

# 1st Steps

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY263881  
**Inspection date** 12/10/2009  
**Inspector** Jean Evelyn Thomas

**Setting address** 42 - 44 Irlam Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 4AL

**Telephone number** 0151 944 1345

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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 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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## **Description of the setting**

1st Steps Day Nursery opened in 2003 and is owned by a private limited company. It is a designated 'neighbourhood nursery' situated in Bootle and serves families within the local district and surrounding areas. Children are accommodated at ground and first floor level in six care rooms with associated facilities. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6.00pm all year round, excluding bank holidays.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 105 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 92 children under five years old on roll. The nursery offers care to children aged over five years old to 11 years old. The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are 29 members of staff, 23 of whom hold early years qualifications to at least level 2. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment, where staff know them extremely well and respect their individuality. Children are involved in a broad range of activities and experiences, both inside and out, which supports their progress towards the early learning goals. There is a strong commitment to working with parents, carers and connected professionals. Consequently, children's individual needs are well met and they are settled in the nursery. There is a clear management structure and well defined self-evaluation methods to help identify areas to develop and maintain continuous improvement.

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

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

- ensure consistency in the implementation of procedures for tracking children's progress towards the early learning goals and consider promoting further opportunities to encourage parents to contribute to their child's observation, assessment and development process
- seek health and safety guidance regarding one of the feeding positions used for the younger children.

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

There are clear and up-to-date procedures regarding safeguarding children. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns regarding child protection issues. There are clear recruitment and induction procedures in place, to check staff's suitability to work with children and to ensure they know their responsibilities. Risk assessments of the premises and for specific outings are in place to minimise risks to children. However, health and safety advice has not been sought regarding the lie back bottle feeding position of older babies which on occasion is used. The nursery has all the required documentation in place, providing a good framework for staff to base their practice.

The providers and staff work well in partnership with parents and carers to ensure children's individual needs are met. Parents speak highly of the setting, particularly commenting that they have enjoyed watching their children's confidence and communication skills grow and develop. Parents are kept well informed about the organisation of the nursery and events, through the detailed prospectus which includes pertinent policies and procedures, newsletters and displays. Throughout the nursery, there are displays about the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to inform parents about the educational programme the children are following. Parents are encouraged to provide information about their child when starting at the nursery, so that the child's key person knows their individual interests, welfare needs and developmental starting points to inform the initial planning. Staff exchange information daily with parents about children's care and regularly share children's learning and development records. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning, for example, when they take 'teddy' home to share family experiences. However, few parents are contributing to the observation, assessment and planning process as part of their children's learning. Staff have systems in place to liaise with other providers delivering the EYFS and have a clear understanding about how these links will further support and enhance children's learning. Staff promote equality and diversity within the setting and work with other professionals and parents to support children with special educational needs/and or learning difficulties.

Staff warmly interact with children during play and respond to their individual needs. Each day is well structured to offer a mix of free-choice and adult-led activities, thereby maintaining a relaxed atmosphere and providing children with a variety of learning experiences. All ages of children benefit from easy access to a wide range of resources, set out in learning areas to stimulate their interest and promote the development of skills. Children have the opportunity to use the outdoor area every day.

The providers have clear aims and objectives for the nursery. Management and staff work as an effective team to bring about improvements and to raise the quality of the provision for the children and families. There are distinct methods for self-evaluation, which includes use of the Ofsted evaluation form, regular staff meetings and actively seeking views from parents and children. The providers work with other agencies to help achieve their objectives. For example, they have been

awarded the top rating by the Environmental Health Agency for their food provision. Training is well supported, staff attend relevant courses and in-house training, several staff are studying towards further qualifications. The recommendations set at the last inspection have been addressed, which has improved aspects of children's learning and development.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children throughout the nursery are happy, settled and secure. They enjoy the time they spend at nursery, making good relationships with staff and each other. The key person system contributes to children's sense of belonging. Children become happily involved in play situations, enjoying the support of adults who interact to enhance children's play and promote learning. Babies and young children are actively curious and enjoy the freedom to move around, as they explore books and toys. The babies use their senses to discover colours, textures and sounds as they investigate a wide range of resources set out beneath a partially covered area, which is colour themed, currently black and white. The toddlers delight as they sit in the water to play with bubbles, splash the water and pour water to and from different sized containers.

Staff plan to meet individual children's learning needs by recording their observations of children's development and working out each child's next steps in learning. Staff use the EYFS framework expectations to identify the children's next steps. However, there are some inconsistencies in the maintenance of the tracking records, to monitor the children's progress towards the early learning goals. The enabling environment provides defined areas of play for children of all ages and easily accessible resources to promote their independent play and exploration. In line with the principles of the EYFS, children enjoy the outdoor environment on a daily basis. The continuous provision of resources enables children to pursue activities of their choice, to practice skills and consolidate their learning. This effective childcare results in children being motivated to learn and develop their levels of concentration, which contributes to their future economic well-being.

Language and communication skills are strongly promoted throughout all aspects of nursery life. Many children are confident communicators and clearly express their thoughts and ideas. Older children develop confidence in talking in groups about events in their lives and joining in with familiar phrases of a favourite story. Children develop good listening skills, as they participate in these activities and show respect, as they listen with interest to what others have to say. Staff spend time singing, chatting, making facial expressions to stimulate babies and to provide them with the basis for their language development. Older children participate in Spanish language sessions, which further enhances many aspects of their overall development, as well as their communication skills. There are always materials readily available for children to practice writing skills and to express their creative ideas. Throughout the nursery children show a genuine interest in books. Children learn about number and solve problems through planned and everyday activities. Staff introduce number as they talk to children and encourage children to consider simple calculations. From an early age children develop their technology skills, for

example, babies explore interactive toys. The older children demonstrate their competence with the use of computer keyboards and the large interactive wall board.

Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them through regular visits and outings. These include taking items to the nearby recycling centre. This is one of the different planned activities to help develop children's understanding of sustaining the earth's resources. In response to children's interests, the nursery bought an incubator to hatch chick eggs. The children and staff kept a record of their progress before the chicks left the nursery for a more suitable environment. The community police officer regularly visits the nursery to talk to children to further support their understanding of how to look after themselves, such as following road safety procedures.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging to the community. They see photographs of themselves displayed in the nursery and participate in celebrations, such as birthdays. Staff present themselves as positive role models for the children's behaviour. The children's behaviour is good. From an early age, they learn to take turns and share equipment. They are encouraged to help tidy away equipment and help with tasks, such as sweeping up sand, learning to take responsibility for their environment. Children know what is expected through familiar routines and explanations and receive regular praise and encouragement for effort and achievement, which helps boost their self-esteem. Staff use a range of resources and plan activities to support children's understanding about the diversity of society. Staff encourage children to value similarities and differences in our lives. For example, as the children construct a tower, reference is made to a block of flats. The staff use this opportunity to talk to children and ask them questions about different types of buildings we live in.

A healthy lifestyle is promoted throughout the setting. The meals are prepared and cooked on site using fresh ingredients. Children's dietary needs are strictly adhered to. Activities are planned to support children's understanding of healthy eating. For example, following reading the story 'Handra's Surprise', the children selected fruits and made their own fresh fruit drinks. Meal times are relaxed, social occasions, where staff and children share information and enjoy each other's company.

## 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*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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

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