

First Steps Private Day Nursery (Pennington)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 323014
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Inspector Lynda, Margaret Ronan

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Registered person S Green

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 Steps Private Day Nursery (Pennington) opened in 1997. It operates from four children's rooms in a purpose-built single storey building within a residential area of Pennington. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

A maximum of 61 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 70 children on roll including 16 children who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports children for whom English is an additional language and children who have special educational needs.

The nursery opens 5 days a week throughout the year from 07.30 to 18.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Part-time sessions are from 08.00 to 12.30 and 13.00 to 17.30.

There are 17 staff who work directly with the children, four of whom are employed part-time. The manager and 15 staff hold early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a community advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment where effective measures are used to reduce the risk of the spread of infection. The children, for example, use individual face cloths after lunch to wipe their faces and learn about the importance of good personal hygiene as the staff discuss germs with them. The staff always wear aprons and gloves to change nappies. They talk with children during the nappy changing procedure, making it a personal and pleasant experience for children.

Children benefit from a very healthy diet. The nutritious meals are prepared on the premises using a good proportion of fresh produce. The nursery subscribes to the 'five a day' scheme and children enjoy choosing and eating fruit in the mornings. Children's individual dietary needs are well met, for example, there is a vegetarian option available each day. Meal and snack times are relaxed occasions, with staff sitting with older children to eat and sit face to face with younger children whilst feeding them. Young children and babies develop very good self help skills as the babies are encouraged to learn to feed themselves and are given their own spoons.

Staff pay very good attention to babies' individual needs and ensure that they follow their own sleeping and eating patterns, whilst some babies are sleeping outside in the fresh air, another is eating breakfast and yet another playing in dry rice with their key worker. Children's emotional needs are very well supported, for example, children who are new to the nursery are helped to settle in during a series of visits to the nursery that are designed for each individual child.

Children's health is given high priority as management ensure the majority of staff have current first aid certificates and that all documentation regarding children's health is kept up to date and all accidents accurately recorded.

Children play outdoors every day, providing them with good opportunities for fresh air and exercise to promote their health. They have very good opportunities to climb and move freely, playing with balls and a wealth of sit and ride equipment. Opportunities for all children to practise balancing and using peddled machines are insufficiently promoted. The children do not benefit from independent choice between indoor and outdoor play and do not experience all of the curriculum outside on a daily basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery rooms are very well organised to promote good care and learning. Each room is planned to allow children to be physically active, challenging them to learn using all their senses and abilities. Children use a wide range of good quality toys, furniture and equipment. Sensory experience is particularly well promoted through such equipment as smelly building bricks and 'feely bags'. The toys and books are placed where children can reach them easily, allowing the children to select independently the items with which they play. Some areas of the nursery and equipment do not fully support an ethos of inclusion.

The completion of comprehensive risk assessments of areas and activities, daily written safety checks and an emphasis on safety equipment, such as the safe play surface outside, ensures a safe play environment for children. In addition, staff are vigilant and respond quickly to avert potential dangers, such as children climbing on chairs. Children are encouraged to be aware of

their own safety and to take appropriate responsibility for it through planned activities, such as dressing as a 'lollipop' lady and learning safe road crossing techniques in the safety of the nursery.

The staff keep the children secure by supervising them well at all times. The staff have a very good awareness of child protection issues and procedures in order to safeguard the welfare of children. Safeguarding children is given high priority and all staff have attended training, ensuring they are knowledgeable about this subject.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the nursery are very well settled, relaxed, happy and fully engaged in activities. Children have a key carer who is responsible for their care and welfare on a daily basis. This encourages the children to develop positive relationships with their carer and helps them to feel secure and happy. Children and babies especially enjoy the high level of one to one interacting with their carers, who talk to the children and frequently cuddle and play with babies.

The younger children and babies enjoy an interesting and age appropriate range of activities which effectively supports their development. Staff know each child very well and use their knowledge of each child's next steps in learning to bring the curriculum to where the child is playing. For example, staff discuss the colour of toys in the water with one child whilst discussing the shapes of the toys with another. Children enjoy learning through play, painting, making marks, dressing up, singing and listening to and enacting stories. They explore dry rice, silk play, sand and water and other tactile media in order to develop their exploration and learning skills.

Staff make daily observations of children and use their observations effectively to plan for the next steps in children's development.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The children are confident, interested and are developing a positive approach to learning. They organise their own learning choosing from a variety of activities and resources that are freely available to them. Staff skilfully support their learning as they play. For example, during the daily routines and play the children count often and develop a good awareness of mathematical concepts, such as shape and size. They count the bands which allow them access to the role play area, discuss the shape of the tunnel they crawl through and calculate how many more pieces they need to complete a design if they have two pieces and need six.

The children develop good communication and early literacy skills as they listen to stories and they often recount and develop their favourite story during independent play. Children are good communicators, using language to order events, recount events and they are beginning to use language to negotiate. They have many varied and interesting opportunities to develop early writing skills, for example, they bake, paint outside on the floor using water and large brushes and make marks using paint, chalks and pencils. They do not often write for a purpose.

The children are imaginative and creative, relishing opportunities to express thoughts and ideas using creative media. Children build a washing machine with wheels, a head and a tail whilst

others depict the sound of a police siren with blue and white shiny paper. They explore and develop their ideas using a wide range of different media and collage materials which are constantly and independently available to them. Children are aware of their feelings and those of others as they have many well planned opportunities, such as making sad and angry faces in a mirror and discussing what makes them sad and angry, to help them develop understanding and empathy.

Children are interested and curious and are actively encouraged to explore and investigate. They find out what happens when they mix sand and water together to make 'mud' and how it differs from the dry sand. They observe changes as they freeze and melt ice lollies, grow sunflowers and look at mini beasts.

Children develop an understanding of the community and place as they interact with the many visitors to the nursery, they talk about letters with the postman and are delighted when the police visit and bring their helicopter to take a picture of them from the air.

The staff support the children well as they play, they talk to them about what they are doing and ask questions to encourage their thinking. They organise the resources very well to support the children's learning and offer them good quality choices. They respect and support children's creativity. They observe the children, know their abilities, have realistically high expectations of them and are able to challenge them at a level which is appropriate for their understanding. However, staff do not plan so as to provide the whole curriculum in the outside play area or to allow children to choose freely between indoor and outdoor play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children behave well in the nursery as the staff manage any unwanted behaviour very effectively. They encourage positive behaviour as they praise and encourage the children often, rewarding them with stickers and encouraging other children to recognise kindness and generosity by clapping children for sharing. They talk to the children with kindness and respect and involve children in developing 'golden rules'. In response, the children learn about acceptable behaviour. The children learn to respect each other and value differences through well planned activities and stories. Their knowledge is enhanced when they take part in activities linked to different cultural festivals. Through this very positive approach, the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The staff are particularly effective at recognising special educational needs and seeking early and effective intervention to support children.

The entrance to the nursery is arranged to provide very good information for parents. There are informative displays about the curriculum, staff qualifications, the menu and files giving useful suggestions as to activities to be conducted at home with children to extend their learning. The staff work very well in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that children's individual needs are well met. Parents report that they are spoken with on a daily basis, feel welcome and are very happy with the nursery. Staff seek useful and comprehensive information from parents before children start at the nursery and continue this dialogue on a daily basis with parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Parents and carers are very well informed and consulted.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education funding is good. Parents are invited to contribute what they know about their children at regular reviews of their child's profile. The staff provide them with ideas of activities to do at home to encourage the children to learn through play. This effective partnership contributes to the good progress which the children make.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The good organisation of the nursery ensures that children receive good quality care and education. There are effective recruitment policies and nursery plans to maintain fully qualified staff, by putting a strong emphasis on accessing training and maintaining professional knowledge. Staff consequently attend numerous appropriate courses each year. The nursery has a stable staff group and organise and deploy staff well to maintain continuity of care for children. The very effective procedures in place for the employment of staff and a rigorous induction procedure ensures staff both understand and deliver the level of care to children required by the management.

The documentation relating to the care of the children is very well maintained. There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place which are reviewed very regularly to ensure that they reflect the day to day childcare practice.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are good. The nursery staff and manager work very well together to plan good quality educational experiences for the children. The staff attend training on a regular basis which ensures that they have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum and are able to support and challenge the children well.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last childcare inspection, a recommendation was made to provide an environment for very young children which enabled them to continue their normal life experience and which assisted their mobility. The nursery have provided a domestic style adult chair and a soft play area for children, both of which assist their mobility. In general, however, the environment does not continue children's life experience.

At the last nursery education inspection, the nursery was asked to consider two developmental points: to improve the presentation of the book area and to further develop planning with regard to future learning intentions. A new book case in the shape of a train and a variety of comfortable seats have been provided and books are well chosen and in good condition. Although this area's presentation is now satisfactory, it is not a focal point of the room and children are observed not to frequently access this area independently. The nursery have sought help with planning learning intentions from Sure Start and these are now clearly linked with the stepping stones on children's individual observation records, which enhances children's progress towards the early learning goals.

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.

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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):

- complete an audit of the building and equipment to fully support inclusion
- provide additional equipment to enable children to practise balancing skills.

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):

- plan to offer consistently all six areas of learning in the outside environment.

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