

First Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY319318
Inspection date	11/06/2009
Inspector	Gail Robertson

Setting address	The Bungalow, Manor Park C of E V A First School, Mellstock Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 2BH
Telephone number	01305 250600
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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

First Steps Pre-School moved to its present premises in 2006. It operates from a bungalow within the grounds of Manor Park Church of England First School in Dorchester. The pre-school uses the reception classrooms and the main hall within the school building. There is a fully enclosed area for outdoor play. There is easy access for wheelchair users and toilet facilities inside.

The pre-school operates each weekday in term time only and is registered to provide care for a maximum of 25 children aged from two years to under five years of age. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 each day, with an optional lunch club until 12:15. An afternoon session operates on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12:30 to 15:00 for children aged from two and a half years to three years of age. There are currently 38 children in the early years age group on roll. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The pre-school employs five staff, all of whom have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority. There are close links with the first school and other pre-school providers.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children have an enjoyable time in this happy, caring pre-school, which meets their needs well. All children are fully included at all times. Planning for the activities that the children do is in a transition phase at present but this does not stop children making progress in their learning. Parents speak well of the setting, reporting how much their children want to come to play and meet their friends. Parents know that the staff take good care of their children. Evaluation of what goes on and the action taken to improve practice shows that there is good capacity to make the setting better.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure observations of children are made regularly and that they are recorded promptly
- involve parents in making contributions to their children's learning books
- make more detailed risk assessments for visits out of school

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and her staff are a good working team. They have regular meetings to discuss how they can improve the setting. The manager has made a good start on the Ofsted self-evaluation form. She used the parental questionnaire replies,

the committee views and contributions from the staff to help her evaluate the effectiveness of the setting. The form is descriptive, but has been a good exercise for the pre-school. The strengths and areas to develop further shows that the manager knows her provision well.

The importance of regular training to ensure the pre-school improves is well understood and taken on board by all the adults. This shows that the setting has good capacity for continuous improvement. Staff care well for all the children because it is a priority in their work. Everyone is vigilant to ensure that the children are registered into the setting and a check made as to who will collect them at the end of the morning. The fire alarm system is on the same circuit as the first school now and the setting is involved regularly with the main school for fire and evacuation procedures. There are rigorous policies for health and safety and a daily health and safety check. Risk assessments for off-site visits, such as to a nearby garden centre and the local library, are not sufficiently detailed. Child protection procedures met government regulations at the time of the inspection.

Planning documentation in response to the new development matters has begun. The staff take into account children's needs and have started to work out how they can also accommodate children's interests. The staff have made good observations of what children can do but the children's record is not updated regularly to give an accurate picture of the progress children have made. A start has been made using the 'About Me' learning journal for each child, but these journals are not up to date.

There are good relationships with the parents. Parents appreciate the information they receive and know their child's key worker. However, their contribution to the 'About Me' learning diary is limited. The link with the first school is strong. There are outstanding links with the speech therapist who on the day of inspection played a wonderful parachute game with all the children and staff.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children run into the pre-school, looking expectantly at all the activities as soon as they arrive. They settle down quickly to the fun things to do. They work at what interests them and ask adults for what they need if it is not available. Children love drama and story time. They all enjoy 'The Three Little Pigs' story book, joining in the story with gusto as they shouted 'or I will blow your house down!' They watched the manager carefully, carrying out the actions with the lovely puppets, and wanted to hear the story all over again once she had finished reading it. There is a good balance of child-initiated activities and adult-led tasks throughout each session. The emphasis is to help children to become independent. Children respond by being responsible and act more grown up than their age.

Children make choices at snack time, when they choose what they would like to eat from the healthy and fresh fruit and vegetables. Children also help themselves to a drink, and water is available at all times for them. Staff use this time to teach children about healthy eating and the importance of good manners. This is a time to be social with each other.

Outside in the garden and playground children explore and have a fun time. Staff make sure they are well protected from the strong sunshine. Watering the vegetable patch and the flowers is a favourite task to do each day. Recycling and care for our planet is a strong feature of what the children learn here.

Children learn to share, play together and have fun together. The staff know how to keep the children safe and keep up to date with their safe practices. Children behave well because they know what is expected of them. They know when they must wash their hands and change their footwear. Children are happily tired by the end of the session because they put all their energies into the activities.

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?	3
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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