff prioritise the emotional well-being of babies and children by allowing them to settle in at their own pace and follow their home routines for eating and sleeping. This ensures consistency of care and that children are happy and settle well. Soft lighting and quiet music plays which enables children to settle easily at sleep time and their shoes are removed which enables them to stretch and relax in comfort.

Children are well nourished through the provision of varied and well balanced menus. Meals and snacks are planned on a four-week menu and are prepared on the premises using mainly fresh ingredients. Children develop their independence and self-esteem at meal times by helping to set the tables or give the place mats out. For example, toddlers receive a 'Beanbag cheer' when they have successfully completed the task. Children are actively involved in a good range activities which develop their knowledge and understanding of healthy foods. For example, they are introduced to new and unusual fruits and vegetables which are displayed in bowls in the playrooms and on the table at lunchtime. They explore them through their senses, tasting and touching them and describing how they feel or use them in fruit and vegetable printing.

Children are eager to enjoy fresh air and exercise every day in the well-planned and interesting outdoor play environment. They actively choose to spend the majority of their time outdoors and enjoy playing in the sand, digging in the garden, balancing on the stage or walking up the ramp. An excellent range of indoor activities, such as dance and music and movement or exploring the balloon quilt contribute to keeping children healthy and fit and help them develop control of their bodies.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a learning environment where they are able to move around safely and confidently. The play areas are welcoming and child-centred with attractive displays of

children's art work and photographs of their play, and these are also in the corridor for parents to view. Children use an excellent range of good quality toys and equipment which are maintained to a high standard of hygiene and safety. These are stored at low-level in baskets labelled with photographs or at floor level to enable children independent access. Tables and chairs are at different heights to meet the different needs of the ages of the children being cared for and a large comfy chair enables staff in the baby room to provide a homely environment for children.

Children's safety is given high priority by staff completing daily visual checks of the rooms and the outside area. Good consideration is given to security. The nursery entrance is protected with a security keypad and high ratios of adults to children and well deployed staff ensure children and babies are always well supervised. There are appropriate maintenance checks for fire safety as the fire alarm is tested weekly. However, fire evacuation drills are only practised twice a year which means that children do not become familiar with the emergency procedures. Children learn to keep themselves safe through their discussions with the staff, such as road safety. They are given consistent reminders by staff and explanations, such as not climbing on the furniture or they may fall and picture cards remind them to use scissors safely.

Children are very well protected because staff and the management team are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. All staff attended safeguarding children training recently and the procedures to follow are clearly displayed in each of the children's rooms and on the parents noticeboard. In addition, staff photographs are displayed in the entrance so that they can easily be identified by parents.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the setting and separate from their carers with confidence. Individual rooms are generally well-organised to promote children's play and learning, however, children aged over two are cared for in the same room as the pre-school children. As a result, older children cannot always follow their own ideas and interests due to consideration of safety issues for younger children and space is limited. The children of all ages benefit from an excellent range of indoor and outdoor play experiences which foster their all-round development. Play activities are provided by staff with imagination and creativity to make them interesting and stimulating for children. For example, ice cubes of different sizes and instant snow are placed in a tray for preschool children to touch and watch the changes as the ice melts, while babies explore the sounds and smells of grains of rice and essential oils wrapped in material. Children are motivated as they engage in their self chosen activities and take great pleasure in exploring the outdoor environment. Babies and young children are free to explore their surroundings and a range of natural materials. They develop their senses through exploring different treasure baskets and listening to a variety music as they eat their lunch or go to sleep.

The staff are caring and sensitive in their daily activities with the children, in particular towards the very young children and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. They spend time playing with the children, interacting well and creating opportunities for children to have fun and enjoy the time they spend at the nursery. Staff have regard to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use it well to plan interesting activities. They observe children's play and focused activities are evaluated but these do not always show the links to the next steps in individual children's learning. All children in the setting have comprehensive learning journals containing written observations, examples of their work and photographs of their play which are linked

to either the aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework or to the stepping stones within the six areas of learning.

## **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a strong knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and, as a result, plan a wide range of stimulating play experiences, which ensure a firm foundation for learning. Staff observe children very well, they know what their starting points are and their abilities. However, although evaluation of planned activities are evident, these are not always completed and the planning for the next steps in children's individual learning is not always clearly recorded or identified. This means that the observation and assessment systems are not fully secure.

Children are very confident in the nursery environment. They initiate their own play and independently access a wide range of resources both indoors and outdoors. As a result, they often concentrate on their self chosen activity for long periods, such as exploring the ice or completing their collage pictures. They benefit greatly from the good relationships they have formed with adults and initiate interactions with other people with confidence.

Children learn that print carries meaning as they listen to stories or choose a book from the good selection available to them. They have regular visits to the library to choose books and enjoy the story time sessions. They are developing good hand and eye coordination and enjoy spontaneous mark making through the many activities available to them to practise this skill, such as mark making on large sheets of paper indoors or the blackboards in the outdoor area. They have some opportunities to help play an active part in the setting as they help set the tables or give the place mats out at lunchtime. They develop an awareness of mathematical concepts, such as full and empty as they play in the water or sand and develop an understanding of numbers when they join in songs and rhymes. They are able to use positional language when describing where things are, such as over and under.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to explore the outdoor environment on a daily basis, such as exploring rain and snow and digging in the garden. Staff ensure that children are warmly dressed and have their Wellington boots on before they go outside. They have many opportunities to explore and investigate different and interesting textures, such as ice cubes and instant snow. They are becoming familiar with technology as they use computers and follow simple programs. They use their imaginations well in their play as they talk to their parents on a mobile phone and show surprise and delight when parents arrive to collect them, saying 'Oh I was just talking to you'. They have good opportunities to design and build selecting their own tools and resources from the well-stocked construction area. Children use a range of tools to develop dexterity, such as paint brushes, scissors, glue spreaders, rolling pins and cutters. Interesting sensory and creative opportunities enable children to experiment and explore shape, colour and texture in a variety of media as they freely express themselves.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a range of opportunities which help them learn about the wider community. For example, there are dolls, books and play figures available which reflect diversity. As a result, children learn about differences in society and develop an awareness of society as a whole. The setting has a positive attitude towards the inclusion of all children. Staff work in very close partnership with parents and other professionals effectively to ensure that individual education

plans are successfully implemented. Key staff are appropriately trained and confident in enabling children to participate in daily activities. They are sensitive and caring to all children and those with learning difficulties or disabilities particularly form very close bonds with their key worker.

Children behave well. They learn right from wrong by being given clear messages through staff being positive role models. Staff promote children's behaviour through emphasising and rewarding positive behaviour. For example, through the 'Bean bag cheer'. Children or staff throw a bean bag in the air and children and staff praise them for their achievement. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered well.

Partnership with parents is good. There are effective procedures in place to keep parents informed of their children's progress, such as a noticeboard, newsletters and good daily verbal communication. A strong settling in period where children attend for short visits and the completion of a detailed profile of children's daily routines, likes, dislikes, comforters and other family members ensure that children's individual needs are effectively met. Children's individual learning journals are available for them to view at any time and meetings for parents are held twice a year to formally share children's progress. Children benefit from the high quality relationships that the staff have developed with parents which promotes consistency of care.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are well protected through robust recruitment and vetting procedures being in place. The majority of the staff team are qualified to National Vocational Level 3 or equivalent and display a good knowledge and understanding of child development. The staff work effectively as a team to ensure that adult child ratios are maintained at all times to support children's play extremely well and to keep them safe. Staff are well supported by management and the organisation to promote their professional development through attending further training as individuals with the early years team. The organisation also plans six days a year for the staff to train as a whole team. Children's development is appropriately monitored through using a key worker system and staff organise the environment well to promote children's learning and play.

All the documentation required by the National Standards is in place, well-organised and stored to maintain confidentiality. There is a wealth of written information available for parents which is clearly displayed on the noticeboard in the entrance hall. Policies and procedures are of a high standard and reviewed annually which fully ensures the safety, care and welfare of children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff work well together because there are effective systems for communication, such as monthly team meetings, individual support sessions once a month and annual appraisals. In addition, the setting benefits from a children's centre teacher being on-site. Staff share a clear vision to deliver high standards of care and education for all children. As a result, a detailed action plan is in place with target dates set, and shows the progress the staff and setting have made in the last six months, such as the development of the outdoor environment. Plans also show how they plan to progress the development of the care and education for the next six months. Managers value their staff and provide a clear sense of purpose and direction resulting in a motivated staff team which enhances the good quality of care and education. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to provide a visitor's book and review and update the information booklet for parents. These have both been completed and have improved the safety of children and the quality of information available to parents.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. In April 2005, concerns were received in relation to National Standards 7: Health and Hygiene and 12: Working in partnership with parents. A child care inspector visited to investigate the concerns in April 2005 and three actions were raised in relation to National Standards 6: Safety and 7: Health and Hygiene. A response to these actions was received by Ofsted in July 2005, confirming that these had been completed. The provider remained qualified for registration.

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):

- improve changing facilities for older children to ensure their comfort and privacy
- ensure fire evacuation drills are practised regularly.

#### **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):

- continue to develop the observation and assessment systems to ensure that children's individual next steps in learning are clearly identified (also applies to care)
- review the organisation of the preschool room to ensure that all children are able to be suitably challenged and their individual learning needs met. (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)