



Footsteps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY234198
Inspection date	13 December 2005
Inspector	Elaine Poulton
Setting Address	Sherbourne, Old Hedging Lane, Dosthill, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 1LD
Telephone number	01827 268082
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Registered person	Footsteps Day Nurseries Ltd (5046074)
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Footsteps Day Nursery opened in 2002. It operates from a bungalow in the Dosthill area of Tamworth. The nursery has 3 ground floor and 2 first floor activity rooms and a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The day nursery serves the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 70 children under 5 years on roll. This includes 17 funded 3 and 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children

with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 07:30 until 18:00 all year round.

This setting employs 14 staff to work directly with the children. Over half the staff including the manager hold a level 3 early years qualification. The remainder hold a level 2 early years qualification or are working toward a level 3 early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff work in partnership with parents and share information to meet all children's dietary needs. Children are well nourished and benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy a varied menu of freshly prepared nutritious meals and all snacks comply with any special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Staff are very attentive to the needs of younger children and babies to ensure their individual meal-time routines are met. Drinks are offered to children regularly throughout the day and older children know they can ask for a drink when they are thirsty or serve themselves from the water dispenser.

The 'no-outdoor-shoes' policy in the baby and toddler rooms and extensive hygiene procedures throughout the nursery ensure that children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment. The provision is warm and well ventilated. There are good procedures in place for sick and infectious children which help prevent the spread of infection and help to keep children healthy. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through some well-planned routines, such as hand washing before eating. Occasionally older children share a communal towel to wipe their hands after messy play, which compromises their good health.

All children benefit from outdoor play in the fresh air and active play helps them to develop their physical skills well. They enjoy and join in with a range of age appropriate physical play experiences. Younger children are active according to individual needs and are also able to take rest and sleep when needed. Older children take part in 'brain-gym' to stimulate their mind and body, action songs and musical games which contribute to their good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised environment, where risks are minimised through good safety and security procedures. Children are able to play safely with a range of toys that promote their development. There is a good range of equipment, resources, toys and games to choose from that are in good condition and that are

well maintained and conform to appropriate safety standards.

Children's safety is a high priority in the nursery. They are learning about keeping themselves and others safe through, for example, emergency evacuation procedures which are practised regularly.

Effective procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children are in place. Children are kept safe through policies that are understood by staff, for example procedures for outings. Risk assessments are completed regularly together with daily safety checks for each room and for outdoors and outings.

Children are protected from harm because staff are knowledgeable about child protection issues. Staff are aware of whom to contact and the procedures to follow should an incident occur. The child protection policy is clear about roles and responsibilities and what happens if there is an allegation made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The care, learning and play experiences for children in this setting are good. Children are secure in the nursery's welcoming and caring environment and they have positive relationships with staff. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is implemented in part. Planning and assessment systems are beginning to link together to enable young children to experience a good variety and balance of activities, which in turn ensures they become competent young learners.

Children are content and play happily together or along-side one another. They investigate resources such as, sensory equipment, activity toys, and music and movement, all suitable to their age and stage of development. All children enjoy exploration with natural materials, paint, water and sand which helps children represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Babies show interest as they react to sponge painting and seeing images of themselves in the mirror. The children's language and communication skills are promoted well by staff through constant conversation, questions and individual attention. Consequently, children are able to make their needs known.

Children watch and listen to one another and as a result they are beginning to learn how to share resources in a small group situation. They are building good relationships with staff and peers and are supported and helped to understand the concept of what is right and wrong.

Nursery Funded Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is a very well organised staff team who have developed their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage well to judge the impact of activities on the children. Staff plan and provide a varied range of activities under each area of learning, the learning intention is recorded and relates to the stepping stones so that all aspects are covered.

Children's enthusiasm and attention are maintained to ensure children are achieving and progressing.

Staff use effective methods to maintain children's interest, such as spending the majority of their time working directly with the children and asking understandable questions. This means that children are appropriately challenged and engaged. Organisation of group time is flexible and encourages children to concentrate because staff stimulate and engage the children with varying approaches. Children are clear about the purpose of adult-led activities and frequently join in with their own ideas and home experiences. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a calm and caring environment for children.

Children are interested and absorbed in their free play as they select and carry out activities. They are encouraged to visit the bathroom independently and help tidy activities away. Not all children are encouraged to assume responsibility or to initiate and manage their own tasks. For example children do not help to set the table before lunch or wipe up their own spills at snack time. Children are lively and friendly and respond positively to staff's high expectations of levels of behaviour.

Children speak clearly and confidently with each other. They listen intently to stories and independently select books for pleasure. They are beginning to recognise their own names and are able to sound letters in words. Not all children are encouraged to use the writing table or the resources to practise making marks on paper.

Children are beginning to understand and use numbers. They count meaningfully up to seven and in some cases beyond. They are developing problem solving skills during everyday routines, such as deciding how many more cups they need at sack time. Children demonstrate that they understand shape, quantity and size as they name and compare shapes including oval, hexagon and pentagon. This means that children use number names and number language spontaneously.

Children develop an initial sense of time and place through regular visits and walks in the community, for example taking the bus to the Snow Dome. Children are introduced to other cultures and customs as they celebrate different cultures with food tasting, dressing-up and stories. They are developing their knowledge of the natural world as they have regular opportunities to investigate their natural environment planned through topics and activities.

Daily use of the outdoor area helps children develop their physical skills. They climb, ride and pedal wheeled toys and use outside activity equipment competently. Children use paintbrushes and one-handed tools with good control. They are able to express themselves imaginatively and explore different textures and name colours competently. They use their imagination and a range of rhythmic movements as they take part in singing nursery rhymes and music sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Information about children's individual care needs is shared between staff and

parents. Pre-contact arrangements and a planned settling in procedure means that children are supported effectively in the setting. Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities and use this to introduce activities to interest children in different cultures and beliefs.

Staff support children with special needs well and work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that children are included in the life of the nursery. All children have good opportunities to self-select games and toys and can access all activities. Children are gaining a sense of being valued and respected as individuals which in turn helps them to develop their confidence and self-esteem

Children are building good relationships with peers and staff. Children are praised and rewarded consistently when they are behaving well and this in turn promotes and reinforces good behaviour. They are learning how to take turns, share, help each other and remember to say 'please' and 'thank you'. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff are continually developing systems to ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress towards the early learning goals so that they are actively involved in their child's learning. All children benefit from the positive partnership developed between parents and staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting employs experienced, qualified and vetted staff to ensure that children are cared for and are well protected. Staffing ratios are maintained at all times resulting in children's care, learning and play being well supported. There is a consistent staff team which helps children to settle in well, develop good relationships and enjoy their play and learning.

Younger children benefit from the 'Birth to three matters' framework although this has not been fully implemented and therefore not fully effective. Older children behave well as staff reward their good behaviour and achievements with praise and encouragement.

Policies and procedures which support good practice are in place and staff are fully aware of their role and responsibly to care for children and to ensure that children's good health, safety, enjoyment and ability to make a positive contribution is promoted.

Activities and routines are planned well to support children's all round development. Most activities successfully promote children's learning, but not all children are encouraged to practise good hygiene routines. Older children are not always encouraged to use the writing table or to assume responsibility to initiate and manage routine tasks thus limiting their progress.

Staff are well deployed and indoor space and equipment is well organised. The outdoor play area is used successfully and outings and visits are planned to help

older children explore their local community and natural environment. Resources are well maintained, safe and accessible

Leadership and management is good. The manager is experienced and has a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The management team is good at supporting and valuing the staff, identifying strengths and weaknesses in the setting and offering direction to staff to ensure a consistent approach to children's learning. Individual staff supervision and evaluation systems are in place to support staff and identify further training to ensure children continue to make good progress in all six areas of learning.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

An action was set in January 2005 by a Childcare Inspector to ensure that all health and safety requirements are in place prior to Ofsted granting a variation in the Conditions of Registration. The providers requested a variation to extend the provision on the first floor of the building and to increase the number of children to be cared for. A plan of action was devised and sent to Ofsted detailing how health and safety requirements would be met. The Action Plan contains Risk Assessments, Fire Safety Officer and Building Inspector reports. The providers have followed all appropriate health and safety requirements to meet the action. The variation was therefore granted by Ofsted.

There were two recommendations from the previous inspection. To update the equal opportunities and special needs policy statements, to included current legislation and guidance. The recommendations have been met and the nursery has a good range of policies and procedures in place including equal opportunities and special need policies. Literature on current legislation and guidance is now available, including for example reference to the Disability Discrimination Act.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to encourage children to practise good hygiene routines
- continue to develop use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to further improve outcomes for younger children

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve challenges for more able children to assume responsibility to self-initiate and manage their own routine tasks
- encourage better use of the writing table resources and equipment

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