

# First Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110168
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Carol Patricia Willett
<b>Setting Address</b>	School Lane, Yateley, Hampshire, GU46 6NW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 746963
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Governing Body of First Steps Nursery
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 Nursery opened in 1992. It operates from a purpose-built, single story building within the grounds of Yateley School campus. Children are cared for in three separate age groups - Babies, Toddlers and Pre-School. All rooms have access to toilets, hand washing facilities and nappy change areas. A large, additional room provides space for lunch times and group activities. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outside play.

The nursery opens from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks a year. There are currently 99 children, aged from three months to four years, on roll. This includes 41 funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is able to support children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

A team of 15 staff work with the children; 10 staff hold early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 and 3, three staff are currently undertaking early years training. The manager is currently working towards an Early Years foundation degree. An additional two staff provide lunchtime cover.

Yateley's playscheme operates from The Yateley Centre. The main session runs from 10:00 to 15:00, with optional early and late sessions. It offers a range of activities including swimming, art and craft, sports, dance and drama. Children have access to extensive playing fields, sports hall, drama hall and gymnasium. There are currently up to 124 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

Home From Home Breakfast Club opens from 07:30 to 09:00, Monday to Friday, during term time. Home From Home After School Club opens from 15:00 to 18:00. There are currently 34 children on roll in the Breakfast Club and 64 in the After School Club varies. The Home From Home Club collects children attending Westfield Infant and Primary Schools, St Peters and Yateley Infants School and staff collect children from these schools. Staff have suitable qualifications and are committed to updating their knowledge by undertaking further training.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because they have access to clean, well-maintained premises and staff are very aware of the need to protect them from the spread of infection both in the nursery and at the out of school club. Staff implement generally good hygiene routines so children learn the importance of personal hygiene as part of the daily routine. The toilet and nappy changing areas are very good and there are excellent nappy changing procedures in place. The layout of the premises allows older children to develop independence in their personal care. They use tissues to wipe their noses and go and wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before snack-time and after messy play. Children's health is promoted as staff undertake additional cleaning as necessary throughout the day to ensure good hygiene at all times. This ensures the environment remains suitable to everyone. Children's healthcare records are maintained appropriately and any accidents involving children are recorded promptly, with a copy of the written report given to parents. Almost all members of the staff team have attended paediatric first aid training and they treat children who do have an accident with care and concern.

Children have suitable opportunities to spend time in the fresh air as staff ensure they play outside daily using a variety of resources including wheeled toys and climbing frame and balls and small equipment. Children display good spatial awareness as they move around indoors and outside with control and co-ordination. They participate in a variety of activities that enable them to be active and maintain a healthy body. For instance, they competently manoeuvre wheeled toys and practise their throwing and catching skills as they play with balls. Children dance around avoiding collisions as they practise for the Christmas play and they enjoy signing and matching actions and words. Children using the after school provision have opportunities to go out side in the enclosed garden area and use the school fields during the summer months. They enjoy activities such as air hockey and pool to develop their physical skills and enjoy using the dance mat trying to keep up with the steps on the screen.

Meal and snack times are very social occasions where all the children in the nursery sit together to eat and this allows siblings to enjoy each others' company. Children enjoy a varied range of healthy and nutritious snacks; for instance breadsticks, apples and raisins which are varied on a daily basis. Hot meals are provided at lunch time by the school caterers and are healthy and nutritious and children enjoy eating. These are provided in sufficient quantity to ensure children can eat enough to satisfy their appetites. They choose whether they would like milk or water

to drink and older children generally manage to pour out their own drinks totally independently. A water dispenser is available in the wet play room so water is available throughout the day. Some procedures around snack times are not hygienic as staff do not provide plates and place pieces of fruit on to the table. Children in the out of school club enjoy a good variety of food for their tea which includes fruit and chopped vegetables. However, they are not able to develop their independence skills as staff make their sandwiches or put spread on their toast. Staff seek relevant information about children's individual dietary needs and take positive steps to meet these.

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

The provision is good.

The children in the nursery have use of a self-contained building which is bright and airy, maintained in a good state of repair and with good levels of natural light. The premises are welcoming and child friendly as staff greet the children and their parents and carers. They attractively display children's individual artwork and group collages and a collection of children's photographs in the entrance hall and base rooms which the children like to view. This creates a warm and welcoming environment and develops children's sense of belonging and self esteem as they understand that their efforts are valued. The nursery is divided into age appropriate base rooms and enable children to move around freely and independently and easily access furniture, play materials and equipment. Older children in the out of school club occupy the social area of the community school using the bar area and conservatory which provides ample space for their needs.

Younger children freely access a wide variety of good quality resources that are age appropriate and covers all areas of development. This encourages their independence skills and choice well. Staff have good systems in place to ensure resources are suitable as they regularly check items to ensure their safety and they remove anything that is broken or dangerous. Staff in the out of school club ensure the children have access to a broad range of activities and resources. Due to the limited storage facilities children ask for other resources that may not be out. Staff are very responsive and get out items as requested.

Children stay safe and receive good attention because staff in both provisions take positive steps to identify and minimise areas of potential risk. Premises are secure and there are good arrivals and collection procedures in place. Safety checks are undertaken daily both inside and in the outside play areas. Staff follow good procedures when children are taken out for walks. They record details in the outings book and take walkie talkies with them. Required fire safety features are in place and children and staff regularly participate in fire drills to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of the procedure they should follow in the event of it being necessary to evacuate the premises. Staff are vigilant and supervise children well at all times.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe and avoid accidental injury as staff use daily experiences to reinforce their awareness. For example, they intervene to explain that children need to sit properly on chairs to avoid the possibility of them falling off. Children are safeguarded as staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues and the procedure they should follow if they have any concerns. Everyone is aware of which member of staff has overall responsibility within the group for child protection and all staff members regularly update their knowledge of safeguarding children through training. Parents are informed of the nursery's responsibility through a written policy.

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

The provision is good.

Children are confident, settled and happy both within the nursery and the out of school club as staff are affectionate and caring and form very warm, close relationships with the children and use lots of praise and encouragement. Most children in the nursery separate easily from their parents as they come into the nursery and join their friends for play. Staff are calm and reassuring to children who find it more difficult to separate from their parents. They know the children well and offer good support as they take them to activities they know are liked. Staff in the toddler room have very good interactive skills and the children enjoy going to them for hugs and cuddles. They ensure that the children have an enjoyable and worthwhile experience whilst at the nursery as they plan and prepare a wide range of interesting activities to ensure children make good progress in their development. They use the observations of children to plan for their next steps, for example, noticing when they use their left hand for cutting. As they are well prepared they provide suitable scissors. Children's work is attractively displayed so children develop a sense of belonging and pride as they like to see and talk about their pictures.

Children operate independently in the nursery as staff organise the layout well so children can move freely around, exploring everything on offer. Children benefit from a good balance of child initiated play and adult focused activities and positive adult interaction. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework of good practice to plan for and monitor the progress of children in the baby and toddler rooms. The under two's enjoy exploring texture as they paint with their hands and explore the items in the treasure basket. They respond with pleasure to close interactions with staff, which helps them develop early communication skills.

Staff working with the older children in the nursery use the Foundation Stage Curriculum to plan effectively for children's development. The organisation of the day enables siblings to see each other and share play activities such as helping with their baby brother's painting and giving them kisses after snack time before they go back to their rooms which helps children feel secure in the nursery.

Staff prepare a wide range of enjoyable activities for the children after school which ensures children are happy and comfortable and enjoy their time. Staff are interested and attentive to the children joining in with their play. Children enjoy challenging the staff to games such as air hockey and pool. They have fun with the dance mat and show good skills on the play-stations. Children know the staff will help and support them, for example, children confidently ask for help to set up their dens using chairs and sheets.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff know the children well and plan for their next steps in learning. They plan and provide a wide range of activities linked to the early learning goals which ensure children are interested, enthusiastic learners. Children generally show good concentration in their chosen activities and persevere to complete these to their own satisfaction. For example, they enjoy painting pictures of Father Christmas to their own design and make hand print Christmas tree calendars for their parents. Children benefit from the mostly good input and support of staff. They ask open ended questions that encourage children to think. Staff listen to children and respond to their interests and ideas which extends their learning in many areas. All staff undertake observations on children. Key workers then use the information gathered to monitor children's progress and achievements and to identify

the next steps in their learning. Record keeping is generally good though staff rely on worksheets to make up children's achievement folders and these activities are not appropriate for the stage of development of the children.

Children's independence is well fostered as staff encourage them to get themselves ready for outdoor play, to make their own decisions about what they do and encourage them to go and put the pictures they have done on the drying rack. Most children are familiar with what their written name looks like and successfully locate the coat pegs. They get on well with one another and play co-operatively, for instance as they make up the train track, explore the small world toys or act out stories in the pirates' role play corner. Staff provide children with good opportunities to develop their communication skills as the children converse readily with others and they listen to stories with obvious enjoyment. They make marks and some write using correctly formed letters, for instance as they try to write their names on their work. They do not always have good access to writing materials in the role play area to develop their emergent writing during play. Staff ensure children are introduced to letters of the alphabet and they display good awareness of both letter names and sounds. They join in enthusiastically with rhymes and singing for the nativity play. Children handle books well and use them spontaneously during the day. However, they do not have good access to information books. Children use mathematical language during the course of their play and as they count the number of bricks and cars and talk about who has more. Staff provide activities to develop mathematic skills. Children learn to count and develop concepts of addition and subtraction as they sing songs such as 'Whoops a daisy angel'. They name shapes and colours. Children take turns to use the computer. Some have good mouse control skills, they select the games they wish to play and successfully complete these. Children develop their fine motor skills and hand/eye co-ordination as staff provide a range of one handed tools such as scissors and paint brushes. Children freely talk about their home lives as staff are interested and attentive. Children are enthusiastic singers and have a repertoire of songs and rhymes. Staff ensure children enjoy a wide range of creative activities which are attractively displayed on the walls in their base room and in the hallway outside.

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

The provision is good.

Children are confident, happy and settled because staff develop strong relationships and know the children and their families well. Staff value and respect everyone as individuals and are positive in their support of the children. For instance, staff take children to other rooms to visit baby siblings to give them a kiss as they forget at snack time. They allow them to help with their sibling's craft activity as staff ensure children have daily opportunities to meet up together in the wet play room and as a whole group at meal times. Such measures add to children's sense of security and belonging within the nursery. Staff respect children's wishes, for example, staff convert the role play home corner into a pirate castle following children's interest. Children in the out of school club help make the rules and have a say in the purchase of new resources. Children with additional needs receive excellent levels of support and the nursery works closely in partnership with parents and other agencies including occupational therapists and physiotherapists as necessary to ensure this. Parents value staff support in their children's development.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children treat the premises and resources with respect. Staff encourage them to value the input of others, for example, children clap excitedly as they practise for the nativity play. Children develop a good understanding of the wider world as staff provide an excellent range of posters and resources

that reflect positive images of diversity. Children have good opportunities throughout the year to find out about and celebrate different festivals. They become familiar with their local community as they regularly go out on walks, for instance around the school campus site and visit the library. Behaviour management is excellent. All staff have a calm, gentle affectionate manner with children and ensure a consistent approach. They have high expectations of behaviour and intervene calmly and gently to guide children as necessary. Children respond to the input they receive. Staff are very positive about children and use lots of meaningful praise which fosters children's self-esteem and helps them feel good about themselves.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit because parents and carers are encouraged to play an active role within the nursery. For instance, they share their knowledge and expertise to support children's learning, such as talking to them about festivals they celebrate at home or sharing information about their job roles. Parents receive comprehensive information about the nursery and its curriculum and they send in items to support topics. There are both informal and formal systems for ensuring they are well informed about their children's progress and achievements. Staff spend time talking to parents daily and share children's records at annual parents' evening. Parents receive daily sheets in the baby and toddler rooms and they are encouraged to add their comments to these. This ensures that staff and parents work together to support children's learning. However, parents do not comment on or contribute to older children's records.

Staff in the out of school club form good relationships with parents and take time to make themselves available to them at the end of the session. There is a good range of written information available to parents. Staff respond flexibly to parents. For example, they reassure them when they ring in to tell of traffic delays on the way home and make arrangements for other parents to take the children home at their request.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are confident and settled in the nursery as staff have good skills and are qualified and experienced. They work together closely as a team and they are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Staff are deployed well to support the children attending. Everyone has a kind, caring manner and displays a very positive attitude. Staff organise the day well to offer children a variety of activities and experiences and consideration is given to ensuring children are grouped appropriately in base rooms with appropriate resources and equipment. Transition between rooms is well managed to ensure children are secure and happy. Consequently children feel safe, secure and confident within the environment.

The new manager has a good awareness of the requirements for registration and is working hard to update many aspects of the nursery. For example, she has undertaken training in the effective use of the software system used on the nursery computer. Qualification levels are met and ongoing training is encouraged. Individual staff members attend some external courses. All records are in place and are well organised. Comprehensive policies and procedures underpin good practice and contribute to the health, safety and welfare of children. The system for the induction of new staff is not effective as the manager has not had any follow up meetings since her appointment and the systems to check the ongoing suitability of staff are not robust. Hygiene issue around snack time and the drying of wet washing are not suitable.

Leadership and management are good. The manager is developing her skills and knowledge through the completion of a childcare degree. She reviews and reflects on nursery practice to

develop all aspects of care and learning. Some areas of the nursery education does not effectively meet the needs of the children, such as outdoor play. Suitable recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that adults working with children are suitable to do so and most staff have an annual appraisal to identify areas for professional development. The nursery education planning and children's records are regularly reviewed by the manager and the room leader to ensure they are completed effectively and are used to plan for children's learning. The nursery uses observations from local authority support staff to improve and develop their practice, for example, in the use of worksheets. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection the nursery was required to review the nursery policy to include the relevant procedures to be followed should an allegation be made against a staff member. Good progress has been made and there are suitable procedures in place in the child protection policy which ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

The nursery education inspection recommended improvement to children's access to creative and physical play and to improve the organisation of the transition between activities during the day. Staff have improved the organisation of the nursery day and this effectively ensures children are busy and well occupied during the whole day. Staff have made good improvements in the planning of creative development to increase children's creative skills with good examples of children's work displayed on the walls and in photographs of the children at play. The program for physical play is not effectively planned for and improvement to the outside area is recommended for future improvement to enable children to further develop their physical skills and to provide a heuristic learning environment.

The nursery were required to provide parents with written feedback of their children's progress to the early learning goals. Parents receive written records of their children's achievements at the end of the year. Staff operate an open door policy for parents to talk to them about their children's progress. This ensures children's progress is monitored and shared with parents.

### **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**

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 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 wet washing is not hung around when children are present
- improve hygiene procedures at snack time in the nursery and children's independence skills at tea time in the out of school club
- improve systems to ensure induction procedures are robust and to ensure ongoing suitability of staff.

### **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):

- review the provision of activities to ensure they are relevant and appropriate
- improve and develop the outdoor play area to create a stimulating and challenging environment that covers all areas of learning
- provide opportunities for parents to contribute to children's achievement records.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)