

First Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY351384
Inspection date	26 August 2008
Inspector	Karen Eunice Millerchip
Setting Address	246 Cranes Park Road, Sheldon, Birmingham, B26 3SU
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Registered person	First Steps Nursery (Solihull) Limited
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.

At the time of the inspection there were no children in receipt of nursery education. Ofsted judges that the provider remains suitable to provide nursery education.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Steps Nursery was registered in 2007. It is one of two privately owned nurseries and operates from a two storey building in Sheldon, Birmingham. The main areas used include two ground floor and two first floor play rooms; toilet and washing and changing facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outdoor play.

In the nursery, there are currently 27 children on roll. The setting has places for children who receive funding for early education. The inspection was carried out during school holidays; therefore there were no funded children on roll. The nursery serves families and children in the local community and surrounding areas. Children who attend the local school nursery are escorted to their session by a member of staff.

Children attend for a variety of sessions from 08.00 until 17.30. The group opens five days a week all year round except for bank holidays. The nursery has support systems in place for

children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 10 staff. Of these, eight have appropriate qualifications to level 2 or above. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show a suitable understanding of keeping themselves healthy. More able children confidently take care of their own personal needs with regard to hand washing and accessing the bathroom. Satisfactory arrangements for nappy changing are in place and are recorded. Children sleep or rest in a dedicated room where they are supervised by a member of staff. Children's risk of infection being passed on by others is minimised because of a health and safety policy that is shared with parents, informing them of illnesses that will mean their child should not attend. All areas, toys and equipment are in a clean condition. Staff follow clear and correct procedures when dealing with accidents and medication, and a qualified first aider is on site at all times.

Children are suitably nourished and hydrated. Children access healthy snacks during morning and afternoon sessions and can access drinking water. Meals are provided by outside caterers and staff follow sound procedures with regard to monitoring the temperature of the food. Mealtimes are sociable times and staff support and encourage children to develop their self-help skills. Staff follow clear hygiene procedures whilst preparing snacks and drinks for children, however there are no guidelines for re-heating meals or formulae feeds which potentially puts children's well-being at risk. Children's health and dietary needs are satisfactorily met as parents provide information about their child's needs, preferences and specific requirements. Weekly menus are clearly displayed on the wall to keep parents informed.

Physical development is suitably promoted as children have regular opportunities to access outdoor play. They are encouraged to have a positive attitude to exercise and have the use of a garden with some large apparatus, bikes and buggies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Care is provided from a two-storey building. Babies and young children are cared for on the first floor and older children on the ground floor. Space is appropriately organised to enable children to experience a variety of play opportunities. Children move confidently and independently throughout the areas as most potential risks have been identified and minimised by staff. Risk assessments have been developed and are generally implemented throughout the setting. However, risk assessments on the use of the microwave and the hand blender are not in place and could potentially compromise children's well-being.

Children are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe, as they are gently reminded about safety rules within the setting. Children have an awareness of fire safety because emergency escape routines are practised and recorded. All fire safety equipment is in place and regularly checked to further protect children in case of an emergency.

Toys, equipment and furniture are checked and cleaned regularly. Resources are generally well organised and allow children to make some independent choices. Toys are mainly stored in low-level units, presented for play on tables or on floor mats and children can ask for those that they cannot see. Children were observed safely, self-selecting toys and helping to tidy up to prevent tripping hazards. These practices contribute to children playing in safe and suitable surroundings.

Children are appropriately protected by staff, who have a sound understanding of child protection policies and procedures. They demonstrate a suitable understanding of their role and responsibility with regard to safeguarding children in their care and share the policies with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and gaining confidence. They are eager to participate in adult-led activities, such as biscuit decorating and cutting and sticking. They are beginning to explore play opportunities and their environment independently. Babies and younger children have dedicated play rooms to enable them to explore and investigate in a secure environment. However, the range of activities and play opportunities on offer do not provide for children's differing stages of learning and development. Most play confidently with a few younger children still requiring some adult reassurance. They take turns, share and are developing independence appropriately as they learn to wash their own hands and put on aprons.

Children enjoy sound relationships with staff and are developing friendships with their peers. Their self-esteem is fostered through the support provided by a caring, friendly staff team. Children are praised for their achievements and encouraged to take pride in their own work. They are able to freely choose from activities on offer.

Nursery Education

At the time of the inspection there were no children on roll receiving funding for early education. The inspection was carried out during school holidays and the setting continues to provide the Foundation Stage curriculum throughout the year. The evidence gathered demonstrates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Key staff have a suitable knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how to plan in line with the Foundations Stage. However, although plans reflect a suitable range of activities to cover all areas of learning this is not evident in practice and does not fully promote children's learning. Children's progress is charted through observations and learning opportunities are recorded, however the system used to record children's achievements does not contain sufficient information to plan for their next stage of learning. The links between observation, assessment and planning are tenuous.

Children are developing confidence as they engage in conversations with other children and adults. They practise their early writing skills through easy access to the graphics area, during spontaneous activities such as cutting and sticking using sticky tape, glue, string and other materials, and when drawing with chalks in the garden. Children look forward to circle, story and singing time. They are learning a repertoire of rhymes and enthusiastically join in with familiar songs and stories. Children are beginning to learn that print carries meaning. Some children are able to recognise initial letters and more able children their own name at

self-registration. Around the room signs and labels identify toys within boxes and everyday objects.

Children talk about shapes and size as they play in the sand. They are beginning to learn about number order as they discuss how many children are present in the group. Children use a range of small equipment, including scissors, paint brushes, glue sticks, pencils and cutlery which they are beginning to handle with increasing control. Children have opportunities to use their imagination in role play situations such as a shop, home corner and a hairdressing salon.

Children have some opportunities to explore their environment and learn how things grow as they observe the progress of seeds they have planted in tubs in the garden. They freely explore and investigate their environment whilst playing indoors and outside. There is a computer available for children to develop skills in 'mouse' control and explore how computers work.

The outside area is used during the day to access a general range of outdoor play, such as bikes, swings, a climbing frame, buggies and a chalk board. Plans are in place to further develop learning opportunities in the outdoor environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing good social skills in this caring environment as staff are fully aware of their needs and effective routines ensure they are continually met. They are settling well and the daily routine ensures children have freedom of choice. Children are being introduced to diversity within their immediate and wider community through planned activities, toys and resources such as dressing up clothes, dolls and books. They take part in celebrations of different festivals from around the world, such as Chinese New Year and have tasted food from other cultures.

All children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all activities and facilities within the setting. There are clearly identified procedures in place to address the specific needs of all children which includes working closely with parents and other professionals.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They receive praise and encouragement and learn what is right and wrong. As a result children's behaviour is good. They learn to share, take turns and show consideration for others. They respond positively to the expectations set by staff who use appropriate strategies to manage children's behaviour in a way that promotes their understanding and learning. They are reminded to share with friends, help look after each other and to look after toys and books.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are asked to share what they know about their child's interests, achievements and learning during settling-in visits. They can informally discuss their child's progress at any time. Communication with parents is effective through daily contact and use of notice boards to display information on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, the Foundation Stage curriculum and staff photographs and qualifications. However, this information does not effectively include the parents in their child's learning. Parents comment positively on the care and support offered to their child by the staff team.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a friendly and caring environment. Staff ratios are well maintained to provide ongoing support and care. A well-developed organisational plan is in place and contains all legally required policies and procedures as well as many more devised by the organisation. Documentation is well organised, regularly reviewed and shared with parents. Staff and children's personal information is accurate and kept up-to-date. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and Management are satisfactory. Staff are committed to developing a sound learning environment. The manager has developed the use of staff meetings, appraisals, training opportunities and the use of evaluation schedules to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the provision. This includes the staff's involvement to identify their areas of strength and development needs during appraisals and thereby improving experiences for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- develop and implement risk assessments with regard to using electrical equipment specifically the microwave and the hand blender
- develop and implement guidance on re-heating meals and formulae feeds

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 staff knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage
- ensure planning is followed to extend opportunities in all areas of learning (this also applies to care)
- develop observations to provide relevant information on children's individual achievements and use to develop links with planning their next stage of learning
- develop ways to involve parents in their children's 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