

Footsteps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY273087
Inspection date	17 July 2007
Inspector	Carys Millican
Setting Address	Minto Centre, Nilsson Drive, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 5BD
Telephone number	01900 872 011
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Registered person	Westfield Neighbourhood Nursery
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?

Footsteps Nursery is run by a management committee. It opened in August 2004 and operates from a purpose-built building within the Minto Centre, a community centre adjacent to Westfield Primary School. It is situated on the Westfield housing estate on the outskirts of Workington. A maximum of 56 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00. It is open all year apart from bank holidays, the days between Christmas and New Year and for several training days each year. All children share access to a number of secured enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 114 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education. The nursery provides wrap around care for the school nursery based at the adjacent school. Children attend from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 staff. All of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by staff who have a secure knowledge of the setting's health and hygiene policy and procedures. Consistent hygiene practices are followed by staff. The food preparation areas and tables are wiped by staff members before and after children eat their meals. The kitchen preparation area is well maintained and staff follow appropriate environmental health procedures. Children's hygiene practices are fully promoted. They confidently wash and dry hands before eating, after toileting and after completing activities, such as gluing and painting. Children enthusiastically explain that they 'must wash hands to keep them clean or germs will make me poorly'. Children's growing independence is aided by the provision of small, child sized toilets and sinks. They access these areas easily and liquid soap and paper towel dispensers are positioned at their height. Children learn the importance of keeping areas safe and clean, and dispose of used paper towels in the waste bin. Children learn the importance of dental hygiene. They proudly brush their teeth after lunchtime using their own toothbrush. These are stored individually in a suitable container and taken home by children. Nappy changing procedures are meticulously followed. Protective clothing is worn by staff and changing mats are wiped down before and after each individual nappy change. Children's welfare and the protection of other children are fully considered by staff following the sick child policy. Children's welfare is promoted as the required documentation is maintained and parental permission is in place.

Children benefit from the healthy eating programme developed in the nursery. Children learn about healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet. A rolling snack programme is encouraged in the morning session. Children access a choice of drinks and a selection of healthy snack options throughout the session. They thoroughly enjoy the freshly cooked healthy meals prepared for them. Children benefit from the social occasion created at meal times when children sit together in small groups with staff members. Children's independence and self-help skills are fully encouraged. Older children pour their own drinks and help themselves to the selection of fruit available. Babies sit comfortably in low chairs; their growing independence encouraged as they attempt to feed themselves. Babies benefit from the comfort of being held when bottle feeding. Children's needs are met by staff following their dietary needs, routines and parental wishes closely. Details of allergies are confidentially recorded. All children are provided with suitable containers of fresh water which is accessible to them at all times.

Children benefit from a range of physical activities which contribute to their good health and all round development. Plans show how physical play is encouraged within daily outdoor activities, weather permitting. Children access a number of enclosed play areas. Staff encourage the use of these outdoor play areas and support children well in activities. Children enthusiastically pedal their tricycles around the safety surfacing, practising their gross motor skills. They develop a sense of space as they run around. Children play ball games as they throw and catch the different textured balls. They play parachute games and complete obstacle courses. Indoors, children enjoy music and movement in an adjoining hall. Children benefit from visits to local attractions, such as aquariums, animal farms and castles. Children rest according to their needs. They look at books and listen to stories in their 'comfort zones'. Babies sleep in the sleep room or rest on cushions in the sensory area looking at the 'bubble lamp' and fibre optic lights.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure when playing indoors and outside. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised by staff using detailed risk assessments and completing visual checks in each playroom. Children access a safe indoor environment and cannot leave the premises unsupervised. Inner doors are securely closed and key pads are used on all exterior doors. Television recording equipment is used to monitor the perimeter gate outside which can only be opened by a staff member indoors. Socket covers are placed in all electrical points and any trailing wires are positioned out of sight. The play areas are fully enclosed and staff supervise the children's play at all times. Children are protected by the health and safety practices and procedures that staff follow to help prevent accidents. Staff check play equipment for loose or broken parts and areas are checked before children access them. Children learn about how to keep themselves safe. They confidently talk to staff about wearing safety helmets when riding bikes so they do not hurt their heads if they fall off. Children benefit from visits from 'people who help us' such as the local fire fighters. These experiences are beneficial in raising children's awareness of personal safety. Fire fighting equipment is in place and all fire doors are unobstructed. The fire evacuation procedure is practised by children and staff regularly. Children are kept safe on outings as adult-child ratios are maintained, permission is obtained from parents and documentation is in place.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. The rooms used by the children are spacious and well maintained. Children confidently move around their surroundings and help themselves to a range of safe, suitable and age-appropriate resources that are accessible to them. Children feel a sense of belonging. Their art and craft work is creatively displayed throughout each playroom and each child has their own named coat peg. Children's health and safety is maintained by staff checking equipment before use and regularly cleaning toys and resources. Babies are monitored closely when sleeping and bedding is changed after each use.

Children are protected by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection policies and procedures. Children's safety and well-being is enhanced by the staff's commitment to undertaking additional training to update their knowledge of child protection issues. The child protection statement is in place and clearly explains the procedures to follow, however, the policy requires updating with changes in recent legislation. Children's general safety and welfare is met by the documentation maintained by the nursery. Children's individual record forms contain a wealth of information including details of named persons allowed to collect them including passwords. The hours of attendance of visitors, staff and children are meticulously recorded in each room of the nursery.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the nursery. They are extremely happy and contented. They settle easily into the warm and welcoming atmosphere created by experienced practitioners. Children are enthusiastic and self-assured in their play as they help themselves to the numerous sensory activities and natural resources provided. Children progress and achieve well. Staff are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their daily practice and well-documented planning. Children who are new to the nursery settle easily. Staff are sensitive towards children's individual needs. Transition and settling in periods allow children to move into the new rooms and older age groups when they are ready. Children are eager to participate. The youngest children make

excellent progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships developed between key workers and children increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. High quality adult-child interactions are extremely supportive of early communication skills. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences. Babies enjoy relaxing in the sensory area surrounded by the colourful fibre optic lights, mirrors and 'bubbling light tubes'. Older children prepare salad sandwiches using the tomatoes grown from their very own tomato plant. These activities and resources support their development and learning and are closely linked with the planning in place, which is flexible and follows children's interests.

Children enjoy the small-group activities and their attention is fully maintained. Young children play with the play dough. They roll out the pink dough and use a number of cutters to make different shapes. Children make sound relationships with adults and other children. They learn to share and take turns, for example, when making three dimensional models. Children begin to consider the needs of others as they welcome new children into the group. Children's enjoyment is supported by experienced staff who create learning opportunities from spontaneous events. For example, a helicopter is spotted in the sky by the children, who enthusiastically rush indoors and put on the 'ground control' and 'pilot' uniforms and tabards. The role play area becomes an aeroplane. Other children join in and tickets and bags are taken and stored away by stewards as the children fly off to Ibiza. Staff skilfully extend this play through questioning and when looking at a map of the world to find Ibiza. Children's independence and self-help skills in practical activities are encouraged. They develop confidence and self-esteem through the interaction, care, love and attention they share with the staff. Children access a range of outdoor activities in play areas that encourage children to use their senses. They look and listen to the wind chimes and coloured twirling sticks making patterns in the wind. Young children pedal bikes around the path and push themselves round on the wooden sit and ride toys. Children enjoy filling up the wheelbarrow with construction bricks, pushing it around the garden then tipping them out again. They enjoy singing action songs and playing musical instruments under the gazebo outside. Children are observed by staff during their play. Written profiles are maintained showing the excellent progress children make. Children listen to instruction. They understand the routine which allows flexibility, to accommodate the needs of all children and allows them sufficient time to explore and develop ideas. These routines enhance children's learning. Children eagerly join in the activities provided and their concentration levels are maintained. Opportunities to engage children in conversation are fully explored by experienced staff members during play opportunities and within the daily routine. Children talk to each other at snack time and circle time. Children enjoy dressing up. They play in the role play area with the pretend food, making lunch and feeding the dolls. The resources are within easy reach of the children and are stored in wicker baskets or on wooden shelves. Numbered silhouettes on shelves allow children to match shapes and develop their mathematical skills. Children help themselves to these resources and play harmoniously with other children. Quiet activities allow younger children to snuggle up to their key worker as they look at books together. They enjoy mark making with crayons and chalk, and play enthusiastically in the sand and water.

Children are valued. They are treated with trust, concern and respect by staff, who have a kind and caring manner. Children benefit from the relaxed atmosphere and homely environment. They relate their own experiences at circle time, building up strong relationships with staff and other children. Staff are on hand to support children in their play and actively take part. Children begin to distinguish between right and wrong, as they learn to take turns and share when using the toys and equipment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Their learning needs are fully understood by staff who have an exceptional understanding of the 'Foundation Stage'. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss the planning in the nursery which is displayed in the each playroom. The key-worker system is well established to ensure new children form a secure attachment with one person. Activities are skilfully adapted in practice for the different age groups and abilities. Information about the pre-school children is obtained from parents on admission to the nursery. Children attending from an early age have individual profiles completed showing clear starting points for nursery education. Staff use detailed observations to enable the identification of achievement and clearly explain how these then inform the next steps in children's learning and for future planning. Staff cleverly extend children's learning and provide sufficient challenge in child-initiated play and small group activities. Children count confidently and can name a number of different colours. Painting skills are further enhanced by the opportunity for children to mix their own paints. Children's mathematical skills, such as calculating, comparing and problem solving, are skilfully reinforced by staff in everyday activities and experiences.

Children are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They are self-motivated and self-assured in their play and confident to try out new experiences. They enjoy washing, cutting and preparing the ingredients for their salad sandwich. They notice the roots of the lettuce and discuss the tomato plant and how the flowers turned into tomatoes. Children's independence is fully encouraged as they chop the lettuce, spring onion and tomatoes up, butter their bread and cut their sandwich into squares or triangles. Children enjoy using the motorised computer toy. They learn positional language as they programme it to move around the mat. They show a sense of achievement as they enthusiastically show their observational paintings of tomatoes. Children develop hand-eye coordination in activities. They use scissors to cut sticking tape and paper as they use their imagination to make a spider's web. Children use construction materials confidently to build three dimensional models and a wide range of mark making materials to draw pictures. Although children attempt to write their name and most recognise the first letter of their name, every day routines and experiences are not fully encouraged to help reinforce letter and sound recognition. Children develop their communication skills through the staff skilfully questioning them and reinforcing their language and vocabulary. They chat confidently with each other using a wide range of language and sentence construction, and their thinking skills are excellently promoted when listening to a story.

Children are well behaved and begin to show a good understanding of right and wrong as they interact together in their play. Staff support children in their play. Children enjoy small-group activities which help them learn how to share and take turns, and the staff skilfully encourage the children's understanding of respecting each other's needs. Children interact well with each other and listen to one another during quieter activities. They use their imagination as they confidently dress up in the dressing-up clothes and re-enact their own experiences. Children recognise colours as they look at books and mix their paints. They can count easily up to 20 and recognise the day of the week, date, month and season. Children's development of large and small motor skills is sufficiently promoted through the physical activities provided. They can find their personal space when asked to sit at the table at snack time and can negotiate their own space when playing with equipment outside in the play area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of equality is fully promoted through the numerous activities that encourage equal play. Children play harmoniously together. They learn to share and take turns in circle time and small group activities. Children are familiar with the routine. They develop sound relationships with each other. Children patiently sit in the 'comfort zone' waiting to do the weather chart and to talk to the staff about what they are to do that morning. Children value each other's contributions as they listen to each other as they share experiences. They form appropriate relationships with the staff who are on hand to help, praise and constantly support the children throughout the session. Children's individual care needs are known and met by staff in discussion with their parents. Children begin to become aware of the wider society as they explore their own culture and festivals, and those of others. Children benefit from the visual displays and activities that help them understand about diversity and difference.

Children behave very well. The positive strategies staff use encourage children to explain their behaviour and acknowledge wrong doing. Staff listen to children, praise achievements and provide individual support and comfort when required. Children become aware of their own needs and the needs of others. They show a willingness to help younger children attending and show concern if they are upset. Children make suitable choices and decisions about their play from the continuous play opportunities freely available to them. Staff fully support children's interests and change the activity following the requests of the children or in spontaneous play situations. Children's confidence and self-assurance is fully promoted by staff constantly praising achievement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is securely fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children settle easily into the nursery, supported by the induction and transition arrangements established across all age groups. Parents and children are made very welcome. They are extremely happy with the high quality care and education their child receives, and praise the friendliness and expertise of the staff working with their children. Children's activities and learning experiences are shared with parents verbally on collection and through written care sheets, produced daily. Detailed child profiles and progress reports are completed by the key workers for all children. Children's individual care needs are discussed and recorded at registration, including any specific requests and requirements for individual children. On registering, parents are provided with information about the nursery and the care and activities provided. Information about the weekly activities and topics to be undertaken by children is regularly produced and available for parents. Healthy eating is firmly established within the nursery and encouraged at home by the inclusion of recipes in newsletters and recipe cards which are made available to parents. Children's steady progress is welcomed by parents and the opportunity to extend and reinforce children's learning potential at home is fully promoted. Children take home library books weekly to encourage parents' involvement in their children's learning. Information is available on a number of noticeboards within the nursery. The complaints procedure is displayed and fully understood by parents. The complaints log is established.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are extremely well cared for by adults who have a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. The staff are experienced and qualified. They have undertaken appropriate suitability checks completed by registered person. The robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff

with an exceptional knowledge and understanding of child development. The induction procedure ensures that the nursery policies and procedures are consistently applied and staff appraisals are rigorously completed. Individual training needs are recognised and continual training and development fully encouraged. Staff meetings and committee meetings are encouraged to make sure continuity is maintained and information and curriculum planning developed in the interest of the children. Staff use positive behaviour management techniques, which are consistently applied in practice. Members of staff work well together as a team and are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. The premises are extremely well organised and indoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities. It is effectively organised to maximise choice, independence and decision making and to encourage children to explore the environment through their senses. Children are provided with a wealth of natural materials to enable investigation and exploration. They access text labels and silhouettes to recognise where resources belong and wicker baskets contain natural 'heuristic play' materials for younger children. Children relax in 'comfort zones' where they can rest or choose a book to read quietly with staff members. Well organised documentation and record keeping is in place which ensures the efficient and safe management of the provision, and contributes to the health, safety and well-being of children.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provided for children is good. An all inclusive environment is fully encouraged and all children are included and treated with equal concern. Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals from their learning experiences within the resourced, free choice areas and focussed activities. The manager has a strong commitment to development and improvement. This is shown in documents, such as minutes of staff meetings, and lead teacher and development worker reports. Planning is exceptional and clearly indicates focussed activities, to help develop children's areas of learning and evaluation of activities. Children's individual needs are fully recognised and they are extremely well supported. Their personal information is collected and recorded in detail. Initial assessments are used to help the planning process for individual children recognising their progress and contributing to their further development. Parents are provided with a wealth of information about the provision. Information about how to help their child at home is welcomed. The pre-school children benefit from the close working relationship established between the nursery and local schools, enabling those children who will join schools to settle in seamlessly.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered person agreed to improve children's access to accessible fresh drinking water throughout the day. It was also agreed that the registered provider would improve the arrangements for notifying Ofsted of any significant changes to staff.

Since the last inspection arrangements are in place for children to easily access suitable drinking containers containing fresh water throughout the day. Documentation and operational procedures to notify Ofsted of any changes are fully established.

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 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):

- update the child protection procedure in line with changes in recent legislation.

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):

- encourage sound and letter recognition within every day experiences and routines.

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