

First Steps - Windsor

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	108441
Inspection date	07 November 2007
Inspector	Aileen Ewins
Setting Address	N.W.C.A., Hanover Way, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 5NW
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Registered person	The Trustees of First Steps Windsor
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 Pre-School is a long established group, which changed its name in 1999 from Little Learners. It operates from New Windsor Community Centre in Hanover Way, Windsor. The group have use of the large hall, kitchen and toilets. It is a parent committee run group and serves the families of the local community.

There are currently 25 children on roll from two to five years. This includes 12 funded three and four year olds. The setting currently supports children with particular needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five mornings a week term time only. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

Six part time staff work with the children. All the staff have appropriate early years qualifications. The manager is also currently working towards the Early Years Foundation Degree. Three members of staff hold paediatric first aid qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher in the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children understand about healthy hygiene as they are aware to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Children are escorted to the toilets, which are across the hallway from their pre-school room. Children use liquid soap and paper towels. Children happily show staff their clean hands after washing them.

Children have opportunities to play outside on the field adjacent to the pre-school and enjoy wooden horses, tricycles and fun with balls and bean bags, for example. Children therefore benefit from fresh air and exercise. Inside the hall each day, a sectioned off area allows children time to spend on sit on cars, climbing apparatus and rockers. Children also use the Judo/padded play area which provides a safe environment with cushioned flooring and mats for physical exercise.

Staff are aware to document accidents and parents sign to acknowledge these. Three members of staff have paediatric first aid qualifications and a member of staff has responsibilities for first aid. Further training for the remaining staff is to be put in place.

Staff clean down tables with antibacterial spray before snack time and after. Children are given healthy snacks which include milk/water and toast. Children are not encouraged to pour the drinks themselves, however. Children sit in small groups at snack time with a member of staff present. Throughout the day children have access to drinking water. Parents inform staff about children's individual dietary needs and any allergies. Three members of staff hold food hygiene certificates.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children arrive to a welcoming room displaying some of the children's own work. The hall is large, light and airy. The hall is set up each morning before children attend. Children are greeted as they arrive by a member of staff on the door. Children sit down on the mat for registration. Resources are set out well and children can therefore access toys and equipment easily. Children are happy, settled and confidently approach staff as they move between activities. The toilets are based across the hallway but staff always accompany the children. Equipment and resources at the pre-school are in good condition and well maintained.

A thorough risk assessment check is made each morning before children attend. Likewise, when children go outside on to the field a member of staff checks the area first. A fire evacuation procedure is in place which is practised each term. Times for evacuation are noted. Registers are kept which detail each child's attendance and staff working that session; however, if a child arrives late the time of arrival is not noted appropriately. Parents do advise staff if someone different to normal is collecting their child and this is documented. Emergency contacts are in place for each child.

Staff have a thorough understanding of safeguarding the children in their care. A member of staff has particular responsibilities for child protection and a policy is in place, which parents are made aware of. Staff are aware to protect themselves from false allegations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a stimulating environment and have fun whilst at the pre-school. Children interact well with the staff and can access the resources available to them easily. Children enjoy playing with a wide range of toys which include animals and zoo, cars and roadway, dolls, railway, Lego, construction, puzzles, a kitchen with toy food and a small table with chairs, for example. Children also make good use of painting, chalking, play dough, the literacy table with stampers, a calculator and pads of paper, dressing up clothes and the book corner. Part of the hall is sectioned off each day and children have an extensive play area available to them for use on the climbing frame, sand and water, sit on cars or tricycles.

Staff are happy to listen to the children when they are talking to them and play is child led. Children settle well and are stimulated in their play as staff ask a mix of open and closed questions when speaking to the children. Each day a child has special responsibilities, for which they take turns. Children help staff with taking the register back to the table, counting out the cups at snack time, for example. Staff are aware of children's individual needs, likes and dislikes.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from their time at pre-school and sessions are fun. Children learn to make play dough and the staff help children to measure out in simple ways, such as one cup and half a cup which the children easily understand. The children mix the dough and talk about its texture. Later as they use the play dough they discuss how it feels warm. Children are encouraged to be imaginative and whilst building a Lego railway name the station.

Children enjoy familiar action and rhyming songs. When singing The Wheels On The Bus children are confident to take the main part, for example in being the driver or the babies crying. Children learn to recognise their own name and that of their friends as in registration staff members hold up name cards for children to hang on the self registration poster. However, limited opportunities are made for children to practise mark making or to develop their skill at writing their own names. Good use is made though for children to develop language and children confidently use describing words such as lumpy, smooth, half, strong, big and more than. Children also discuss the weather at circle time, saying that it is cloudy and misty.

Children take turns to take home Barney Bear at the weekend. Children take Barney home along with his hairbrush and toothbrush in his small suitcase. Children draw pictures about their adventures with Barney and parents write about the weekend in Barney's Book which other children share on his arrival back. Children enjoy visits to the community, for example to the local allotments when they were able to bring back locally grown fruit and vegetables. Children also have regular opportunities to use the computer with educational games and making pictures and designs. Children experiment with musical instruments and happily sit together playing the bells making loud bells, quiet bells, high and low bells.

All staff are involved with the planning for all age groups from Birth to three through to the Foundation Stage. Staff have a good knowledge of both and are experienced in their care. Planning is organised and structured and efficient use is made of evaluating the activities that take place. Planning incorporates many themes and also includes time to learn about festivals celebrated throughout Britain and the wider world. Children are also given a good grounding in phonic work which helps children to read later in their lives. Staff make good use of extending

activities, for example when counting how many children are present they ask how many bikes will be needed and if one more child arrives how many will that make. Children's individual progress is plotted within their development records which are shared with parents. Staff are aware of children's starting points through discussions with their parents and effectively extend activities for those children more able or offer more help to any child needing further assistance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident at the pre-school and play together well. Children form good relationships with each other and the staff who care for them. Staff are aware of each child's individual needs which helps children in turn to feel valued. Children have been introduced to the diverse world in which they live and are aware of positive images of society in regard to disability, age, gender, culture and religion. Children have been shown insight into religious festivals, such as Eid and Divali and celebrate St Andrew's Day whilst being taught about St Lucy, the patron saint of the blind. Children are offered jigsaws, puzzles and books which depict culture, age, disability and gender.

A member of staff has responsibilities for inclusion and staff work well with children who have particular needs. Staff are aware to include these children within the everyday structure of the pre-school they work with parents' wishes and alongside professional assistance to help children gain the most. Staff are also aware of confidentiality with sensitive issues.

The relationship with parents is good and parents have many positive comments to make about the staff who care for their children. Parents receive newsletters about the day to day running of the pre-school and what is happening within the local community. Parents are made aware of the key worker who cares for their child and parents are encouraged to drop in to help either with story time, if they have a particular skill they can share or to help at snack times.

Children behave well and staff talk calmly and nicely to the children. Children are happy to approach staff and have respect for one another. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with consistently and staff explain to children why something may not be nice to say or do. Staff use distraction techniques when dealing with children who may not be acting appropriately but overall children behave very well and are happy and content in their surroundings.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately. Children at the pre-school develop relationships with each other and the staff. Children learn right from wrong and respect their surroundings. Children are aware of the community around them through visits to such places as the local allotments and have been given insight into cultural and religious differences.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents visit with their children before starting at the pre-school. Staff offer supportive help to parents which helps to ensure children are happy. Parents are aware of the policies and procedures of the pre-school and sign to acknowledge reading these. A notice board for parents is displayed in the entrance hall and parents receive details on the curriculum in regard to the theme of the week, literacy and language, physical times, play and enjoyment. Parents were offered an open day last term which enabled them to see their children's work and development records, whilst speaking to key worker staff. However, parents are aware that they can see these records and discuss their children's progress at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children develop emotionally, socially and personally during their time at the pre-school. Children are cared for by efficient, well organised and motivated staff. Children feel secure and confident in their care. Good use is made of the space available within the very large hall, which is divided to allow children lots of room for playing with climbing apparatus, tricycles and sit on cars. Children settle well and are happy to approach and talk to the staff. A new manager is recently in post and staff work well together.

Good practice is seen with regard to accident records. Registers however, do not detail the times of arrival for any children attending late. Policies and procedures have been recently updated and are thorough. Parents are kept aware of the procedures in place for their children. Emergency evacuation is practised regularly and consistent practice is in place in regard to risk assessments. Staff have been given personal responsibilities in regard to first aid, risk assessing, food hygiene, child protection and inclusion, which further aids personal development. Permissions for outings, photographs and emergency treatment for instance are sought from parents.

The quality of the leadership and management is good. The new manager is currently working towards a degree in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is committed to the role she is now involved with. Staff work well together and are supportive of one another. Staff and the manager also work well with the committee who support them. Staff deployment is well organised. Training for staff is ongoing and the management structure is aware of the keep training consistent. An appraisal system is now being put in place and staff are consulted about how they view the pre-school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff work together in the planning of the curriculum and make observations on children's progress. Children's progress is shared with parents and a positive relationship is in place between parents and the staff who care for their children.

The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Only one recommendation was made at the last inspection. This was to update records to ensure that all necessary details are recorded, emergency medical consent is in place for all children and confidentiality is maintained. The setting has addressed this and records are now kept which show children's emergency details are in place and medical consent is in place. Parents sign to give emergency consent and each child's records has an emergency contact as well as parent/carer. Records detailing personal information about children is stored in a locked filing drawer within a cupboard. Staff are aware of the need for confidentiality.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require Ofsted or the provider to take any further 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):

- provide children with more opportunities to pour drinks independently at snack times
- ensure children's times of attendance are recorded appropriately within the register system with particular regard to those children arriving late.

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):

- offer children more opportunities to practise emergent writing.

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