

Step By Step Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY295902

Inspection date

19/05/2009

Inspector

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Setting address

Watford College Site, Park Avenue, off William Street,
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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).

Description of the setting

Step By Step Nursery registered in 2005 and operates from four rooms in an adapted building. It is situated in the grounds of the Watford college site in a residential part of Watford, Hertfordshire. All children share access to a secure enclosed outside play area. The building is easily accessible by means of a ramp and wide doors.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 49 children at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 until 18.30 for 52 weeks of the year. There are currently 65 children on roll in the early years age range. Children come from the local area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 staff who work directly with the children, of these 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications and four staff member are working towards relevant childcare qualifications up to a level four. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The setting provides very effectively for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children of all ages settle well at the nursery and develop good relationships with staff. Children enjoy a balanced programme of free play and planned activities both indoors and outside that supports their welfare, learning and development well. Partnership with parents/carers is highly valued and supported through ongoing communication. Practitioners have made a positive start in developing systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide children with appropriate support and opportunities to help them develop and undertake practical experiments through allowing them to make decisions about what to investigate and how to do it
- show how children's learning and development will be supported through the planning of learning outcomes.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are guided by an effective and motivated management team who have a clear vision for the setting. Together the nursery manager and deputy manager value their staff team and utilise their skills well. Effective recruitment procedures

ensures children are cared for by staff who have relevant experience, qualifications and skills to do their job. Clear induction systems ensure staff are informed of the setting's procedures and policies. All staff are involved in an appraisal system and this enables them to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Professional development is encouraged and staff regularly update their knowledge through attending appropriate courses.

Management monitor and evaluate the nursery provision in discussion with staff. Previous recommendations set at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The group are focused on making further improvements through evaluation, further personal development and training. A high proportion of staff are exceptionally well qualified, including to degree level. Effective steps are taken by the setting to reflect and review the quality of its provision for children's welfare, learning and development. For example, through beginning self-evaluation and seeking parental feedback with the use of parent questionnaires and a suggestions box.

All the required policies and procedures for the safe management of children are in place. Most staff have attended safeguarding training and are aware of the procedures to follow should they have concerns regarding a child in their care. Detailed and effective risk assessments are undertaken regularly to enhance children's safety throughout the nursery and outside areas. Good use of space, resources and effective staff deployment ensures most routines run smoothly and an environment that is safe and fully inclusive.

Parents and carers receive some useful information about the nursery and the activities that are planned for the children. Staff involve parents in the children's learning through the information displayed, daily records of the children's activities, regular newsletters, observations and assessments, verbal communication and consultation evenings. Consequently, the nursery endeavours to build close relationships with parents and keeps them well informed about the setting, the children's well-being and what they have been doing.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The nursery promotes children's learning and development well. The learning environment is effectively organised and encourages purposeful play and exploration with an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-led activities. Well-qualified staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the EYFS and are effective in helping children progress in most areas of learning. However, opportunities for older children to undertake practical experiments and make decisions about what to investigate and how to do it, are less well implemented. Key workers contribute well to the weekly plans. Planning develops through daily observations and a range of varied assessments undertaken on all children. This ensures it is flexible and takes into account the interests and ideas of each child. Effective procedures are in place to enable parents to view their children's learning records, such as open evenings. Curriculum planning is linked to the six areas of learning and is generally informative. Staff record the wide range of resources that are accessible to the children each day. However, the inclusion of learning outcomes for individual

activities is not yet fully established to help challenge children and highlight the learning intended.

All children participate eagerly and with enjoyment in the activities provided, such as sand, water, playdough or foam play. Staff support the children well. They join in their play and interact to encourage children's thinking and communication. Many opportunities exist for children to develop a wide range of physical skills, such as balancing, climbing, jumping on the mini trampoline and negotiating space on wheeled toys. Children can make further choices outside from a wide range of equipment, for example, imaginative role-play using hairdressing equipment, construction and small world animals. Staff reinforce children's communication, language and literacy skills through social occasions together such as meal times, sharing books and guiding their early writing skills through regular opportunities for chalking, drawing and painting. Younger children are eagerly engrossed in messy finger paintings. When using resources such as tills, children's laptops, and various computers they become aware of the use of information communication and technology. Children are encouraged to develop an understanding of the world and their community as they learn about each others' celebrations and have access to an appropriate range of resources that promote positive images. Children develop problem solving skills and numeracy with mathematical concepts reinforced through a varied range of activities which involves numbers, shapes and patterns.

Staff promote children's welfare effectively through encouraging an awareness of good hygiene and personal safety. Children enjoy healthy snacks and meals each day and staff ensure that all dietary needs are met appropriately. On nature walks around the grounds or to post a letter they increase their knowledge and understanding of the environment. Children are made aware of playing safely and adults reinforce children's understanding of their boundaries, such as not running inside. Children are kept safe in the nursery due to the extensive safety procedures carried out by staff and management. Security is a priority of the provision for example, a closed circuit television system monitors all visitors and rooms to the nursery. Children make positive relationships because behaviour is well managed. Effective procedures are followed by staff to ensure the health of children, for example, bedding is individual to each child, a high number of staff hold first aid qualifications, children brush their teeth after lunch and being healthy is promoted through topics and visitors. Consequently, children learn about nutritious foods, exercise and dental hygiene.

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

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