

First Step (Bath)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY268656
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Esther Harvey
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Registered person	First Steps (Bath)
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 Twerton Children's Centre re-opened in July 2004. It operates from a purpose built two storey building in Twerton, Bath. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. All children share a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 103 children from six months to under eight years on roll. Of these, 42 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties, and can support children who speak English as an additional language. The Children's Centre also provides a wide range of multi-disciplinary family support services which operate from other areas of the building, including the large reception area, meeting, conference rooms and family room.

The nursery employs 18 full time members of staff. Of these, 16 hold appropriate early years qualification and one staff member is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn appropriate hand washing routines in the nursery. For example, before and after meals and using the toilet. Staff manage young children and babies' nappy changing routines appropriately, using protective gloves and aprons. However, children's personal hygiene routines lack continuity in order to prevent the spread of infection with regard to regular use of tissues. Staff have appropriate first aid training which ensures that appropriate action would be taken in the event of an accident. Documents relating to accidents and medication are sufficiently recorded and remain confidential. A sick children's policy reminds parents about the exclusion times for children from the nursery if they are ill. Suitable knowledge of notifiable diseases in order to report effectively to Ofsted, is maintained throughout the nursery.

Children have access to good quality climbing apparatus in the garden. This includes a large wooden house on stilts where children use various climbing skills to reach the platform. Children laugh and take pleasure using a winding slide to reach the ground. Babies learn to climb safely by using an indoor purpose built wooden structure, with low stairs and a ramp. As a result, all children are provided with apparatus which is suitable for their age and stage of development, so enabling them to increase their large muscles and balancing skills. Children have access to other equipment in the garden such as bikes and ride on toys, many of which are stained with mud and dirt, leaving children vulnerable to infection.

Children enjoy a healthy nutritious diet, which includes wholesome cooked meals for lunch, and appetising snacks and tea. Meals are a social occasion. Staff sit with the children, who talk about what is important to them and the events of the day. Fresh drinking water is readily available for all children to access throughout the nursery which ensures they are having sufficient intake of fluids during the day, especially after exercising.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the nursery by staff who know them well. The environment is welcoming to the children. They see their art work displayed professionally in all areas of the building, as a means of celebrating their achievements. Children gain from the excellent safety measures whilst in the nursery. The rooms are secure and only accessed by staff using a security coded key pad. Children and babies keep themselves safe as they eagerly tidy away toys and books after use. Children also learn simple domestic skills as they use a dustpan and brush to sweep the floor to prevent them slipping on spilt sand. Children's time of arrival and departure are recorded appropriately and used in the event of an evacuation from the premises. The safety of children in the garden is closely supervised by staff members.

Babies are kept safe as they move from their base room at the end of the day to share time with the older children for tea. The environment where babies are cared for is safe and secure. Low level shelving gives young children the chance to be independent in their choice of toys and books, and a comfortable chair for staff to use in the room helps with bottle feeding babies. The small outdoor area for babies is safe and gives them chance to see other children in the nursery playing on the climbing apparatus.

Staff members are fully aware of their personal responsibility to safeguard children. There are appropriate procedures in place in the event of a concern about a children, and parents are made aware of these when registering their child in the nursery.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident in the nursery. They play happily together and know each other by name. For example, children choose to hold the hand of a friend who they call by name. Children reach out for friends to join them in playing with things such as small world resources made up of farm and doll's house materials. Children are able to choose what they wish to play with from the self-selecting drawers in all areas of the nursery. Children are confident in knowing what they wish to play with. As a result, they are continually making choices for themselves about what they wish to do with their time in the nursery.

Young children are confident and settled in the nursery. Any child who takes time to settle is cuddled by staff and gently encouraged to take part in the activities on offer, where they soon play happily. Young children are very familiar with the routine of the day. The routine is displayed at their height showing a pattern of photographs as a reference for children who need reassurance about what happens next. Young children enjoy sitting together, listening to stories and singing familiar songs and nursery rhymes. As a result, young children are finding a voice and building positive relationships with staff and each other. Staff observe children's abilities which are evidenced with the use of photographs and written examples of their development.

Babies thoroughly enjoy splashing around in water, pouring and floating. They experience the chance to paint, and sing songs. They are very capable in choosing an object from a music box, which supports a nursery rhyme. For example, a furry spider means singing 'Incy, wincy spider climbing up the spout'. Staff members' encourage babies to experience a range of activities. These are well planned in line with their developmental stage and abilities. Babies are learning that they are important to someone and are able to snuggle in and be cuddled if needing help or reassurance.

Nursery Education.

Teaching and learning is good. Children's learning is progressing well. Staff members' have appropriate knowledge of the early years curriculum. Children's progress is recorded and observed by staff using photographic evidence which is built up on their individual files. Planning is detailed and links in with most of the children's individual progress. However, further development by staff is needed to increase the system, in order to identify the next stage of learning for all children. Activities for the children are stimulating and realistically challenging. For example, children choose to make models of planets and the moon using a variety of resources while listening to a compact disc of music played on electronic instruments, so giving the feeling of space and time. Children with learning difficulties are well supported in the nursery.

Children are confident and show enthusiasm for the activities on offer. They are very caring towards each other and show concern when anyone is unhappy. Children know each other by name and select a friend to share snack time with, and enthusiastically join in with the 'friendship song' at circle time. Staff help children to succeed through encouragement. For example, staff are willing to offer advice to children if asked, when constructing a model held together with plastic screws. Children design the model using propeller shapes and wheels, they are proud

of the finished model. Children learn the process of subtraction while singing 'five little men in a flying saucer', through the use of small props by staff, as an aid to learning and a means of involving children in the activity. Children learn to count up to ten and many are able to count beyond. Children enjoy listening to stories and copy staff members' when 'reading' their favourite story to an audience. Children are fully aware of the resources available to them in order to make marks with a purpose, such as writing a letter to a friend in the nursery, and drawing pictures of their family.

Children concentrate for long periods of time, constructing models or role play with farm animals. They paint pictures and learn about quantity by pouring and measuring water during messy activities. They explore the use of colours while painting pictures. Children learn about the world around them as they have chance to plant seeds in the garden. They relish in the chance to handle natural objects such as shells and wood as part of the basket full of treasure. Children learn that decisions are made democratically and their views are taken seriously. For example, staff seek children's ideas about the purchase of a new settee to make the nursery more comfortable. Children select a picture of the settee of their choice. The children's decisions are recorded on a graph, and the settee with the most votes is the one purchased. As a result, children are included in decisions in the nursery which will affect their comfort and well-being. Other methods are used by staff to enable children to calculate using a graph. This includes the way children arrive at the nursery whether by bus, walking, in a car, or pushchair. Therefore, children's learning is being encouraged by staff in a fun and interesting way. Overall children are being helped by staff to enjoy a range of self chosen activities, which are linked to the early years curriculum. As a result, children's confidence in their learning ability, knowledge and experience is increased.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and babies are welcomed into the setting. There is a gradual induction for young children when they start in the nursery. Staff members' also take time to introduce the children to the main part of the nursery when it is time to move from the baby room. Young children are already familiar with the staff and environment as they often mix with older children at some point during the day. There is as strong key person system in place which helps with the transition and in meeting parents to introduce them to the nursery environment. As a result, children's individual needs are met, and parents are well informed about the routine and various policies and procedures. Young children are beginning to take turns and share with the support from staff members' who are consistent in their management of challenging behaviour. Children learn about the world around them and their involvement in the community. Local reception school teachers visit the nursery and spend time with the children before they move onto school.

Children are confident and independent. They are able to put on their own coats and shoes, change into Wellington boots if needed. Children have time during the day to sit quietly and look at books or listen to music. Planned activities also included various festivals as a means of introducing children to cultural differences, as do a good range of books and resources which are easily available for them to use. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children with learning difficulties are well supported. The special needs coordinator is fully informed about where to find support, and can work with parents and other professionals who may be involved with the children's care. An informative notice board includes photographs of staff, children's menu and the curriculum.

The nursery has a written procedure for parents in the event of a complaint. They are informed about the process the nursery will take and a record of complaints is available for parents to read if they wish.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers receive good quality information about their children's progress. There is a mixture of verbal and written information about nursery education which staff members' regularly share with parents. This includes details about how their children learn and what they achieve. Plans of activities are explained to parents and photographic evidence shows how their children are progressing. Children's developmental records and assessments are frequently shared with parents and carers, both formally, at a pre-arranged meeting, and informally at the end of the session. Parents are involved with their children's learning in a variety of ways. Such as making notes about Friday Bear's visit to their home at weekends, and informing staff about their children's interests at home. This information is used by staff to plan activities for the children's individual needs.

Parents receive regular news letters which informs them about the topics children will be covering and informs parents about events that are taking place in the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care, welfare and learning is promoted through appropriately organised policies and procedures. There are effective recruitment, induction and appraisal procedures of staff. A robust system is in place, which ensures that people working with the children are suitable to do so. The operational plan is detailed and used in a positive way to provide a stable environment for children in the nursery. The trustees of the nursery ensure that this is regularly reviewed and updated where necessary. The space used by the children is well organised which encourages them to move freely around the rooms and access toys and resources with ease. The space used by babies is effectively managed and includes a comfortable, safe place to sleep.

As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and education.

Leadership and management is good. Children's care and attention is supported by staff who are well qualified and experienced, and present a stable environment in which children can learn. Staff are committed to furthering their professional development by attending training courses and updating their knowledge through in-service training days. The nursery is well managed by a group of trustees which includes a parent representative. The aims of the nursery are to extend opportunities for children to access the garden at all times, and provide activities outside to increase their learning. The nursery also plans to use the Bristol Standard as a way of evaluating their effectiveness. Staff are dedicated to the children and have regular meetings to discuss their progress and plan activities. This approach has a positive impact on children's learning and development. As a result, children are cared for appropriately and their learning is well managed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider agreed to ensure that children have the opportunities for outdoor play. The outdoor area has been made more accessible to children with the use of an all-weather surface which has replaced a large grass area. Climbing apparatus has been built

for children to explore and climb safely. As a result, these improvements have enhanced the use of the garden for children on a regular basis.

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 from 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 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):

- improve children's personal hygiene routines and ensure outdoor equipment is sufficiently clean in order to prevent the spread of infection

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 systems in order to identify the next stage of learning for all children

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