

First Steps Private Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY259565
Inspection date	31 July 2007
Inspector	Dawn Bonica Brown
Setting Address	Newmarket Street, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 2JP
Telephone number	01756 799339
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Registered person	First Steps Private Day 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?

First Steps Day Nursery is a privately owned nursery. It opened in 1997 and operates from purpose built premises consisting of four play rooms plus associated facilities in Skipton, North Yorkshire. A maximum of 64 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 110 children aged from a few months old to under five years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education.

The nursery employs 34 members of staff. Of these, 31, including the manager, hold early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are gaining a good awareness of personal hygiene routines through using facilities that encourage their independence and which are well maintained. They are gaining further independence through regular reminders to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day. Children remain healthy because staff follow policies and procedures reliably. For example, nappies are changed hygienically and disposed of in separate bins for soiled and wet nappies. The nappy changing rooms are kept odour free using purpose built extractor fans as well as through open windows. Children gain further protection because staff use a medicated hand solution before entering the milk room or the kitchen.

Children's welfare and well-being are closely protected through good maintenance of the records that help to maintain their good health. Staff ensure that they are well protected in all types of weather. For example, children know that they must wear sun hats and sun protection cream before going out in the sun. Staff create shaded areas for children to play safely in the outdoor space. A significant number of staff in each room hold current and relevant first aid certificates. This means that they are able to administer first aid promptly in the event of an accident.

Children are well nourished. They receive well balanced, freshly prepared meals, which include fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as the occasional treats supplied by parents. Their individual dietary needs and preferences are taken into account when planning meals. For example, a vegetarian option, which looks similar to meat, is served so that children do not feel disadvantaged at mealtimes. Staff work with parents effectively to provide individually planned menus for babies who are weaning. Parents are provided with a four week menu, as well as a daily menu, written on the notice board of each room.

Children are encouraged to be active through regular physical play. They take advantage of the outdoor play space, where they enjoy activities that promote their physical skills. They use equipment well to practise climbing, throwing and catching balls, bean bags and hoops, balancing and crawling through tunnels. Children demonstrate good spatial awareness as they use wheeled toys to steer a path round objects.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's enjoyment of the setting is enhanced through a wide range of stimulating activities. They play safely in well maintained premises and staff are observant and vigilant. For example, staff anticipate children's actions well so that accidental bumps are minimised. Their actions are especially well anticipated in the baby room. The setting ensures that parents are careful about maintaining safety. For example, they understand the safety precautions for entering the premises and follow them reliably.

Children play in safe, well maintained premises. They benefit from an environment which promotes their independence and enhances their all-round development through good organisation of space and resources. Children use furniture and resources that are safe, suitable and of a high quality. Children are developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe

through discussions on road safety followed by outdoor play to support it. Older children practise crossing roads safely on outings to and from school.

Children are well protected from abuse because a significant number of staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. They are knowledgeable about the potential signs and symptoms and how to report their concerns. The correct documentation is retained for quick and efficient reporting. This means that they can act quickly in the child's best interest to safeguard their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well settled, curious and friendly. They have good relationships with the staff and with each other. They are well stimulated through good play opportunities that keep them highly involved in the activities provided. For example, young children listen to stories, enjoy messy play and the textures, colours and smells of a range of materials. Babies are encouraged to explore the setting independently through equipment to support them to sit up and toys that encourage them to crawl and to pull themselves up to investigate. They receive plenty of attention from staff, who support them physically and encourage them to interact through face to face communication and action songs. Children who are walking enjoy a range of play, including imaginative play, which helps them to make sense of their experiences. For example, playing with dolls when there is a new baby in the family.

Children are confident and make decisions for themselves as their play is rooted in their own ideas. For example, staff follow children's ideas for development of the home corner and change it according to the themes devised by the children. Children respond to adults' interest by bringing objects and experiences to the setting from their home, such as games, toys or photographs of holidays. This promotes interesting discussion and fosters their self-esteem and confidence.

Young children's progress is carefully fostered using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Their development is monitored, their independence is fostered and, from an early age, they are gaining an awareness of others. For example, the shared activity of handing out the drinks at snack time encourages young children to learn each other's names, take responsibility and relate one object to another. The effective placing of equipment, such as a front facing book rack, supports young children's independence as they select books for themselves and return them correctly.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the early learning goals and understand how to deliver the early years curriculum effectively so that, over time, all areas of learning are covered. Children receive appropriate challenges. They manage developmentally appropriate tasks and take initiative. Resources are used effectively so that children operate independently in the setting. Teaching methods are effective as children learn through first hand experiences. Their behaviour is managed well. Children learn right from wrong through positive encouragement. For example, they understand set boundaries and are given praise and attention when they are kind to each other. There are no children with disabilities or learning difficulties currently being cared for, but staff are well trained to care for them and there are policies in place for their support.

Children demonstrate high levels of self esteem and have a positive self image. They are interested in learning and are highly involved in the activities provided. Many children contribute to group discussions confidently. All children are well settled and are successfully encouraged to form good relationships with each other and to respect the wishes and feelings of others. Their good behaviour is encouraged through meaningful incentives, such as stamps and stickers for helping to tidy up.

Children have a broad vocabulary and speak to each other clearly. They are particularly well supported to think logically and recall events. For example, at the end of the day children are invited to describe activities or events that they have enjoyed during the day. Their memory is promoted further through enjoyable activities. These include memorising objects from a group of items so that they can identify the missing object when one is taken away. Children learn the letters of the alphabet through active learning methods which involve a range of activities. Many of them write their own names on their artwork and all children use the mark making table freely.

Children are learning to count reliably and many children understand number sequencing. For example, several children know that the number 23 comes after number 22. They are encouraged to think about objects and numbers using a range of activities. Their problem solving skills are fostered through interesting activities. For example, making charts of things that they grow and looking at size comparisons through stories and action songs.

Children are learning about the natural world through growing plants, such as sunflowers, tomatoes, scented herbs and carrots. They use modern technology meaningfully in their spontaneous play. For example, children use the cassette recorder to play a game of musical bumps. Children are gaining a clear idea of time as they relate significant events in their lives, such as birthdays and holidays.

Children demonstrate a well developed sense of space as they manoeuvre wheeled toys around objects easily. They use a wide range of construction toys and equipment to build three-dimensional objects and demonstrate a good understanding of the use of specific tools. Their understanding of healthy eating is well promoted and they are making the connection between the food they eat and where it comes from through growing vegetables.

Children's creative skills are well promoted through a wide range of activities that stimulate their senses and encourage creative thinking. For example, they make puppets and have a puppet show. They explore the changing properties of materials through cooking and baking activities and create original artwork from their own imagination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. They are learning to be polite and considerate and to treat each other with respect. This is achieved through good role modelling from staff, who explain things clearly to them. Their consideration for each other is noticed and praised as they take turns and share responsibilities. From an early age all children are gaining independence and learning to interact with each other appropriately. For example, when toddlers take turns to hand out drinks at snack time the other children are encouraged to say thank you when they receive their drinks.

Partnerships with parents and carers is good. Parents are very positive about the setting. They appreciate the professionalism of the staff and find staff approachable, friendly and informative. Parents benefit from a good exchange of information with the setting which helps them to follow their children's progress comprehensively. They are particularly appreciative of the progress their children make in their social skills. The care that children receive and the abundance of high quality resources and activities are also praised by parents. For example, personalised feeding programmes for weaning babies are worked out with parents and followed. Parents comment on their children's enthusiasm about activities and are highly motivated to become involved in the pre-school curriculum through topics.

Children are allowed to take responsibility for their own actions because they are given realistic choices. They are encouraged to think through situations and to organise themselves independently. For example, children organise themselves into groups as they help to clear away after activities. Their role play is inspired by their own ideas and they are valued and included as individuals. As a consequence, they are well behaved.

Children's individual needs are met because staff work with parents effectively to provide continuity of care and to foster a sense of belonging. For example, children bring their own special things to the group to share and these are stored carefully in each child's designated place. There are no children with disabilities or with learning difficulties currently being cared for. However, staff are well trained and able to provide appropriate support.

Children benefit from activities which give them an awareness of a variety of religions. However, their awareness of the range of people in society is not well promoted as insufficient resources are provided to help them gain sufficient awareness of disabilities or cultural diversity.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well protected because there are systems in place to ensure that staff are suitable to care for them. They are well cared for because staff are well trained and knowledgeable about child development. There are sufficient numbers of staff to help children feel secure and confident. Children's welfare is promoted well because the records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are maintained. The exception to this is the complaints policy, which has incorrect contact details of the regulator.

Resources are used well to provide a welcoming, child-orientated environment. Staff put the needs of children first as good organisation of the day follows children's individual routines. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good. The manager understands her role and provides effective monitoring and assessment of teaching and learning through observation and staff appraisals. Strong leadership and a commitment to improve the care and education for all children inspires the setting to canvass parent's opinions. This is done in order to assess its strengths and weaknesses effectively. Good training programmes improve staff knowledge and understanding of how to promote children's education and welfare.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the provider was recommended to improve the availability of resources reflecting positive images of cultural diversity and disability, to make the book areas more inviting and to improve staff knowledge of child protection procedures.

Children's welfare has improved through good accessibility to books for all children. However, their access to resources reflecting positive images remains to be fully addressed. Children's safety has improved through staff training in child protection procedures.

The key issues arising from the last inspection for nursery education were to ensure that planning shows how activities are adapted to meet the needs of the more able children and to provide ongoing opportunities for children to select and use resources creatively.

Teaching and learning has improved because greater attention is paid to adapting resources and activities to meet the needs of the more able children. Children's well-being has improved through greater opportunities to make choices and enjoy play which is rooted in their own ideas.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

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.

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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):

- update the complaints procedure to include the correct address of the regulator.

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):

- develop further resources reflecting positive images of disability and continue to develop those reflecting cultural diversity (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