

# First Steps Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 305058  
**Inspection date** 28 September 2007  
**Inspector** Debra Elizabeth Jean Dahlstrom

**Setting Address** Yewtree Lane, Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1PU

**Telephone number** 01625 859 867

**E-mail**

**Registered person** First Steps Kindergarten

**Type of inspection** Integrated

**Type of care** Full day care, Out of School 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](http://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 Kindergarten and Out of School Club is situated in Poynton within the Macclesfield Borough of Cheshire. The setting is open from 07.45 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, throughout the year. Full Day Care is provided for up to 50 children aged from birth to five, children may attend on a full or part-time basis. Out of school care is provided for up to 24 children of primary school age. Children are taken to and collected from five schools in Poynton; Worth, Lower Park, Lostock Hall, Vernon and St. Paul's. During school holidays the provision is also open to children who attend other schools. There are currently 55 children on roll in the nursery of which 16 receive nursery education funding and 58 for the out of school club. Staff are able to support children with learning and physical disabilities.

There are a total of 17 staff who work directly with the children, of which nine hold a recognised childcare qualification. Support staff are employed to carry out cooking, cleaning and maintenance duties.

The groups premises are two large single storey demountable classroom buildings, within the same grounds. The Kindergarten building comprises of four play rooms for children of different

ages and a sleep room, while the out of school building has one large play room and a computer room. Toilet and nappy changing facilities directly adjoin each of the children's play rooms. Play rooms are divided into different types of activity and play areas, and have carpet and vinyl floor surfaces. Children are able to participate in physical and outdoor play activities in one of the three enclosed outdoor play areas which provide grass and hard standing surfaces and directly adjoin the buildings. There is a kitchen, laundry, office, staff room and staff cloakrooms.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment with robust practices in place to reduce the spread of infection. Children are learning about 'germs' and how to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Older children clearly describe the effects of 'bacteria' on their bodies. Almost all members of staff have current training in administering first aid. All the necessary permissions and records are in place regarding the administering of medication and accidents to children. Children enthusiastically run, jump and stretch and generally enjoy outdoor play on a daily basis.

The setting holds a certificate in oral hygiene for its provision of low sugar drinks and snacks for children. Children also received a visit from a health promotion worker in dental hygiene to support them in learning about tooth care. Fresh drinking water is readily available in sports bottles or lidded cups to quench children's thirst and keep them hydrated. Children enjoy the social experiences that meal times provide and discussions that promote the benefits of healthy eating. Young children for example are encouraged to drink their milk to help their bones grow. There have been a number of changes to the menu since the last inspection and the setting is currently reviewing it once again. Children do receive fresh fruit on a daily basis, however, they continue to receive a number of processed foods

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is made interesting by the numerous displays of educational posters and examples of their art work. They choose what to play with from an appropriate range of age appropriate toys and equipment.

Fire fighting equipment is provided and checked at specified intervals, regular fire drills ensure children are well practised in emergency evacuation procedures. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant, using risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Staff have a good understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits, and how to involve children effectively in organising their environment. This is to allow children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion with staff; for example, about the importance of not running indoors because of the danger of hurting themselves or others. Effective systems are also in place to ensure that children are collected by named persons, with suitable arrangements for emergencies.

Children are safeguarded because staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding children procedures and their individual responsibilities. Staff are aware to report concerns to the appropriate agency should they have any concerns regarding children's welfare. The child

protection statement is detailed and shared with parents and carers of children prior to their children attending. However, there are small yet relevant details missing.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled at the nursery. They enter their groups happily and quickly leave their parents and carers to play with their friends. Staff establish strong, positive relationships with children, helping them to feel settled and secure. Early communication skills are well supported through good adult-child interactions. Staff working with children under two years old for example, support young children's listening as they talk about what they are doing, thus helping babies to start to link words with actions. They are very gentle and caring and know the children well, so young children make themselves understood through gestures as they express their feelings.

Staff have knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework to inform their planning and practice, and this has a positive effect on the quality of children's learning. Clear plans are in place to ensure that all children take part in a range of interesting play and learning opportunities. Children achieve well and benefit from a broad range of activities that promote their good all-round development. Skilful intervention from staff encourages children to think and make connections. Children are developing a sense of belonging, they are familiar with the daily routines and remind others of what happens next. Children in the preschool room are confident speakers; they talk about their homes and families, sing rhymes and readily anticipate their enjoyment for both free play and group time.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and plan a range of interesting activities across the six areas of learning. Staff attend ongoing training and receive support from an early years advisor. The staff team work well together and are in the process of further developing the planning and assessments systems. Planning identifies the next steps in children's learning and assessment systems are in place to chart children's progress.

There are good opportunities for children to recognise and identify the meaning of words and numbers around the setting. Children confidently count beyond 10 and some beyond 20, they spontaneously drew shapes, such as triangle, circle and rectangle. Older children recognised that two triangle blocks when placed together make another shape. Children's use of positional language and comparisons is supported well by staff as children competently described 'bottom', 'on top of', 'biggest' and 'smallest' when building a tower with large cardboard boxes.

Children's enjoyment of stories is significantly enhanced by the very good skills of the storytellers. Children listen well and are animated as staff encourage their interaction and use small puppets as props. Children freely select books from the well stocked book corner and sit and show the pages to their friends. Children use marks readily to represent their ideas on paper, which contributes to their confidence, emergent writing skills and language development. They use recognisable letters and sound out their names as they do so for their peers. 'Ol is for your name' said one child looking to his friend and pointing to his written work. The writing area had few resources laid out at the time of inspection, thus children's opportunities to self select from a range of materials was limited.

Children construct with a range of building materials and make models using their fine movements and hand-eye coordination. They have opportunities take part in a variety of creative activities, using a range of tools, and they are not overly directed by staff. This enables the children to use their imagination and natural creativity. They use large cardboard boxes to build; they make a house and a tower, show sustained interest and enthusiasm in completing their tasks. Children have generally good opportunities to use marking materials; they confidently cover the paper with colour. They talk about the use of colours as they discuss their choices with other children working next to them and comment about lighter and darker shades. Children enjoy using technology, such as the computer. They are happy to explain to others how the electronic toy works.

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

The provision is good.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They have access to a range of resources that provide positive images of diversity, such as books, posters and imaginative play equipment. Children participate in activities that help them learn about their own and the customs, religious and cultural beliefs of others. Children have equal access to the play activities, ensuring that they are all valued and included. Staff are very knowledgeable about children's individual needs and use this information in their planning.

Staff skilfully support and encourage children to play fairly, share and take turns. They carefully negotiate with children to resolve minor squabbles in a friendly manner without the need for sanctions. Children respond to the meaningful praise they receive and work hard to receive the stickers that are given to recognise their efforts, achievements and good behaviour. Other positive strategies include the use of a 'happy board' a clearly visual aid to children to assist them in managing their own behaviour. Older children in the out of school setting readily explain the 'rules within the club, which focuses upon respect for others.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents speak positively about the group, staff, the care provided and the progress their children are making. Newsletters and daily discussions keep parents up to date about events at the setting and their child's day. Work files are used to monitor children's progress; these are shared with parents to keep them informed about their child's achievements. There is some written information in the parents handbook regarding the Foundation Stage and areas of learning which all parents receive once their child starts the nursery.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management is good as there is good communication between management and staff. Daily discussions and regular team leader meetings help the staff team review, evaluate and develop practice. Staff are positively encouraged to develop their skills in planning. Children benefit positively from the improvements and developments this is bringing to the setting.

Children are happy and settled in the friendly and well organised environment. The key worker system is effective in enabling staff to build good relationships with children. The good ratios of qualified staff improves the quality of care and education for all children. Staff work with the children consistently on a daily basis, ensuring that they are fully supported with their learning and development needs.

All the legally required documentation, which contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being, is in place, including medication, accident and incident records. This maintains children's safety and welfare. Appropriate policies and procedures are used to inform staff practice and underpin the care provided although small yet relevant details are missing.

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

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

At the last inspection there were a number of recommendations agreed to improve the quality of care provided for children. The following written procedures provide for children's safety and well-being. There is now in place a procedure for uncollected children, the child protection statement includes steps to take in the event of any allegations made against staff. The behaviour management policy includes the process for recording incidents of physical intervention by staff. Consent to transport children in a vehicle and a list of named drivers is in place to improve upon children's safety.

Resources which show positive images of diversity have been purchased and are used with children and so improve their experiences of difference. Children's meals and snack times now include fresh produce daily and some progress is made in reducing the amount of processed foods included on the menu.

Three areas for further development in respect of nursery education were also agreed. Planning clearly links to the areas of learning and so learning intentions are identified. Children's opportunities to develop number are practised as part of the practical daily activities. Children can and do more readily access resources thus promoting their learning, although this was less evident in the mark making area.

### **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):

- continue to develop the menu for children in order to offer healthier food options

- clarify the wording in the child protection statement in line with the recent guidance.

### **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):

- consider how more information about the foundation stage is provided for parents
- consider how children can gain more opportunities to self select mark making materials in the writing area

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