

# Next Steps Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY263811

**Inspection date**

16/03/2009

**Inspector**

Mary Daniel

**Setting address**

The Royal Bath & West Showground, SHEPTON MALLET,  
Somerset, BA4 6QL

**Telephone number**

01749 346808

**Email**

**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## **Description of the setting**

Next Steps Childcare Centre opened in 2003. It operates from a purpose built, one storey building situated in the grounds of the Bath and West showground, near to the town of Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Children have use of three play rooms, bathrooms and nappy changing facilities. There are two enclosed outdoor play areas.

Ofsted have registered this group on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered to care for a maximum of 46 children aged under eight years at any one time and there are currently 77 on roll, of whom 29 are in the early years age group. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. A crèche facility is provided when the Bath and West Show is operating, and an after school club operates in term time.

A total of 11 staff are employed, which includes an overall director and nursery manager. The majority of staff have completed training in childcare and early years education. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. Children are eager to enter the nursery and they receive a warm, friendly welcome from staff who are committed to promoting their well-being. Each child's individuality is clearly respected and effectively supported through the strong relationships formed with parents. Evaluation systems are implemented and contribute to ongoing improvements in the quality of the provision offered. Children are very well supported in making good progress in their learning and development and are content and settled.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review the overall risk assessment systems to ensure these effectively cover all aspects of the provision
- review the systems of registering children's attendance to ensure the actual times of their arrival and departure are reflected and an accurate record is maintained

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children's welfare is supported very well by qualified, experienced staff who work effectively as a team. Staff are dedicated, sharing responsibilities and attending further training to continue developing their skills and their understanding of children's needs. For instance, a sign language course has helped them encourage the communication skills of all children. Recommendations from the previous

inspection have been appropriately addressed and suitable systems of self-evaluation implemented, which helps staff make ongoing improvements. Effective operational procedures are implemented and reviewed, although the current system for recording children's attendance is not always reliable in giving an accurate account of those present. Clear safeguarding procedures are in place to promote children's well-being and relevant written information is available. However, some aspects of the policy are not formalised.

Children benefit from the extremely good relationships which staff form with parents. Their involvement is very well encouraged, for instance, through regular parents evenings. Parents help their children keep a diary of the 'Kanga' and 'Roo' toys they take on their holidays and children collect postcards and photos to show where they have been around the world. Parent's views are actively sought through regular questionnaires and ample information is made available on how the nursery operates. Children's activities are discussed with parents through daily liaison, diaries, photos and opportunities to share in their developmental progress. Children form their 'family tree' page in their folders, which helps them feel valued and important within the group and consequently supports them developing their self-identity.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children become absorbed in their play, for instance as they push their fingers through shaving foam and make patterns or watch colours merge in a finger painting activity. They make a colourful firework picture by blowing paint through a straw, and start to recognise red, yellow, green and blue. They sort and compare objects of different size and colour, which encourages their early 'mathematical' skills. This continues in a music session, where they enthusiastically sing about 'five currant buns in a bakers shop' and count how many 'buns' have been bought. This encourages children to learn about 'more' and 'less', although the written number shape is not always sufficiently reinforced to further develop their association of number concepts. Children are keen to find out and explore through their play. They enjoy the range of meaningful activities provided, for example, as they make a 'weather chart'. They cut, stick, colour and use collage materials, such as cotton wool to make clouds, rain, snow and sun. This helps develop their hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, creativity, language, understanding of their world and their awareness of shape as they learn the sun is a circle. Effective planning systems are being established, which clearly support children's development. Individual learning plans are formed using observations made of children's play and which are used to plan further purposeful activities, based on children's existing abilities and interests. This helps children to consolidate their skills and overall, provides realistic challenges for them in their play.

Children's different styles of learning are recognised and planning is often taken outdoors. Children have great fun exploring their outdoor world, watching wildlife from their 'hide', doing tree rubbings or enjoying the freedom of being able to run and climb out in the fresh air. Garden areas are well organised to provide activities relating to each area of learning and children play 'hide and seek', paint, make streamers to blow in the wind, or blow bubbles and watch them float away.

Sometimes they 'paint' the walls with water or dress up as a fireman with a friend. Interesting activities are planned to support children's 'early reading and writing' and they start to recognise familiar words, such as those on their name cards and photos. Some start to form recognisable shapes and letters, although some opportunities are missed to encourage their awareness of 'mark making' for a purpose, such as within general daily routines.

Children are relaxed and happy with staff who get to know them well and carefully observe their routines, for instance recognising when babies are tired or hungry. Consequently, babies generally settle easily to sleep, feeling comfortable and at ease as their needs are met. Babies' natural curiosity is encouraged as they explore 'treasure baskets' of colourful and tactile objects. Their interest is captured as lights go on and music plays when they press and push buttons on the variety of 'cause and effect' toys. Children have fun in the well laid out 'home corner', where they 'make' a 'cup of tea' for a friend, and act out experiences they have seen. Children's safety is promoted through a security system at the main entrance. Babies are securely strapped in clean, sturdy highchairs and are monitored regularly as they sleep in comfortable, wooden cots. Risk assessments are completed, although they are not always effective in evaluating risk in all aspects of the provision, for instance in preventing children's access to the kitchen, or on some outings. Children behave very well. They share toys easily and learn to say 'please' and 'thank you', for example, at meal times. They benefit from the positive approach given by staff, who get down to children's level to explain why certain actions might not be nice. 'Golden rules' are formed and encourage children to 'be kind' and to 'look after their toys'. Consequently, children feel secure within the appropriate and consistent boundaries and develop a positive outlook encouraging them to mix well with their peers.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b> | 2 |
| How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?   | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.   | 2 |

### Leadership and management

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>          | 2 |
| How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement? | 2 |
| How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?                            | 1 |
| How well are children safeguarded?  | 2 |

### Quality and standards

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>  | 2 |
| <b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>       | 2 |
| How well are children helped to stay safe?  | 2 |
| How well are children helped to be healthy?   | 2 |
| How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?  | 2 |
| How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?   | 2 |
| How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 2 |

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

## **Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted**

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

### **Detail of the complaint/s**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection that required the provider to take any action.

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.