

First Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	120033
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Inspector	Julia Lynn Freemantle
Setting Address	Guildford Road, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 0PZ
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Registered person	First Steps Day Nursery
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.

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 1991. It operates from purpose-built accommodation in the grounds of St Peters Hospital, Chertsey, Surrey. It provides a childcare service to the employees of St Peters NHS Trust as well as some external families. The children are separated into age appropriate groups and there is a self-contained baby unit.

The nursery is registered to provide care for 81 children aged three months to five years. There are currently 116 children on roll. This includes 27 funded three and four-year-olds. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week from 07:00-18:00 except for Christmas and bank holidays.

The nursery have 20 full and part-time staff; of these, 18 hold relevant qualifications in teaching and early years. The nursery is in receipt of nursery education funding and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted and protected as the staff have good procedures in place. Children are encouraged by the staff to become independent in their personal care and when using the toilet. Older children wash their hands with antibacterial hand wash and use paper towels to prevent the spread of infection. They wash their hands at appropriate times throughout their day, such as, before meal times and after touching the nursery animals.

Children benefit from the procedures in place for dealing with accidents and of the administration of medication. There are 15 members of staff who hold a first aid qualification.

Children are encouraged to drink throughout their day and staff enable children to become independent in accessing water when they need it. Babies are offered water regularly, slightly older children point to their cups in a basket and sit with each other on a low seat. Older children independently access water from a water cooler machine. Children are encouraged to drink more at snack and meal times to ensure that they do not become dehydrated.

Children enjoy a social time when they have their snacks and meals, they are very well supported by the staff at these times. Older children are very confident talking to each other about what they are eating and what they like to eat. Younger children have set snack times during their day. Older children benefit from a rolling snack time and choose from a good selection of healthy snacks when they wish. Children enjoy a good range of main meals at the nursery; information is provided for the parents about the rotating four weekly menu. Children's dietary needs are adhered to and staff ensure that the babies are provided with their food pureed, mashed or chopped depending on their weaning stage.

Children enjoy lots of opportunities for outdoor play and fresh air during their day as staff are proactive in encouraging children to take advantage of the good range of activities available daily in the outdoor play space. For example, children use wheeled toys, climb on the climbing frame, play with their peers in the play house, step on the stepping stones, feel the wind on their faces and enjoy watching and feeding the nursery rabbit and guinea pigs. Younger children benefit from their own enclosed play space.

Children rest in line with their parents wishes and with the nursery routine as much as possible. Babies and younger children have separate sleep rooms, while older children have sleep beds in one of their play areas. Children have individual bedding and are closely monitored by the staff while they sleep. For example, staff regularly check sleeping children and use a baby monitor; checks are recorded for babies and younger children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children remain safe at nursery as the staff and managers have a good understanding of safety concerns and risks. Staff check the rooms used daily and there is a more detailed risk assessment completed yearly. The outdoor pond is fenced, however, the fence that is present is showing signs of decay; children remain safe while in the garden as the staff continually observe the children to ensure that they are safe. There are a variety of safety devices in place, such as, safety gates and radiator covers.

Children move freely in each area of the nursery, each room is organised effectively to allow the children to remain safe. Children develop confidence and independence in a welcoming environment that allows them to make choices about their play.

There is an appropriate fire procedure in place and the fire alarms are tested weekly. Fire procedures are displayed in each room and a fire log is used to record evacuation practises.

Children are protected as the staff are vigilant at all times. There is a good arrival and departure procedure in place. For example, children are only released to authorised parents or carers. There is an entry system and visitors are requested to sign the visitors book.

Children have access to a extensive range of toys, equipment and resources throughout the nursery. They are in good condition and are regularly checked, cleaned and replaced at appropriate times. Children are able to self select most of the toys to help them make choices and gain independence. Toy boxes and cupboards are labelled with words and pictures to support the children's choice.

Children are protected as the staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children and of child protection issues. Staff are aware of the procedure that they should follow if they have concerns and there is a designated member of staff who is responsible for taking any concerns raised further. A written procedure and policy is in place to provide information for the parents and staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at nursery, they are happy and settled and quickly become involved in the activities available to them. Children separate from their parents and carers well; staff are near by to support any children who may become unhappy about saying good bye.

Children benefit from the good relationships they have with the staff; this helps to develop good self esteem and confidence. Staff provide lots of praise, encouragement and smiles for the children to help them feel part of the nursery. They value the children's input and ideas, children are asked questions to support their learning and they are given time to answer. Children and parents benefit from a 'key worker' system that is in place as this ensures that the children's needs are adhered to and enables parents to be kept fully up to date with their children's day and their development.

Children show care for each other as they play. Children play alone, in pairs, in small groups and in large groups on occasions for specific activities. Children play well and get involved with what is going on within the nursery. Children benefit from staff observing them to ensure that they join in and take full advantage of what is available.

Children enjoy a variety of craft activities, use the sand and water trays, cook, play with role play toys and enjoy the 'ball pit' and soft play area.

All children benefit from the observations, the staff undertake on the children to ensure that they monitor the children's progress and plan for their next stage of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from the balance of both adult and child initiated activities that provide children with experiences of the six areas of learning. Staff encourage children to think for themselves and lead their own play, however, they are there to support the children and enable their play by providing them with the resources they need. For example, the staff ensure that children have suitable clothing and footwear to play in the outdoor area. Children are provided with sufficient challenge in their play and learning as staff are aware through observations and progress records what the children are working towards. Children are happy in their play and chat freely to their peers about what they are doing.

Children are encouraged to become independent and develop good self help skills, such as, putting on their coats and shoes. Children are independent in choosing what they do during their day as they are able to self select most of the toys and resources.

Children are able to access a range of writing materials within the craft room, however, opportunities for them to write for a purpose are limited. Children view the written word in many ways around the room. For example, staff have put labels on toys, labels on displays and written questions around the room, such as, 'can you find your shoe pocket' and 'what letters can you see'. Children learn to recognise their names. The children begin to understand that print carries meaning with the use 'Jolly Phonics'; they discover a new letter each week.

Children have opportunities to count during their day, they count cutlery as they lay the tables, count children in the line to go out to play. The children use 'compare bears' with matching cards to learn simple sequencing patterns, when playing games the children begin to understand big and little, heavy and light, shapes and colours.

Children discover the outdoors and develop an understanding about the world around us through planned and unplanned activities and discussions. The children acknowledge festivals and celebrations throughout the year, such as, pancake day, Chinese New Year and St Patrick's day. Children have daily opportunities for 'free flow' play between the nursery room and the outdoor play space; they enjoy feeding and touching the nursery animals, exploring the textures of flowers, soil and sawdust in a tray while playing with plastic bugs and learn about growing plants. Children use the computer, programmable toys and microphones.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and parents are welcomed into the nursery and have equal opportunities within the nursery. Children are encouraged to take part in all of the activities available. The nursery environment makes all feel welcome. For example, posters, writing and flags about other cultures and countries promote an environment that shows the nursery values and respects people from other cultures and backgrounds. Children have daily use of a good selection of toys and resources that reflect the diverse country we live in. Staff liaise with parents to ensure that they fully understand their children's cultural and religious requirements. This ensures that any changes to planned topics and activities can be made to allow for the children's needs to be met. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

Children behave well and know what is expected of them as staff act as good role models at all times. Children benefit from the sound routine and boundaries in place, staff use praise and encouragement to promote good behaviour. Children are encouraged to be kind to one another

and to say please and thank you. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. The children look in wonder and are fascinated by the rabbit and guinea pigs as they eat the fresh vegetables they feed them. Children smile with glee as they run through the wind and feel it on their faces. Children begin to understand and value differences between us and the diverse country we live in.

There is a good admissions and settling in process; parents feel that the children are supported well when they transfer from one age group to another. The staff liaise regularly with the parents to ensure that the children's needs are met when they start in the nursery and also their changing needs as they arise. Parents feel that they are kept up to date with the care their child receives. They feel that they are kept informed about Birth to three matters and of their development. Parents are kept informed about the nursery through information displayed on notice boards and via daily information sheets about their child's day. Parents feel that the staff are approachable and that any concerns are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Staff value the children and parents and speak positively about the importance of the parents in the children's care and wellbeing.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are happy with the education their children receive and feel that they are kept up to date with their progress. They feel that they are kept informed about the Foundation Stage through discussion, posters, information evenings and through regular one to one meetings with their child's key worker. Staff feel that the parents are the children's first educators and that they know their children better than anyone else. Therefore, they feel that their involvement is vital in ensuring that the children's needs and full potential are met in partnership with them. The parents and children are encouraged to tell the nursery staff and other children what they have been doing at home to support this partnership further. Parents feel that their input is valued by the staff and feel that they are both working together for the good of their children; they value being involved with the children's progress records as they are able to provide information about their children daily and during more the more formal one to one meetings with their child's key worker.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children settle well and are happy in the nursery, their care and learning are enhanced by the effective organisation of the rooms and of the activities that are available to them. Staff have a sound knowledge of Birth to three matters and of children's development as they have attended training and are given ongoing support from the managers.

The leadership and management is good. Managers have a clear mission statement for the nursery. Managers continually monitor the provision and have clear systems in place to do this. Managers regularly observe each room and liaise with the room leaders to ensure that they are fully aware of what is taking place in the nursery. They review their findings to make changes to the nursery practice. For example, managers brought in changes to the snack time. Initially staff were unsure about the changes but managers worked with the staff to ensure that these were implemented effectively and were of benefit to the children. Managers evaluated the nursery provision following the last inspection and have worked with the staff to ensure that the recommendations have been met. For example, managers and staff have worked together to review the different ways of teaching and grouping the children ensure that they are fully supported and reach their full potential.

There is a good recruitment, vetting system, induction and training procedure for staff. All staff hold a valid CRB disclosure. Ongoing training and appraisals ensure that the staff remain suitable for their roles. The nursery benefits from the involvement of the childcare manager and the day manager. Staff are deployed well within the nursery and ratios are maintained at all times. Staff attend regular staff meetings to ensure that they feel part of the nursery and a valued member of the team. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage as they have attended training. Staff have already attended training for the new Early Years Foundation Stage that commences later this year.

Children are protected by the extensive range of written policies and procedures that exceed those required by Ofsted. Copies are available for parents and staff sign to say that they have read and understood what is expected of them.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery were asked to develop the children's awareness of other cultures. The nursery now provides more opportunities for children to have access to everyday practical activities that reflect their environment to ensure that the children learn to value other people. They were asked to keep a written record, signed by parents, acknowledging medicines given to children. The nursery now completes a medication form when medication is given to ensure that children are protected at all times. They were asked to review and update the child protection procedure for the nursery. The nursery now has a good procedure in place and a designated member of staff ensures any concerns raised are dealt with appropriately to ensure that children remain protected at all times. The nursery was also asked to review and update the complaints procedure. The nursery has reviewed the complaints procedure to reflect the changes made by Ofsted in 2004 and ensures that children remain safe and protected at all times.

At the last education inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that children are grouped appropriately to make good use of time and to support them fully in developing their listing skills. The nursery has reviewed the different ways of teaching the children and now works with the children in smaller groups for most of the day to ensure that they are fully supported and reach their full potential. They were asked to ensure that staff know about the cultural background of every child in the group. The staff liaise with the parents to ensure they have information about the children's culture and they ensure that all members of staff are aware of this information to ensure that the children's needs are being fully met. They were asked to ensure that planned activities provide sufficient challenge for older and more able children. Staff regular observe and assess the children to ensure that they plan for all of children to meet their full potential. They were also asked to ensure children make good use of information technology to support their learning. The nursery has improved the resources available and has increased the time children use them to ensure that their learning is supported appropriately.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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

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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 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 that the fence surrounding the outdoor fish pond is robust and secure so that children play safely outside

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to use mark making implements and materials throughout their play to encourage children to write for a purpose

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