



First Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY101522
Inspection date	20 July 2005
Inspector	Duncan Gill
Setting Address	Robson Way, off Edgerton Road, Lowton Leigh, Lancs, WA3 2NP
Telephone number	01942 678803
E-mail	
Registered person	First Steps Nursery 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

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 opened in 2002 and operates from a purpose built building located in the Lowton area of Warrington. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 185 children and is open Monday to Friday from 07:15 am to 18:30, 51 weeks of the year.

Children attend from the surrounding areas. There are currently 142 children on roll. Of these 46 3-year-olds and two 4-year-olds receive funding for nursery education.

The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and does not have any children on roll, who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 45 staff, of which 42 hold appropriate early years qualifications and some staff are currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop a good understanding about healthy practices and the importance of them, through effective staff explanations, monthly topics and visitors, such as the dentist. They are cared for in a very clean and hygienic environment, where staff fully implement comprehensive cleaning procedures to help protect them from the spread of infection. For example cleaning toys and furniture after food or activities, wearing aprons, gloves and through hygienic nappy changing procedures. Children are fully encouraged to practice good routines of personal hygiene and older children develop a clear understanding of the reasons for this, for example washing hands to get rid of germs. Most routines in place ensure children's health is promoted. There are effective arrangements in place to ensure children are well cared for when ill, after an accident and with administration of medicines, however sleeping arrangements do not always meet children's individual needs.

Children develop a positive approach to physical exercise through regular access to excellent outdoor play activities. There are separate, well equipped outside play areas for babies and young children. Older children have access to three outside play areas, which have large climbing equipment to provide children with a wide range of opportunities to practice their climbing and balancing skills. Children learn to move around confidently and with control. Older children learn to move well in a variety of ways through jumping, hopping, running and successfully adjust speed or change direction to avoid obstacles. They develop a good awareness of space and competently operate a wide range of large equipment in a variety of ways such as pushing, pulling, peddling and confidently use small equipment such as scissors, pencils, cutters and stencils.

Children are offered healthy and nutritious food during the day. They learn effectively about the importance of a well balanced diet through themes and activities. Babies are fed in line with their individual routines, children's individual dietary needs are well met and staff follow detailed procedures to ensure food is safely prepared. For example staff have attended food hygiene training and carry out regular temperature checks on the fridge and cooked food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are stimulated by an exceptionally well organised environment, which is very child orientated, extremely bright and attractive with excellent evidence of children's

play and activity. It is in excellent repair and very effectively organised into different play areas. Children can independently select from an extensive range of high quality toys, furniture and equipment appropriate for their age and stages of development, such as role play, dressing up, different construction, books, imaginative play, and baby toys. All resources are regularly checked and maintained in excellent condition. Children are highly interested in the resources available, which are stimulating, fun, interesting and provide effective age appropriate challenges.

Risk of accidental injury to children is effectively minimised through extremely vigilant staff and use of thorough risk assessments on all aspects of the nursery. An excellent range of safety measures in place ensure children's safety is paramount, for example socket covers, fully secure outdoor play areas, safety matting and a buzzer system to monitor access to the provision. Staff fully implement detailed safety procedures to ensure children are safe and free from harm when being collected and on outings. Children develop an excellent understanding about safety in setting, through age appropriate staff explanations such as the reasons for not running inside or walking with scissors.

Children are extremely well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Some staff have attended training and cascaded this information to other staff to ensure they fully understand the clear procedure to follow, to ensure concerns are dealt with sensitively and in the best interests of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children enjoy the wide range of activities on offer, which fully involve them and develop their imagination, language, mathematical thinking and creative development. For example role play, construction, singing, imaginative play, arts and crafts. Their independence is well promoted most of the time and they move around the setting confidently, freely accessing toys and equipment. Children are keen to communicate and build strong relationships with staff and other children. They are very happy at the setting and enjoy their time there. They thrive from strong relationships with staff, who are very interested in the children, asking questions to make them think and responding giving praise and encouragement. Young children and babies all round development is fostered through staff successfully implementing the Birth to three matters framework. Young children develop their self confidence and early communication skills well through high quality interactions with staff and begin to explore the world around them through a wide range of experiences including music, sensory activities, arts and crafts.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum by attending relevant training. They use this to fully implement clear and detailed planning, which helps children make good progress towards the early learning goals, through providing a wide range of activities, covering all areas of the curriculum. Suitable assessment records clearly show children's achievements, but do not show their approach to learning or how

staff plan for children's individual next steps in learning. Staff effectively organise the environment to stimulate children's interest in learning. Resources are well used to provide good challenges for children. Staff use a broad variety of teaching methods to ensure children develop well, including focused activities, circle time, free choice and open questioning to promote children's thinking.

Children have a strong exploratory impulse, they are excited and motivated to learn and show a positive approach to new experiences. They confidently link with others for support and enjoy sharing their experiences, building strong relationships with staff and other children. They are keen to communicate and do this clearly, asking questions and confidently talking activities through to reflect what is happening. Children enjoy books, handling them correctly and very carefully. They begin to understand print carries meaning through a wide range of opportunities to practice their reading skills, for example recognising letters, labels and name cards. Children have good opportunities to practice writing for variety of purposes, developing their handwriting skills and more able children correctly write recognisable letters. Children successfully use size and positional language in their play, for example big, little, under and over. They can competently count to five and beyond. More able children can recognise numbers up to nine and they have a variety of opportunities to practice their calculation skills. Children enjoy regular sessions on the computer and begin to develop good ICT skills through this and varied role play experiences. They show good interest in the world they live and begin to comment and ask questions about the outside world, confidently recalling past experiences and talking regularly about people familiar to them. Children enjoy exploring different materials, using all their senses through baking, arts and crafts. They differentiate between different colours successfully and enjoy developing their imagination through different role play opportunities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit greatly from strong relationships between parents and staff. Parents are fully encouraged to take part in their child's learning. Parents evenings, open access to children's assessment records, high quality information on themes, the curriculum and ideas of activities for parents to try at home ensure practitioners and parents work highly effectively together, to further children's development in all areas. Parents are kept fully informed about the setting and their child through extensive information including newsletters, notice boards, detailed daily sheets, policies and excellent communication on arrival and departure.

Children behave in exemplary fashion, they take turns, learn to share toys and consistently show consideration for other children. They learn manners and begin to understand right and wrong from clear and consistent boundaries. Staff fully implement the detailed behaviour policy and provide age appropriate explanations to help children understand the consequences of their actions. Children receive lots of praise for good behaviour and are constantly given encouragement by staff.

Children are highly valued as individuals, they develop self-esteem, are treated with equal concern and their individual needs are effectively met with regards to diet, allergies and special requirements. Children develop a very positive attitude to others and have extensive opportunities to learn about different countries, the wider world and community through topics, visitors and a wealth of resources to promote equality of opportunity. Effective arrangements are in place to care for children with special educational needs. Staff have attended training and work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure children receive high quality support. Realistic and appropriate targets are set for children with special educational needs to enable them to reach their full potential. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff have excellent knowledge of childcare and use this to provide stimulating opportunities for all children in all areas. They have access to regular training opportunities and use these to effectively develop their own knowledge and enhance the care of the children. Staff consistently interact with children and are extremely well deployed to give children effective support and encouragement, which helps them feel secure and confident. Detailed documentation is in place, regularly reviewed and fully implemented by staff, who follow clear and effective routines to ensure that children have a structured day and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery. For example planning, policies, working towards an accredited quality assurance scheme and clear staff roles and responsibilities.

Leadership and management is good. Staff have attended foundation stage training and have an excellent knowledge of this. They are fully involved in high quality planning for the Foundation Stage with clear learning intentions. Assessment records are regularly updated by key workers to monitor children's learning and development, but these do not show children's approach to learning or clearly include plans for next steps in children's learning. Children benefit from effective induction, review and appraisal systems to help staff develop their knowledge and skills. The needs of all children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure staff working with babies have relevant training and experience, review planning to show how staff assess children's progress and plan for next steps in development and to review the role of the key worker to consider how consistency and continuity of care is maintained.

The nursery is now implementing the Birth to three matters framework and staff have attended training to effectively implement this to help children under 3 years develop. Observations are regularly undertaken by staff to assess children's progress and plan for next steps in development, although planning for individual next steps in learning is not always clear. Consistency and continuity is now maintained for children as they move through the nursery, through an effective key worker system. Children's

development files are passed to their next key worker as they move rooms and parents have the opportunity to meet new key workers.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 6: Safety. Discussions took place with the provider and a full report was submitted to Ofsted. No further action was taken and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- increase opportunities for children to develop their independence
- develop sleeping arrangements to ensure children's individual needs are met.

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 children's assessment records to show how they approach learning and to plan for their individual next steps in learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk