

First Steps Private Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	316452
Inspection date	20 December 2007
Inspector	Judith, Mary Horsfall
Setting Address	Newall Street, Littleborough, Lancashire, OL15 9DL
Telephone number	01706 378 888
E-mail	
Registered person	Tina Stafford-Smith and Alan Smith
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 Nursery is a privately operated nursery located in the Littleborough district of Rochdale, Lancashire. It opened in 1995 and operates from two rooms within a single storey building and there are also laundry, kitchen and toilet facilities. A maximum of 25 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 26 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, five children receive funding for early education. Children come from a local catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties. The nursery employs six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children generally stay healthy because there are policies and procedures in place which are broadly implemented. For example, children who have had vomiting illnesses are excluded for 48 hours and parents receive clear information about outbreaks of infectious conditions. However, the medication records and procedures are not clearly understood by members of staff. Children are protected in cases of accidents or illness as there is an appropriately stocked first aid kit and several members of staff have suitable first aid qualifications.

Although some systems are in place to maintain hygiene such as colour coded mops, other practices including omitting to wipe children's runny noses do not promote healthy lifestyles. Children are learning about dental health as there are regular visits from a dental hygienist. Children benefit from, and enjoy, regular exercise and are beginning to learn physical skills such as balancing, climbing and running. Older children also have opportunities to exercise during weekly physical education classes with an external tutor and regular swimming lessons at a local pool. Children can rest and sleep according to their own needs and preferences in consultation with parents.

Children are regularly provided with healthy, nutritious meals and snacks that meet their individual dietary requirements. The nursery has been awarded a Golden Grin award for promoting healthy eating and tooth care. Parents are consulted about special dietary requirements and individual children's needs are respected and well catered for. Drinking water is available at all times and children can help themselves when they become thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children generally stay safe because the staff are vigilant about supervising the children. Children are learning about staying safe as the staff remind them how to safely use equipment and the children know that they must not run in the swimming baths in case they slip. The premises are secure and children are protected because there are suitable equipment and procedures in place such as fire drills and guards on heaters.

Children are welcomed into a warm and friendly environment where they separate with confidence from their parents and carers. They are beginning to feel part of the nursery as their artwork is attractively displayed and they have their own individual coat pegs. There is adequate indoors and outdoor space for the children to move freely and with confidence. The premises are clean, well maintained and offer the children plenty of natural light and suitable ventilation. Children benefit from a large range of accessible resources which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development. Children are well protected as staff are familiar with child protection procedures and are aware how to manage concerns regarding safeguarding children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting because the staff effectively support them in their play and activities. They are skilful in making sure activities are enjoyable, stimulating

and matched to the children's abilities and interests. They closely observe children's involvement in focused activities and spontaneous play and make excellent use of the information gained to plan activities that are stimulating and challenging for all children. Caring, sensitive staff show genuine affection for the children, ensuring children are settled and secure in their care.

Throughout the setting children follow the good role models of staff members and show care and consideration for each other. For example, children help each other during activities and outdoors when one stumbles, the others assist them. Children make purposeful use of the wide range of toys and play equipment available to them. They particularly enjoy outdoor play and looking through albums of photographs of themselves showing previous activities such as dressing up for a Halloween party. Children benefit from a broad range of visitors attending the nursery. These people, such as a paramedic, police officer and fire officers give the children a wider understanding of the work around them and the local community. Children are confident and readily join in with organising and tidying away activities. They play independently and are happy to share resources and co-operate with their peers. Children are beginning to learn right from wrong as staff remind them about being kind to each other and the importance of good manners.

Staff are making appropriate use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance their practice, which has a positive impact on the quality of the young children's learning and play. Children make choices of where they want to play, and are able to access resources independently to extend their own interests and learning. A key worker system is in place for all children, which makes it easier for a member of staff to keep a track of a particular child's development, and relay any information to their parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and how children become active learners. Planning is linked to the six areas of learning and to children's abilities and needs. Regular observations and assessments are carried out to monitor children's progress. Using this information, staff identify the next steps in children's learning and link these to the stepping stones, to promote children's learning.

Children are secure and confident in their environment, separating from their parents with ease. Children feel a sense of belonging as they readily settle into the friendly environment. They are beginning to relate well to each other and have an affectionate relationship with staff. Children are gaining confidence in personal care as they flush the toilet and wash their hands when using the bathroom facilities. They are also aware that if they do not wash their hands they can get 'germs and a sick tummy'. Older children are beginning to understand the rules of the nursery which are devised by the children and are assertive in expressing their needs and emotions. Children are beginning to demonstrate pleasure in books, which they access freely and handle with care. They join in story time with great vigour, listening well and recounting favourite stories. However, the choice of available books is limited, particularly those with positive images of people in wider society which restricts children's learning in this area. Children access a mark making area to practise their writing skills but opportunities for mark making throughout the nursery are restricted which limits children's learning.

Mathematical concepts are well incorporated into the daily routines. For example, children are count out cutlery and crockery at meal times and confidently sort toys into shapes, sizes and colours. The children have access to the computer which is a popular activity and they are

curious about programmable toys and resources. Children cut out different patterns with the pastry cutter and are beginning to differentiate shapes. Children confidently count beyond 20 and can correctly name some numerals.

Children learn about their environment because they visit the community outside the nursery. They excitedly talk about a recent trip to the church to hear the nativity story and to look at the interior of the church. Children learn about different cultures and religions through some resources, celebrations of different festivals and visits to a variety of restaurants from different cultural groups.

Children move freely with confidence, both indoors and outdoors, negotiating space well and manoeuvring around obstacles to avoid collisions. Weekly physical education classes with an external tutor encourages children to enjoy and benefit from regular exercise. They enjoy physical games and confidently explore a good range of creative materials, such as paint, malleable materials, collage and water. They freely access these materials to represent their feelings, thoughts and ideas, and are learning to use their imaginations as they enthusiastically create games, pretending to be chased by crocodiles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn effectively about the world around them through planned activities taking them out into the local community. For example, they visit a local church, library, lake and park. Furthermore, they celebrate cultures and festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Christmas and Eid giving them a deeper sense of the wider world. They have visited China Town in Manchester and enjoyed a Chinese buffet, whilst at Eid they attended an Asian restaurant and watched as the food was prepared. The children genuinely care about their peers and speak with real affection about their friends in the setting. They are learning to respect living creatures, have cared for baby chicks and had visitors from a local animal sanctuary. The children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The children's behaviour is managed in an effective manner and supported by a clear policy including how to deal with bullying. Children are polite, caring and considerate of others around them, helping their friends and working co-operatively. The staff use appropriate strategies to promote positive behaviour, such as smiles, positive role modelling and frequent words of praise and support. Parents say children's behaviour has improved since starting nursery as the staff as fair and consistent.

There are comprehensive systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff have undertaken relevant training. They work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure children with learning disabilities and difficulties are strongly supported. Continuity of care for all children is promoted due to daily exchanges of verbal information between the parents and the staff. Children benefit from the wide range of information available to parents including a newsletter updating them on the setting's activities. Parents are very positive in their views saying they are very pleased with the friendly staff. The setting has detailed policies which are actively implemented to ensure all children are treated and valued equally as individuals. A key member of staff is designated to liaise with children, parents, carers and other professionals. Parents are warmly welcomed into the nursery. For example, mothers call in during the day to breast feed babies and staff ensure they are comfortably accommodated. Continuity of care for the children is promoted due to daily exchanges of verbal

information such as sleeping patterns and progress in potty training. However, parents are not familiar with complaints procedure which limits their ability to resolve any concerns.

Partnership with parents is good. The staff have developed thorough partnerships with parents and carers, encouraging parents to view children's individual folders. Parents say all the staff are very friendly and that they are given plenty of information about their children's progress and education. Art work is regularly sent home and parents comment on the improvements in children's education. Detailed plans are available for parents and are clearly displayed throughout the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a child friendly environment by staff who have all undertaken the necessary checks and clearances. The well organised and suitably trained staff team actively promote children's learning and play. They have a good knowledge of child development and ensure that children enjoy their time at the setting by valuing them and respecting their views. Creative use of space and resources allows children to move freely, making choices and decisions.

Generally well maintained records and documentation are broadly of an acceptable standard. Staff are sensitive to the importance of operating in a confidential manner. Most policies and procedures are in place and shared with parents, which promotes children's welfare by contributing to the continuity of their care. Children are settled, content and well occupied, enjoying the activities they engage in.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. Staff are supported through regular appraisals and team meetings. Management have clear high, expectations of how staff should work and what they should understand regarding the setting's policies and procedures. Overall, staff are supported well by the manager to ensure children receive varied opportunities and experiences on a day to day basis. The manager has identified areas of strengths and weaknesses and motivates the staff by being a positive role model.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection five recommendations were made. Three of these related to safety issues and have been addressed making the setting safer for children. Another recommendation related to enhancing resources which promote equality of opportunity. Some progress has been made in this area, giving the children more access to images of people in the wider world. There was also a recommendation to improve staff training in disability awareness. Some training has been undertaken by all staff and a special needs co-ordinator has been nominated to increase awareness and understanding of disability issues

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 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):

- review medication procedures and record keeping, ensuring policy is shared with staff
- review hygiene practices to minimise risks of infection
- ensure parents are familiar with complaints procedure
- increase selection of books available to children particularly those with positive images of different people in society (also applies to education).

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 opportunities for mark making throughout the nursery.

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