

2nd Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY346806
Inspection date	08 October 2007
Inspector	Jean Evelyn Thomas
Setting Address	62 Church Road West, LIVERPOOL, L4 5UF
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Registered person	2nd Steps Ltd
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

2nd Steps Day Nursery opened in 2007 under new ownership. It operates from five rooms based over two floors. It is situated in the residential area of Walton, Liverpool. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year except for bank holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, four children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 17 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications and six are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is generally supported by staff who have a satisfactory knowledge of the health and hygiene procedures. Staff have established routines for cleaning surfaces, toys and equipment. Through following familiar procedures, such as washing hands after toileting and before eating, children learn the importance of personal hygiene. Appropriate measures are taken when children become unwell and the parents are contacted. Consents are obtained from parents to seek medical treatment in the event of an emergency. There are qualified first aiders on duty at all times to ensure the correct procedures are followed in the event of an accident. Staff do not always follow procedures when involved in food preparation and handling, for example, not wearing aprons when preparing food and not washing hands before handling food. This compromises children's protection from the spread of infection.

Children benefit from a varied and nutritionally balanced diet. The meals are home cooked and fruit and vegetables are included in the children's daily diet. The dietary requirements of all children are respected because staff work with parents to ensure their individual needs are met. Drinking water is available in each of the care rooms at all times. Older children freely access their drinks responding to their bodily needs and drink when thirsty.

Children's physical development and sense of well-being is promoted. The outdoor play area is used throughout the year. Staff organise energetic indoor activities if they are unable to play outside, such as an obstacle course. Children are helped to understand how exercise helps them to stay healthy as staff talk about it making their muscles strong. Children rest when they need in the quiet areas in each care room and staff accommodate their natural sleep patterns.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is welcoming to children and parents. Children's art work and photographs are displayed to promote children's self esteem and sense of belonging. There is space for children to move around with ease and play. All areas are colourful and stimulating where children access a satisfactory range of play materials. In the baby rooms the position of play mats and toys encourages babies to explore their environment.

Children are cared for in a secure environment. There is a secure door entry system which prevents unauthorised persons entering the building. The risk assessments helps to identify potential hazards to ensure a safe setting for children. However, the risk assessment does not cover all outings children experience or the position of safety mats under the climbing frame. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through practising the fire drill and following the road safety codes on outings. The staff supervision contributes to the children's safety.

Children are protected from harm because staff are aware of safeguarding issues. They know the procedures in place and where to seek help in order to protect children. The child protection statement includes the procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a warm, positive relationship with staff and are happy in their care. Children benefit from the key worker system. As a result, most children separate easily from their parents and quickly settle into the nursery. The dependable routine and the provision of plenty of choice in activities contributes to the children's sense of security. Children are lively and enjoy lots of free play where they can follow their own interests. Two year olds initiate role play as they pretend to be tigers and move around the room confidently developing their play idea.

In line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework, children from the earliest age benefit from a wide range of activities to promote their development. Babies learn through using their senses as they explore a range of stimulating media such as jelly, gloop, cold rice pudding and baked beans. Wearing only their nappies the older babies make their mark using paint on large pieces of paper secured to the floor. Most babies show confidence in trying out new experiences. The staff respect the babies preferences if they choose not involve themselves in an activity. Communication skills are actively promoted and encouraged as staff listen and respond appropriately to babies and children. Babies who are experimenting with sounds are offered praise and encouragement as staff repeat and develop sounds into words. Children are encouraged to develop skills in independence and self care, for example, babies learning to feed themselves and older children serving the food of their choice from the main dishes at meal times. Children over two years benefit from the continuous provision of a range of activities and resources, including role play, sand and water. Children enjoy activities they are interested in and revisit to practice their skills. Children's transition onto their next care room is handled sensitively by staff. Visits are arranged to help children become familiar with their new care area. However, the planning of activities does not always relate to curriculum guidance appropriate to the children's stage of development as they progress through the nursery to support their individual learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the early years curriculum. Children enjoy a range of interesting and fun activities, many offering first hand experiences, such as, walking to the nearby wooded area to collect leaves to use for leaf printing. Staff's enthusiasm makes learning exciting. There are observation systems in place to assess children's progress. However, this information is not used to plan for the next steps in individual children's learning. The plans do not inform staff of how to differentiate activities to meet children's individual needs. Information is not obtained from parents to build on what children already know and can do to ensure the content of the planning matches the different levels of children's needs.

The structure of the sessions and organisation of resources gives children opportunity to make their own choices and pursue activities at their own pace to consolidate their learning and understanding. Being involved in activities which interest the children develops their concentration levels. Children are invited by staff to take part in the focus activities. Most children are eager to participate and confidently leave when they no longer wish to pursue the task. Children are eager to experiment with new ideas introduced to them. For example, staff explain the focus activity is painting with the intention to introduce symmetry to the children. Children in the group listen well to the instructions given and follow them well. They express their delight when they see the effect and beauty in their own symmetrical painting. They notice the pattern is the same on both sides of the paper.

Staff use mathematical language, such as number, position, shape and size. This helps children develop their mathematical understanding in practical and everyday situations. This also applies to problem solving techniques. During the outdoor activity staff ask the children how many children are allowed on the slide. They answer the question and realise there are too many. The children work out how many have to go and play with something else to solve the problem. The designated 'maths' area is well resourced with equipment. A number line is positioned low level to encourage children to handle and sequence the numbers as they choose.

Language and communication is promoted effectively by the staff. The children confidently chat to each other and initiate conversations. Children's speech and language is enhanced through songs and rhymes. Children show curiosity in a spider they discover whilst playing outside. This spontaneous situation is well used by staff to encourage children to observe the spider's movements and to use descriptive language. Children listen to the stories read to them. During story time staff ask questions to encourage children to predict what is going to happen next in the story. Many children recognise their names and become familiar with words in the environment, such as the labelling on the storage boxes and areas of activity. Children are encouraged to write their names, link sounds to letters and have opportunity to write for a purpose in play. Children produce their own books recording events in their lives.

Children have many opportunities to be creative in art, craft, music and role play. The role play area changes to link into themes or the children decide what they want their role area to be. The current theme of 'the jungle' is the children's choice. It is a vibrant area with walls and ceiling decorated to create the 'jungle' scene. The children have made their own clay animals which are displayed in this area.

The children learn about the world around them through regular trips into the local community. A particular favourite is visiting the pet shop. Children develop an understanding of the wider world, different cultures and beliefs through theme work, resources and discussions with staff. In play, children use resources including telephones and scales and operate the music player to develop their understanding about technology.

Physical activity is planned as a valued aspect of the children's development. Children use both large and small apparatus including natural resources, such as sawn sections of a tree trunk to balance on.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the setting by staff who make them feel valued and special. Staff create a warm atmosphere as they smile at the children and show interest in what they are doing. This contributes to the children's sense of security and self esteem. Children are cared for in an inclusive setting where staff respect children's individual needs. Children's awareness about the diversity of society is raised through a selection of resources and activities. Although there are limited resources which reflect positive images of disability and gender.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff are consistent in their approach in managing behaviour. Children receive purposeful praise and acknowledgement for their achievements. Staff remind children why certain rules are in place, such as not pushing past each other on the stairs, so that they begin to take responsibility for and manage their own behaviour. The older children willingly involve themselves in routines, such as handing out the plates at meal times and tidying away toys. The older children have prepared their own list of rules of acceptable behaviour

which is displayed for reference. Younger children are learning to share, take turns and play co-operatively through sensitive reminders from staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers of the nursery educated children is satisfactory. Plans are displayed for parents' information. However, limited information is available to parents about the Foundation Stage learning. Parents have access to their children's assessment profiles.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. There is daily opportunity for parents and staff to exchange information to ensure children's individual care needs are met. When parents collect their child they are given verbal feedback about the events of the day. A daily diary is maintained on babies. Children are cared for according to their parents wishes as written consents are obtained, such as to take children on outings and to use the baby walker. Parents are kept informed about the operational aspects of the nursery through the prospectus which details policies and procedures, notices on display and discussion with staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager provides positive support to staff who work together to promote children's learning. The purposeful meetings and team building days contribute to staff's effective working relationships. Space and resources are organised to promote children's enjoyment and achievement. Systems are in place to evaluate the provision of the nursery education. As a result of this the nursery is in process of improving the systems in place to work in partnership with parents to continue children's learning at home.

The recruitment procedures in place ensure that staff are suitably qualified, experienced and vetted to care for children. The induction of new staff and students and team meetings contribute to the consistent approach to childcare. Systems, such as appraisals are used to identify staff's strengths and personal development needs. However, evidence of staff's first aid qualifications was not available at inspection. The adult to child ratios are met to offer children support and attention. Appropriate contingency plans are in place to cover for staff absence to maintain the required ratios. The structure of the day gives time for children to play in an unhurried manner which allows them to extend their ideas, make connections and develop new skills.

Most of the legally required documentation is in place and available for inspection. However, the children's attendance record does not always show their hours departure as required. This omission is a breach of the condition of registration. Systems in place to maintain records to ensure confidentiality to protect children's privacy, for example, personal information is stored in individual folders. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 6: Safety. As a result of the complaint the provider took action to ensure the entrance door opened

with ease to be effective in an emergency escape. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider remained qualified for registration. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request.

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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):

- ensure staff follow the correct procedures when involved in food handling and preparation to safeguard children from infection
- make sure the risk assessment includes the position of safety mats when the climbing frame is in use and all areas visited by children for their safety
- continue to develop resources which reflect positive images of disability and gender to help raise children's awareness of the diversity of society
- ensure evidence of staff's first aid qualification are available for inspection for children's welfare
- ensure the daily record of children's attendance includes their hours of attendance for their well-being.

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):

- ensure planning identifies the next steps in individual children's learning and differentiates learning activities building on what they can already do (applies to care also)
- improve systems of working in partnership with parents by providing parents with more information about the Foundation Stage of learning.

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