

First Steps

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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.

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Description of the setting

First Steps day nursery registered in 2003. It operates from a single-storey extension built onto 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 directly from the car parking area. The nursery is open every weekday from 08:00 until 18:00 and 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 special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. There are five members of staff working with the children, all of whom are suitably qualified.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery provides a safe and stimulating environment for children where they settle quickly and enjoy a variety of play activities. Staff organise the provision effectively, promoting children's welfare and learning through appropriate systems and procedures. They work in partnership with parents and other professionals in order to meet individual children's needs. Consequently, all children make good progress towards the early learning goals. The nursery maintains the capacity to continually improve as staff set relevant targets for future development which are intended to benefit all children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the system for exchanging information with parents in order to find out more about children's starting points on entry to the nursery
- extend the opportunities for children to learn about information technology and differences in religion and culture.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery has all the required documentation in place, providing a good framework for staff to base their practice. There are clear and up-to-date procedures regarding the safeguarding of children. Through the implementation of appropriate employment procedures the officer-in-charge ensures that all adults working in the nursery are suitable to work with children. Staff conduct thorough risk assessments of the premises, showing any action taken to minimise risks to

children. They know what to do if they have any concerns about child protection. All records relating to children's health and safety are well-maintained. The premises are safe and inviting for children, with many pictures, posters and labels to inform and guide both children and parents.

Staff have worked hard towards improving the outcomes for children since the previous inspection. They have sought advice, and attended various training courses, in order to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has resulted in the provision of a stimulating environment where all children receive effective support to help them progress in their learning. Staff work very closely as a team and make good use of self-evaluation to monitor their provision and reflect on their practice. The officer-in-charge enthuses staff to work towards continual improvement by regularly appraising their practice and setting future targets in an action plan. Parents' views of the setting are taken into account when evaluating the provision and lead to changes in practice if considered to be beneficial for all children.

Staff are deployed effectively around the nursery to enable them to interact with children during play and respond to any individual needs. Children benefit from easy access to a wide range of resources, set out in learning areas so as to stimulate their interest and promote the development of skills. Children have the opportunity to use the outdoor area every day and staff are intending to improve access in all weathers by providing a covered play area. The resources and equipment are maintained in good condition so that they are attractive and safe for children. 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.

Staff promote equality and diversity within the setting, offering individual support to any children with special educational needs. There is a close working partnership with parents which contributes to children's individual needs being met appropriately. Parents receive detailed information in the nursery's prospectus about the educational programme. They are encouraged to provide information about their children when starting at the nursery, although this lacks sufficient detail to enable staff to be fully aware of children's starting points on entry to the nursery. Staff exchange information daily about children's care and regularly share children's learning journals with parents to encourage them to be involved in their children's learning. They work closely with other providers and professionals in order to ensure a consistent approach to individual children's care and education.

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

Staff provide an attractive play environment that offers relevant learning opportunities for children of differing ages and abilities. Children become happily involved in play situations, enjoying the support of adults who interact to enhance children's play and promote learning. Young children are actively curious and enjoy the freedom to move around as they explore books and toys. They especially like to investigate the contents of a large treasure basket, using their senses to

discover colours, textures and sounds. Older children are encouraged to participate in table-top games, and creative activities, which help them to develop appropriate skills. Staff make good use of planned group activities to reinforce and extend children's learning in language, literacy and numeracy, using practical applications. In this way, children develop communication skills and an understanding of mathematical concepts, preparing them well for the transition to school. Children learn to use their skills to solve problems, for example, checking to make sure they have the correct quantity of ingredients in cooking activities.

Staff plan effectively 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. They create attractive visual records of individual children's learning, ensuring that all children's next steps are followed up by including their targets in the written planning. There is an efficient rotation of resources to support children's learning in free play. Consequently, all children make good progress towards the early learning goals. They develop personal independence and make choices confidently within the play environment. There are various opportunities for children to explore creatively, expressing their own ideas in pictures and models, and to investigate natural materials. They find out about the local environment on walks around the nearby farm and woods. Children are beginning to find out about information technology and staff intend to provide opportunities for children to also develop useful computer skills. They organise activities around cultural and religious festivals, although opportunities for children to increase their awareness of different cultures and religions are slightly limited overall.

Children's well-being is prioritised by staff who ensure that children keep safe and healthy whilst in their care. Children develop close relationships with adults and approach them confidently. They are encouraged to talk about how they feel each day and enjoy conversation with friends at mealtimes. As a result, children develop a sense of belonging and a feeling of security. They are aware of their boundaries within the setting and respond positively to staff's instructions and reminders. Staff assist children in solving disputes through negotiation so that they learn to respect others' needs and behave responsibly. They check daily that all the usual safety measures are in place around the premises so that children feel confident to access activities safely. Children are aware of good hygiene practices and enjoy a healthy, balanced diet. They have good opportunities to be physically active and to rest when necessary. They have fun outdoors using a wide range of equipment that encourages the development of physical skills. The daily routine works effectively, and transition times are well organised, so that the provision runs smoothly at all times.

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

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|--|---|
| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 2 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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|--|---|
| How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed? | 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

| | |
|--|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 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