

# First Steps

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY255445
<b>Inspection date</b>	06/02/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Nugent
<b>Setting address</b>	5 Cheshunt Park Farm, Cheshunt Park, Cheshunt, WALTHAM CROSS, Hertfordshire, EN7 6PZ
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<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	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

First Steps day nursery registered in 2003. It operates from a side extension to a house in Cheshunt. Children have access to three connected indoor play areas and a secure outdoor play area. Access to the nursery is at ground level via a short driveway leading from a lane off the roadway. The nursery is open every weekday from 08:00 until 18:00 for 50 weeks a year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 20 children may attend the setting at any one time. Currently there are 35 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff, four of whom hold relevant early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a relevant qualification. The manager and deputy are both suitably qualified.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The overall quality of the provision is inadequate. The nursery offers a homely setting where children are happy and generally make progress in their learning. However, weaknesses in the leadership of the provision impact on the quality of care and education. Staff do not meet children's needs effectively due to inconsistencies in promoting a well-managed, safe and inclusive environment. They are beginning to evaluate their practice but are not fully aware of aspects that require further improvement.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

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

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- review and develop the system for planning learning experiences to ensure that planning includes all children and planned activities are appropriate to each child's stage of development (organisation) 09/06/2009
- promote equality of opportunity effectively in order to ensure that all children are included, valued and supported, making reasonable adjustments within the setting if necessary (safeguarding and welfare) 09/04/2009
- conduct risk assessments to identify all aspects of the environment that need checking regularly and take all reasonable steps to ensure that risks are minimised 09/04/2009

- (suitable premises, environment and equipment)
- implement a behaviour management policy which promotes effective behaviour management and ensures that children are aware of personal safety (behaviour management) 09/04/2009
- ensure that fresh drinking water is available at all times (promoting good health) 09/02/2009
- put in place regular appraisals for staff in order to identify their training needs (qualifications, training, knowledge and skills) 09/04/2009
- notify Ofsted of any change to the person who is managing the early years provision (suitability of adults). 09/02/2009

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review the organisation of the learning environment in order to provide a stimulating environment with a wide choice of play activities and opportunities to share books
- develop the monitoring and evaluation of the provision in order to highlight aspects requiring further improvement.

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

The nursery's documentation is generally well organised and information about children is kept securely. All required policies are in place. There is a sound employment procedure for new staff and an informal induction. However, there is no system of regular appraisals for staff to support their professional development and identify training needs. Consequently, the nursery lacks a consistent approach in some aspects of its organisation. The use of the different play areas has not been thought through sufficiently well to enable all children to access relevant resources and activities. Children are not always encouraged to feel included and valued, for example, when children in high chairs sit apart from the main group at mealtimes.

The manager of the setting has introduced a system of self-evaluation and started to work with staff on evaluating the quality of their practice. Together they have identified some stronger areas of the provision but have not yet highlighted areas requiring further development so as to enable continuous improvement of the provision. Since the previous inspection there has been a change in management. However, the provider does not always ensure that Ofsted are aware of a change in the management of the provision. Staff have updated their training recently by attending courses in 'Safeguarding' and 'Special Needs' although they have not yet accessed training related to the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Staff take into account parents' wishes for their children and respond to any concerns raised about children's care and education. The nursery's prospectus is

being revised so as to include information about the programme of education. Parents are invited to regular consultations to discuss children's progress and this helps them to become more involved in their children's learning. Parents of very young children receive information about each day's events in written diaries. Staff communicate with all other parents verbally when children are collected. There are appropriate procedures in place to enable staff to seek advice if having any concerns relating to child protection.

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

Children show interest in the resources and activities on offer and especially enjoy playing imaginatively, for example, in the 'home corner' or with toy vehicles. They concentrate well at chosen tasks, for instance, when doing jigsaw puzzles or creating collage pictures. Very young children are content moving around the play area and accessing toys and books. However, the learning environment for older children is less stimulating, offering more limited choices and, in particular, restricted access to suitable books. Consequently, at times, children's play can become quite boisterous. They are not fully aware of their boundaries or of how to keep themselves and others safe. This impacts on their ability to develop behaviour that is appropriate to good learners. Children have fun in organised group activities, such as singing and parachute play. They are challenged effectively in some activities, for example, table-top picture games, although not all staff have the knowledge and understanding to interact effectively to extend children in their learning.

There is a comprehensive system in place for observing children's individual learning and development. Staff collate observations to create useful records of children's learning and assess their stages of development. Using a series of topics staff plan activities covering each area of learning. However, the written plans lack detail and so it is not clear what children are expected to learn. Plans do not include all children or link effectively to staff's observations so that children's individual needs are taken into account. Children have opportunities for a variety of experiences that promote learning. They develop self-confidence and language skills as staff support their play and talk with them. They learn to count, match and sort using pictures and objects and are encouraged to use their senses as they explore different materials. They enjoy daily opportunities for physical activity, both indoors and outdoors, and benefit from opportunities to walk around the neighbouring farm and learn about farm animals.

Staff do not promote children's welfare effectively. Regular risk assessments of the premises are carried out but significant hazards have not been recorded so that risks to children can be minimised. The recent extension to the building has not been risk assessed, particularly with regard to the step linking that area to the playroom. Children are not always encouraged to be aware of their own safety as they move around the play areas and join in activities or mealtimes. The nursery has appropriate medical procedures in place and all staff are aware of children's dietary needs. They offer a healthy and balanced diet, although fresh drinking water is not available to children at all times in order to prevent the risk of dehydration. The family ethos of the setting helps children to settle well and

develop a sense of belonging. Children develop close relationships with staff and make friends readily with others.

## 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>	4
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	4
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	4

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	3
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	4
How well are children helped to stay safe?	4
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	4
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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:

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (welfare, suitability and safety of premises, safeguarding children). 09/04/2009

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (welfare, suitability and safety of premises, safeguarding children). 09/04/2009



## **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.