

Footsteps Day Nursery and Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Christine Lynn Williams

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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 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

Footsteps Day Nursery and Pre-School is one of four privately owned settings run under a limited company. It opened in 2007 and operates from purpose built premises situated on a business park in Stratford-upon-Avon, close to schools and public transport links. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is open five days a week, all year round. Sessions are from 07:00 until 19:00.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 100 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 125 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language. The nursery operates from a two storey building, with a lift providing access to the top floor.

The setting is also able to care for children older than the early years age group and is registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but does include the provider's confirmation of compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register, or otherwise, at the end of the report.

There are 21 members of staff, 18 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ Level 2 or higher. One member of staff is working towards Early Years Professional Status. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds and receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. Those in charge have exceptionally high aspirations for quality, which is reflected in the setting's daily practice and is evident from the plans for ongoing improvements. From the outset, strong relationships are established with parents as staff work closely with them to support, guide and nurture their children. As a result, the setting is highly effective at making sure children make excellent progress in all areas of their learning and development and are fully included in the life of the nursery. The welfare requirements are used to best effect in creating a healthy, safe and stimulating environment where children learn and develop to their full potential.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- reappraise the information gained from parents about children's starting points and use this more effectively when planning to move children forward

in their learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Management and staff have a shared vision of what they hope children will achieve and work effectively and collaboratively to ensure that children experience consistently high quality care and education that is tailored to meet their individual needs. Well considered reflection, evaluation and forward thinking is used successfully to maintain and improve the experiences offered to children and to plan improvements that are firmly based on the outcomes for children and their families. Staff are well qualified, receive regular additional training and are given time to discuss children's progress and development, plan support and implement any necessary changes in the setting and in their own practice.

Children are treated as individuals and close relationships are developed between key persons, children and their families. Staff are particularly skilled at identifying and responding to any particular difficulties in children's language development and show sensitivity to the needs of children learning English as an additional language. For example, they use children's own home language when appropriate and encourage children to communicate through a range of expressive forms such as sign language, pictures and symbols. Extremely positive steps are taken to safeguard and promote children's welfare, with a high level of safety maintained, while still allowing young children to try new things that challenge and interest them. All care rooms include quiet places, dens and attractive book corners where children can relax and rest and music plays in the background to sooth babies as they sleep. Children's good health is assured as they learn about healthy living, enjoy being active and develop extremely positive attitudes towards healthy eating. They wash their hands regularly, clean their teeth and eat nutritious meals and snacks which are freshly prepared and cooked for them on site by a well qualified chef. Organic products are used whenever possible and children often help to grow vegetables in the nursery's organic allotment.

Parents are kept exceptionally well informed at all times so that they understand and fully share in their children's early care and education. They talk to key persons at arrival and collection times to share information about their children's needs and achievements and are encouraged to fully support the learning at home. Working parents in particular benefit from the many additional services provided by the nursery. These include a medical prescription collection service and an on-site shop where parents can buy essential items for their children such as nappies, baby wipes and teething products. The nursery has developed a wide range of effective policies and record keeping procedures and these are used extremely well to positively support the children in their care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children develop to their full potential because of outstanding early years practice. They respond enthusiastically as they try things out, solve problems and learn to recognise their own achievements. Activities in the baby and toddler rooms are

planned specifically around children's early developmental needs, with a high emphasis placed on sensory play. There are discovery trenches, hide away cubes and comfy dens that stimulate new discoveries and each child has a 'Key Person' who provides stability and familiarity. Children's care rooms play a key role in supporting their learning, with inspiring additional facilities such as an activity studio, sensory theatre, outdoor learning classroom and an organic allotment ensuring they are both nurtured and challenged. Staff show they are accomplished facilitators who are knowledgeable about the Early Years Foundation Stage. They plan clear learning outcomes that are based on children's varying abilities, and are skilled at helping children to get the most out of their learning. Detailed information is gained from parents about children's personalities, starting points and the important people in their lives so that staff know children really well, although this information is not always used to best effect, particularly during a child's first weeks at the nursery.

Children are encouraged to be independent and autonomous learners. They enjoy an atmosphere where they are valued as individuals, are given rights and choices and so develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture. Praise, kindness stars and certificates for achieving at home and in the nursery help to develop positive behaviour and build children's self-esteem to high level. Their language skills are developed exceptionally well as they learn to communicate in many ways and photographs, signs and labels further aid their understanding and provide additional support to children who speak more than one language. French is taught from an early age, and this adds richness to children's vocabulary as they learn to sing, count and repeat simple phrases in a different language. Important steps in early literacy are developed through mark-making, learning letter sounds and picture books. Stimulating projects such as the life cycles of chicks or growing organic vegetables provide absorbing and fascinating learning opportunities and pet gold fish or guinea pigs are kept in all care rooms so that children learn to care for living things. Excellent resources help children to develop strong skills and positive attitudes to numbers and counting and their creativity is highly valued and encouraged across all areas of their learning.

Children develop exceptional physical control due to the rich range of activities used to build on and extend their balance, coordination and growth. A specialist teacher plans their indoor and outdoor play and special exercises are carried out with pre-school aged children each morning to help them to be alert and ready to learn. Babies and toddlers receive excellent support when learning early walking and climbing skills and this ensures they develop rapidly, become mobile and learn to hold, grasp and use objects well.

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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
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?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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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