

Tiny Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	303486
Inspection date	05/02/2009
Inspector	Therese Kenna

Setting address	St. Martins Lane, Murdishaw, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 6HZ
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Telephone number	0777 952 8926 or 07790 362051
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Email	
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises
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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).

Description of the setting

Tiny Steps Pre-School was registered in 2001 and is run by a management team. It operates in the grounds of St Martin's Catholic Primary School in the Murdishaw district of Runcorn and serves children living in the local area. Children attending access two large play rooms in a mobile unit, the school hall and computer suite. The school playground is available for outdoor activities. There are currently 35 children on roll of which two share one full time place; of the 35, 31 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports 4 children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The setting opens Monday to Friday 09.15 to 11.45 and Monday to Thursday 13.00 to 15.30 term time only. The pre-school employs five staff; all hold an appropriate Early Years qualification. The setting receives support, advice and training from Sure Start in Halton and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. It is registered on the Early Years Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The strong leadership and management of the setting results in good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are very notable strengths in the good relationships between children and staff and the strong partnerships with parents, the school and other agencies. These factors contribute significantly to ensuring that children are safe and secure and that the setting meets their very differing needs. Children make good progress and the setting prepares them well for their future education. However, key workers do not consistently and regularly involve parents in the assessment of their children's progress across the year. Good self-evaluation ensures that the setting has good capacity for continuous improvement in response to the changing needs of all learners.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the role of the key worker to more regularly and consistently involve parents and carers more closely in the assessment of their child's learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

A very capable manager and forward thinking management team lead an effective staff who work well together and ensure the setting runs smoothly. Conscientious self-evaluation is the main strength of the leadership and management in its drive for continuous improvement. It accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses and uses these to identify areas for improvement. Regular checks ensure that the provision meets the children's changing needs effectively. This has a significant impact on children's welfare and development. There are robust vetting procedures

for all adults to ensure they are suitable to work with children. The impact is seen in happy, busy learners who quickly settle in, play happily and concentrate for long periods of time. Staff carry out daily checks to ensure that the premises, equipment and furniture are safe and secure, both indoors and outside.

The setting caters equally well for all learners including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff are suitably qualified, and a carefully planned training programme ensures that their professional skills are up-to-date. Staff deliver the new approaches to learning well, and are beginning to use initial assessments of what each child likes and can do to help them settle in. The new ways of recording children's achievements are being developed and are beginning to prove effective in identifying children's next steps in learning.

The strong links with the school ensure a seamless link into the reception class. The manager regularly checks the views and opinions of parents. This along with the close ties between the school and the pre-school setting, enables all to work closely to the benefit of all children, although key workers do not involve parents regularly or closely enough in the assessment of how well their children achieve.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Strong provision ensures children's good progress because they feel secure and settled, and have many opportunities to follow their interests and discover things for themselves. Adults have good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use children's interests as a starting point. Practitioners match activities well to children's needs so that all experience success, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An example of this is the use of Macaton to aid communication for those children who have speech difficulties. Pre-starter visits establish the all important relationship between parents, children and key workers. Staff have recognised that these need to be constantly reinforced if they are to remain strong. Practitioners review each child's progress regularly and adapt activities as necessary. The majority of activities are available indoors. The outdoor space is not easily accessible, limiting children's choice to decide where to learn. The setting is aware of this shortcoming and organises daily access to various main school facilities. The staff take every care to give children worthwhile experiences outdoors; for example, children delighted in being outside exploring the snow. Practitioners maintain close contact with reception class staff who support links with the Pre-school, helping them to extend children's learning. This close contact ensures that children are well prepared for their future education.

Children develop the habits and behaviour of good learners because of the exemplary relationships they have with their key workers. Right from the start, they learn to share and take turns and to understand why such actions such as 'pushing in' are dangerous. As a result, children learn to behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others and they become socially, physically and emotionally confident. Children have good awareness of health and hygiene and show good levels of independence, washing their hands on their own before eating their snacks. Children choose their own snack, and count and hand out the cups ready for their drink. Afterwards, they put their cup away, and throw waste into

the bin. Children make a positive contribution to the Pre-school setting as they carefully tidy up at the end of the session. Adults encourage children to make decisions and ask searching questions that make children think. A strong focus on communication, language and literacy, problem solving and knowledge and understanding of the world, prepares children very well for life beyond the setting.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
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?	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?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	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

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.

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.