

First Steps Nursery (New Mills) Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY346962
Inspection date	18 July 2007
Inspector	Yvonne Layton
Setting Address	First Steps Nursery, 1 Hibbert Street, New Mills, HIGH PEAK, Derbyshire, SK22 3JJ
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Registered person	First Steps Nursery (New Mills) Ltd
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Steps Day Nursery was registered in December 2004. They have now registered as a limited company and are now known as First Steps Nursery (New Mills) Ltd. The setting is located close to the centre of New Mills. The nursery provides full day care for children aged three months to five years and is open Monday to Friday 07:45 to 18:00 all year round. The nursery supports children with learning disabilities or difficulties. There are currently 102 children on roll and of these 16 are in receipt of funded education. Eighteen staff are employed to work directly with the children. Of these, all either hold relevant childcare qualifications or are working towards one. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and thrive because the staff follow highly effective procedures and practices which meet children's, nutritional, physical and health needs. The exceptional adult

support and guidance helps children gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent. The children, including babies, are well used to the established routine of washing their hands prior to and after meals, snack and activities. They learn about good hygiene through pictorial reminders, themes and being encouraged to assist in appropriate jobs such as clearing away after meals and wiping the table. Staff are proactive in hygiene procedures, such as, all outdoor shoes are taken off in the baby room to protect children when crawling and laying on the floor. There is a rigid routine of disinfecting the changing mats after each use and consistent cleaning of the tables. In each room there is recorded daily rota for the cleaning of toys, equipment and resources.

Children's personal care needs are undertaken with extreme sensitivity, there are individual risk assessments in place to ensure each child who is in nappies has their needs specifically met. Detailed records are maintained for parents to highlight any issues. Older children visit the toilet independently with staff providing appropriate, unobtrusive supervision. Children's self esteem is promoted as they have easy access to hand dryers and each toilet cubicle has a plastic curtain that can be drawn to give them privacy.

All children are able to rest and sleep according to their needs in a comfortable, safe environment, with established hygiene routines which ensure their well-being. They have access to quiet areas in each room and there is a well-equipped sensory room which provides a very relaxing environment.

The needs of children are met effectively if they have an accident, require medication or are sick. Staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and first aid boxes are readily accessible. Accident and medication records are suitably maintained and shared with parents.

Balanced and nutritious meals and snacks ensure children are well nourished. All meals and snacks are recorded on a menu for parents to see. Individual health and dietary needs are well met because practitioners and the cook work together with parents, all allergies are recorded. Meals are made from fresh food only and healthy eating snacks are provided. Children also learn about healthy eating and living through planned themes such as food tasting and by spontaneous discussion with staff. Older children enjoy a free choice snack time where they independently select and serve themselves thus increasing independence. However, the provision of freely accessible water is not consistent in some of the children's rooms and the organisation of meals for babies and toddlers means that their independence is not fully promoted and potentially impacts on their well-being.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. They learn about themselves and their bodies through planned themes and activities. Babies experience outside play both at the provision and during visits to a park where they can explore and investigate.

Children are able to undertake physical challenges as they are involved in the 'Forest School' where they are able to climb and balance in a safe environment. Outdoor play is included in the activity planning and is undertaken daily with the provision providing wet weather clothing in case of rain, except in extreme weather conditions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from an extremely welcoming, stimulating, clean and well-maintained environment. The provision is decorated with posters, photographs, themed displays and children's own creative work. They have access to a superb range of resources, toys and equipment that meet their developmental needs very well. The staff monitor and keep very detailed records of the maintenance of play materials, equipment and resources to ensure they are safe and clean for the children to use.

Children are cared for in a setting where risks are pro-actively identified and minimised and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure they are cared for in a secure environment. They are protected by the strongly effective security of the premises both indoors and outside. Extremely detailed and comprehensive safety policies, procedures and risk assessments, which staff adhere to admirably, ensure children remain safe. To further promote children's safety extensive, comprehensive written risk assessments of activities, both indoor and outside, are completed. For example, all aged children participate in activities using substances such as cornflour, wood and mud. Each activity is assessed prior to children undertaking. Robust fire evacuation procedures, fire drill practices and subsequent evaluations ensure children develop a sound understanding of the need for fire safety and are kept safe. Children are actively learning about personal safety by staff consistent expectation and reminders. For example one of the house rules is 'Eyes are for looking for danger'. The children easily recall the rules and remind each other to follow them.

Children's welfare is fully protected as the staff have very strong knowledge and clear understanding of their role and responsibilities with regard to child protection procedures. There are effective systems in place to ensure children are protected, including, effective liaison with the local authority. All the staff have attended different levels of training. The extremely comprehensive procedures relating to the child protection policies and procedures are made available for parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All of children are extremely settled in the nursery and have a very friendly relationship with the staff. The children are confident and keen to access the extensive range of play activities. This includes a dynamic music area, with unusual and quality instruments, an exciting sensory room and an excellent heuristic resources area. The children develop strong socialisation skills as they look out for each other, support and assist each other.

The nursery is focused on developing the whole child, individual learning and growth is extensively well supported. Staff are very enthusiastic and activities are undertaken with a sense of fun. Children are encouraged to experience activities that stimulate the senses, for example babies experiment with a variety of natural substances such as cornflour and mud. All children have access to the sensory room where they learn about sound and light. The mix of focussed planned activities, for example, circle time, outside play and free choice play ensures children develop independence as well as becoming used to routines and working together. During circle time the children readily join in, are able to recall previous experiences and relate personal stories.

Children become independent as they choose to access the activities themselves. Staff promote learning well through supporting children when required and their expert practice of knowing when to stand back and let children develop their own ideas, such as with creative and role play. Children's developmental progress is noted by observations throughout the session.

Staff verbally share information regarding the child with parents or carers each session. Parents are aware they can see the written records at any time and there are opportunities for parents to share ongoing developmental progress made at home.

Children aged under three have access to extremely well resourced rooms and facilities. Babies and younger children have freedom to explore and investigate using good quality equipment which is used to provide the ultimate experience. This includes large wall mirrors at baby height in the baby room. Activities are provided that are stimulating and exciting. For example, babies were offered 'interesting', tactile objects hidden among soft foil in a container. A staff member 'leads' a music session, which included talking to the children about what the instruments were and what noise they make. Children develop social skills by the good mix of interaction with the older children and independence with time for own age group play. This includes activities such as involvement in the 'Forest School' and a 'Music Garden'. They are stimulated and appropriately challenged by staff that encourage children to think and work things out for themselves. Children are appropriately encouraged to participate in activities. They are treated with warmth and caring.

Planning of activities and a detailed assessment record is maintained for all children relating to 'Birth to three matters' but with a focus on observation and evaluation of individual progression. This assists staff to promote individual learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make superb progress towards the early learning goals as staff have a solid understanding of the 'Foundation Stage'. They ensure that all areas of learning are covered within activities and over a period of time. Staff demonstrate they know which aspect of learning the activities are related to and record children's achievements on an ongoing basis. Detailed, workable planning is in place, with a focus on observations of the children and the evaluation of activities. There are links between each area of learning. All this ensures the children are very purposefully occupied.

Children are challenged by staff that use open ended questions to develop potential effectively during such activities. They readily question and challenge. Children are able to reason. This demonstrates children have a positive approach to new experiences and can use thought processes as they explore, investigate and reason.

Children are well behaved and eager to try new experiences. They are animated when suggesting their own ideas for play or relating experiences. They relate well to their peers, staff and visitors, demonstrating confident personalities, for example when walking from the toilet to his room a four-year-old states 'I'm being sensible'. He recalled a previous discussion with a staff member.

Children are developing good recall as they listen to rhymes and stories. They respond eagerly to staff questions regarding the number, colour and letter of the week. They have access to an extensive range of mark-making resources, including, on a free choice mark-making table where there is a wide range of different pens, crayons, chalks and pencils. Plus items such as, treasury tags, small hole punchers and staplers. Children form recognisable letters and can write

their name competently. They learn new words due to the consistent staff interaction as they play and discuss during planned and spontaneous activities.

Children are developing an extensive love of books as they have lots of opportunity to enjoy them both individually and within a group. There is a comfortable story 'cave' where they readily sit alone or in small groups. The setting has an extensive range of books, including reference books. These are supplemented by story-sacks, puppets and finger puppets. Every half term there are two selected story topic books which are extensively used throughout the session. Activities, displays and craft activities support the books.

Children have a sound understanding of mathematics. The environment is number rich. They spontaneously use their knowledge effectively during play. Themes are undertaken which include the development of children's mathematical skills. For example, the children visited a builder's merchant where the staff supported them to learn about weighing and measuring.

Children are developing an awareness of the needs of others, for example, children support and help each other. They responded positively to the settings 'Golden Rules' including pointing out others misdemeanours. The needs of creatures of the natural world are beginning to be understood as children enjoy the varied topics presented by staff, such as they released the butterflies they had observed from being caterpillars. This is extended, along with their technology skills, as they had access to magnifying glasses to observe their development. Children are skilled using the computer both independently and supported by staff. Children learn about their local area, family life and what celebrations occur in other cultures.

Children's physical development is promoted through a balanced programme of activities. Their fine manipulative skills are significantly enhanced through the use of an extensive range of small resources, such as using scissors during craft activities and woodwork sessions. Outdoor play, outings and visits to the 'Forest School' provides opportunities to run freely, balance, pedal, wheeled toys, catch and throw and kick balls, all of which children enthusiastically engage in and are fully supported to develop their potential.

Children have extensive opportunities to develop their creative experiences as they have access to a range of craft, role play and activities on a free choice and planned basis, including, an extensive free-choice craft resource area. There is a natural resources area which includes boxes of shells, wood and wicker which children can explore and investigate. Whilst adults are there to support them free expression is positively encouraged. Children readily make their own decisions regarding the design and the content of their work.

Musical opportunities are varied and wide-ranging. This includes an extremely well-resourced music area and daily singing and rhyme sessions. Children have opportunities to experience an extensive range of music including a local African art/music festival and drama sessions. Unusual rhymes and songs are enjoyed such as tapes with children's rhymes with classical music. Children enjoy action rhymes including a rhyme about a Venus trap where staff used a large plastic fly to enhance the rhyme and involve the children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are strongly valued and individual needs are of the utmost priority. The ethos of the provision is totally focused on the needs of the children. Activities are planned by observing the children and organising play opportunities that stimulate, excite and support them to

develop their potential. All children have access to all activities. For example, babies and toddlers are involved in art and craft activities such as painting and paint mixed with cornflour. Staff use discussion with parents and carers and outside agencies, when necessary, to ensure specific individual requirements are met. Comprehensive and detailed documents and records produced by the setting, including, requesting life details from parents, ensures a substantial profile of the child is provided to assist in meeting their needs.

The needs of children who have learning disabilities or difficulties are recognised and met extremely sensitively. Experienced staff are very well-supported by a comprehensive policy regarding learning disabilities or difficulties which details how the service will be provided to children. The thorough levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive a great deal of individual attention so that their needs are soundly met.

Children develop a very good understanding of how everyone positively contributes in society. Resources which promote and represent the wider community are extensive and widely available including, through books, posters, themes and craft work which effectively enhances the children's awareness.

Children develop a very strong sense of independence and self-worth as they are encouraged to share, take turns and follow 'the Golden Rules' as they progress through the developmental stages. The rules are focussed on positive behaviour management such as 'Use their mouths to say kind things' and 'Use their hands to be kind to friends.' They respond and readily recall the 'rules' to each other naturally and consistently. Children are very happy and confident in the setting. The use of praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement contributes extremely effectively to the children developing good social skills and a sense of belonging to a wider family group.

Partnership with parents and carers is superb. All parents and carers receive extremely detailed information about the services provided and how their child will be cared for. They receive very comprehensive information about the settings policies and procedures. Regular newsletters are presented and parents are invited to attend parents evening and meetings. Detailed information regarding activities, 'Birth to three matters' and the Foundation stage is provided verbally and on interesting displays throughout the provision. The ongoing sharing of information ensures continuity of care and any changes to children's circumstances can be addressed immediately. The extremely effective key worker system promotes parents confidence and children's well-being. This includes each parent receives a card with the name and direct telephone number of their child's worker.

Information and support to parents and carers is also offered by informative notice boards in the foyer. They have the opportunity to join in sessions and are provided with information booklets, such as, 'Working Together Towards Positive Behaviour'.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Parents are kept excellently informed about their child's progress and themes to be undertaken. Children's learning is further promoted by parents and carers being invited to be involved in home activities, such as, a reading scheme and excellent story sacks. Staff are pro-active in learning about the development point each child is starting from by sharing and completing detailed information about the child with parents. Parents have totally free access to their child's assessment records and are provided with the completed folder, including photographs, when they leave the setting. All documentation is soundly supplemented by regular formal and informal discussion about their

child's progress and achievements. Informative and interesting information regarding the Foundation stage is provided throughout the setting. All this ensures parents are fully informed and children's learning is soundly supported.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

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

This is an dynamic, strong provision. It is successful at making sure that the outcomes for children are very positive. The child care practice is extremely effective. Children are in the care of well-qualified, experienced staff that strongly support them to ensure they are happy and settled in the nursery. They positively benefit from management and staff that are pro-active in promoting, accessing and evaluating training and their own skills. The enthusiasm of the management and staff is reflected on the children therefore their learning and enjoyment is significantly enhanced.

The organisation to operate the nursery is exemplary. Detailed planning of activities and extensive resources, equipment and facilities ensures children's time in the nursery is extremely worthwhile and challenging. The owner/manager has clear focus on what areas need to be developed. However, the organisation to ensure the provision of freely accessible drinking water in all of the children's rooms is not consistent and the organisation of mealtime for babies and younger children is not fully supportive therefore children's well-being is potentially effected.

There are a variety of regular staff meetings at all levels. Planning is completed by them and fully evaluated. Staff respond to the complete commitment of the owner/manager to meet individual children's needs and to continually evaluate and develop all aspects of the setting. Responsibilities are shared and contribute to the pleasant atmosphere, created by the staff team, in which the children learn and play. The provision is thoroughly committed to be child initiated to enable children to progress and develop to their full potential.

Leadership and management for nursery education is outstanding. The three and the four-year-olds are making very rapid progress towards the early learning goals. The leadership of the setting has a clear, pro-active vision for the setting to support the children in their personal development to reach their potential and celebrate their achievements. The owner/manager is forward thinking in recognising the provisions strengths and weaknesses and there is an enthusiastic commitment to address areas for improvement. The staff reflect this enthusiasm and echo the manager/owners ambitions for the provision. Staff a superb knowledge of the principles of the early learning goals.

The welfare, care and learning of the children are extremely well promoted through the very efficient maintenance of records, policies and procedures both required and additional for the efficient and safe management of the provision. Documents are stored securely and safely in order to ensure children's privacy.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 outstanding.

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):

- ensure the procedures to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained with regard to the organisation of meal times for children aged from three months to two years and to the consistent provision of freely accessible drinking water.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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