



## Next Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** EY263811  
**Inspection date** 15 July 2005  
**Inspector** Susan June Stone

**Setting Address** The Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset,  
BA4 6QN  
**Telephone number** 01749 346808  
**E-mail**  
**Registered person** Next Steps Childcare Limited  
**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*

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## 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Next Steps Nursery opened in 2003. It operates from a purpose built building situated in the grounds of the Bath and West showground Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

A maximum of 49 children may be cared for at any one time. There are currently 56 children on roll which includes 6 funded three-year-olds and 6 funded four-year-olds. The setting does not have any children attending with special educational needs at the moment or who have English as an additional language. The group opens five

days a week and the sessions are from 08.00 until 18.00. They offer wrap around care all year, and a crèche facility when the Bath and West Show is operating.

There are seven members of staff of which over half are qualified or training to NVQ level three or equivalent. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Good practice is taking place within all areas of the nursery which helps to ensure positive outcomes for children being healthy. Staff practice of carrying out effective cleaning routines throughout the nursery helps to prevent the spread of infection and cross contamination. For example, wearing gloves and aprons for nappy changes, and cleaning tables between activities. The daily routines within the nursery encourage the children to understand the importance of good personal care and hygiene from a young age. The nursery children know and understand the importance of washing hands after messy play and before eating food, and they are able to do this independently. The children in the pre school know, that hats and sun cream are needed for outdoor play in hot weather, 'to help to stop getting burnt by the sun,' and they take responsibility for doing this.

All children within the setting benefit from regular outdoor play and fresh air, where they are offered appropriate opportunities to explore and develop their physical skills. Indoor physical play also enhances the children's physical development. In the baby room children are able to rest and be active according to their needs, staff recognise when babies are ready for a sleep and accommodate this. The Birth to three matters guidance, 'A healthy child' is being implemented with positive outcomes for the youngest children.

Children benefit, and are learning about healthy eating by the nursery providing balanced, nutritious meals and snacks. Children make choices from the range of fruits provided at snack time. All children's special dietary needs are known to staff and are addressed. Water dispensers are available throughout the nursery for the children to access drinking water if they are thirsty.

Staff have a good knowledge of first aid, ensuring medical needs can be dealt with effectively. All documents and records relating to children's health, medical and dietary needs are up to date, ensuring the children are cared for according to their individual needs.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All rooms within the nursery are bright and cheerful and welcoming to children and parents. Children are able to access a sufficient range of safe, good quality toys and

resources with ease. All areas are checked by staff before the children arrive to ensure the setting is free from hazards and all safety measures are in place. Staff are generally vigilant to the children's safety. Suitable systems are in place for ensuring the security of the nursery; the door to the nursery remains locked at all times and parents ring for attention. All visitors are monitored and asked to sign the visitor's book. Effective procedures are implemented by staff to ensure the children are handed over to suitable known adults.

The nursery room and pre school room are well laid out to allow children to play in comfort. Resources are suitably stored to allow the children to access them with ease. Children are able to select resources for themselves, which encourages their personal independence. The children are encouraged staff to tidy away the toys and activities after using them. This means they are taking some responsibility for their own safety. There are though some concerns about the baby room with regard to its size, organisation and the age range of children using the room. Crawling babies and older toddlers have access to the same areas, which means it is difficult for staff to fully ensure the safety of all children. For example, ensuring the young, crawling babies remain free from harm when toddling children are using wheeled walking aids.

Overall adult / child ratios are being met in relation to the numbers and ages of children attending the nursery. However, staffing in the pre school room is not always sufficient to ensure the safety and well being of these children at all times. Due to the numbers of pre school children attending, at times there is only one member of staff supervising the children the pre school room. This compromises the safety and well being of the children using that room.

Children are protected due to staff's understanding of child protection issues and their practical knowledge of first aid procedures.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident and settled and have good relationships with the adults who care for them. Some aspects of the Birth to three matters framework is being implemented which is having a positive impact on the babies and younger children in the baby room. Staff encourage babies' early communication skills by talking with them, making eye contact and interacting with them with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The babies respond with their own noises, smiles and giggles. Children within the baby room are provided a suitable range of play opportunities with good sensory experiences being offered to the babies, which allow them to explore and investigate. Children show delight at the bubbles being blown, waving their hands and attempting to pop them. However due to the size of room, and the age range of the children using the room, it is sometimes difficult to keep the older children suitably occupied and stimulated alongside meeting the needs of the babies. This affects the progress of all children using the room.

In the nursery room, the children aged from two-years to three-years are also offered a good range of activities which allow them to explore and investigate and which encourage development and learning. Children are offered a balance of free play and

adult led activities. The children are developing good relationships with staff and peers, they interact and play well alongside each other and they are beginning to learn to share and take turns. Most children are happy and settled, with the two-year-olds gaining in independence, however the needs of all the three-year-olds are not being sufficiently met. This room is trying to implement the Birth to Three matters framework and the Foundation Stage. Planning for the Foundation Stage curriculum needs to be further developed to ensure the individual needs of the funded three years olds are being addressed. Observations and assessments are not used to identify the next stages of learning required for children's individual needs.

Individual progress and development across the whole nursery is not being fully nurtured. The grouping of the children is not organised to allow children maximum potential for development and learning. Delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum is not consistent to meet the children's needs.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate an understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They question children appropriately, encouraging them to share their thoughts and ideas. Observations and activity plans show a good range of activities and opportunities are provided for the children which cover all the areas of learning. Children are offered a variety of experiences which allow them to explore and investigate through first hand experiences. These experiences help to contribute to the children's development and learning, and the children are making sound progress through the stepping stones. However, their progress is being hampered by insufficient staffing in the pre school room, which means staff cannot effectively deliver all the activities to meet the needs of all the children. Observations and assessments of children's progress are not effectively monitored or used to identify areas for individual progress, or to help plan for the next stages of learning. The lack of staff in sessions does not allow for effective spontaneous observations and evaluation of activities to take place, this in turn hampers children's ability to reach their full potential and affects their individual progress and development.

Children use language well to communicate their thoughts and ideas. They speak with confidence at news time where they share their news with the group, like playing golf with Daddy. Children are able to recognise their names from name cards and some are able to recognise the names of others. They know most of their letters and letter sounds. The children understand the nursery routines and the levels of expected behaviour. They are able to sit quietly as appropriate, such as at large group circle time and story time. Children enjoy books for stories and know the spine of the book keeps the pages together. At story time the children use the pictures to predict the story. Children's writing skills are being developed through planned activities and regular opportunities for mark making. Children regularly use numbers within their play and daily routines. At snack time they count the number of cups needed and confidently pour their own milk from the bottle. They are developing an understanding of simple calculation through number songs and rhymes. Children have planted sunflower seeds and have watched the plants grow. They know that plants and flowers need water to live. Through topics and themes children are learning to value and respect the views and beliefs of others, and they have

celebrated different festivals. The children experiences a variety of creative opportunities which allow them to develop their individual flair and design, staff encourage self expression and provide a variety of resources and materials to enable this.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are offered opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities and visitors to the setting. They freely explore their local environment while out on walks. Local members of the community visit the nursery, like the library van and police. Children celebrate a variety of festivals and have access to a range of resources which help to promote positive attitudes to diversity. They take part in fund raising events for charity like 'Red Nose Day'. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is fostered.

Children behave well. Throughout the nursery children are cared for in a friendly atmosphere where they respond favourably to the good behaviour management strategies that are in place. These strategies are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. All children respond well to the positive praise and encouragement which is freely offered by all staff. Children are reminded of the levels of expected behaviour, for example a member of staff in the nursery room kindly tells a child 'not in my face please, that's not nice,' also, children getting excited are asked to 'calm down, because someone may get hurt'. This helps the children to learn to play positively and cooperatively within the group. The children in the pre school are aware of the levels of expected behaviour and set good examples to the younger children. Like sitting down and eating their meals sensibly at lunch time.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Relationships with parents are friendly. The entrance hall to the nursery contains detailed information about the nursery including policies and procedures, staff details, certificates and details of current themes and activities. Staff in the baby room use daily diaries to record babies' individual routines. These include information about sleeps, meals and nappy changes, this information is shared with parents and their comments are encouraged and valued. Staff make themselves available to parents to discuss children's activities and achievements each day. Parents are free to access their children's development folders at any time, however the information contained in the progress folders of the funded children is often sparse and inconsistent. It therefore does not fully inform parents of their child's progress through the stepping stones. There is also no key worker system in place for all children attending the nursery. This makes it difficult to share and coordinate information with parents, to help identify individual needs to maintain consistency and continuity of care.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by an enthusiastic staff team who are knowledgeable about

good childcare practices. Staff members are committed to providing the best care possible for the children, and overall the needs of the range of children attending the nursery are met. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. They are suitably qualified or are undertaking training. Staff appraisal systems are in place, which help to identify staff's needs for further training and individual development.

The nursery has developed appropriate policies and procedures to support the running of the provision. Systems in place though are not effective in monitoring and evaluating current practice in line with the outcomes for children. Staff / child ratios are maintained, however staff deployment is not effective to ensure the needs of all the children attending the nursery can be met. At times the grouping of children and staff deployment does not effectively support the needs of all the children attending. Children do not have a key worker to ensure the effective sharing of information and continuity of care can be maintained.

A recommendation from a previous Ofsted visit was to 'improve the current recruitment procedures in place, to make sure a manager is appointed.' A permanent manager has yet to be appointed. The deputy is currently responsible for the day to day running of the nursery, with the owner / manager dividing her time between her two nurseries.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education children is satisfactory. There is a varied programme of activities which cover all areas of learning, although these are not rigorously evaluated to measure their success. Adult / child ratios are maintained, however staff are not always deployed effectively, this limits staff's ability to nurture and support children to reach their full learning and development potential. Systems in place are not effective in monitoring and recording the delivery of the foundation stage curriculum to ensure that all funded children have opportunities to learn and develop at their own pace.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The previous care inspection recommended that the group meet any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer (in this case a Fire Log Book) and, have a written statement of procedure to be followed if a parent fails to collect a child. A written lost child policy is now available within the nursery, which details procedures to follow if a parent fails to collect a child. A fire log book is now kept to record the details of any fire drills conducted by the nursery.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Concerns were expressed regarding insufficient staffing levels at the nursery, and sharing information with parents. These concerns relate to the following National Standards for Day Care:

National Standard 2: Organisation

## National Standard 12: Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We made an unannounced visit to Next Steps Nursery in order to investigate these concerns and the registered person's compliance with the standards. We discussed the issues with the registered person and staff, and examined various documentation held by the nursery. We found that the nursery was not meeting the requirements of Standard 2, and set two actions for the nursery to;

- Make sure that the required staffing levels are maintained at all times
- Maintain an accurate daily attendance record which shows the actual times of arrival and departure of children and staff

We agreed timescales with the registered person to complete these actions, and they took appropriate action to meet these requirements.

We also made a recommendation to improve the standard of care provided. This was to;

- Improve the current recruitment procedures in place, to make sure a manager is appointed. The nursery's progress towards this was to be monitored at this next inspection. A permanent manager has yet to be appointed.

## 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

## 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):

- review the deployment of staff and grouping of children to effectively meet the development needs of all children
- implement a key worker system for all children

### 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 effective systems for monitoring the quality of care and nursery education, and outcomes for children
- develop the use of observations and assessments to clearly identify children's progress. Use the information gained to effectively plan activities which build on children's existing skills and abilities, and activities which move them forward to their next stage of development.
- make sure the delivery of the foundation stage curriculum is consistent for all children in receipt of nursery education funding

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