

Footsteps Private Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY394420
Inspection date 15/12/2009
Inspector Susan Marriott

Setting address 11 Albany Road, LEIGHTON BUZZARD, Bedfordshire, LU7
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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

Footsteps Private Day Nursery is one of two provisions operated by Footsteps Nursery Ltd. The nursery was first registered in 2006 and re-registered in 2009. The provision is currently operated from a large detached, three storey house, close to the centre of Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. Children are cared for on the ground floor and first floor only. The second floor is used for office accommodation. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The setting receives funding for early education. It is open Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year from 8.00am until 6.00pm. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register to provide 45 places and there are currently 65 children attending who are within the early years age group. The setting serves the local and neighbouring communities and is able to support children with specific educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. There are 14 staff members, all of whom, hold relevant childcare qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is a welcoming, friendly and inclusive setting where the children make good progress in their learning and development. Staff sustain high quality interaction with children to draw learning from play and promote positive attitudes to learning. Managers and staff work extremely well together and all aspects of children's welfare are promoted successfully with particular emphasis being given to meeting the individual needs of the babies and younger children. Strong partnerships with parents and carers mean that staff have a good knowledge of each child's needs. The owners demonstrate an outstanding commitment to continuous improvement through the provision of ongoing training and the consistent upgrading of resources provided.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the links between the system of planning, observation and assessment and the Practice Guidance criteria to demonstrate the progress children make. Use the information gained to ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is strongly promoted as the setting has effective safeguarding procedures. Staff attend regular training and review their procedures to ensure that they keep up to date with this area of work. Stringent checks are carried out

to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Regular risk assessments and daily checks are recorded and ensure that hazards are minimised. Good daily practice, such as ongoing explanations from staff, reinforce children's understanding of safety issues. For example, they understand that they must sit at the side of the room whilst staff move the tables for lunch.

The setting's owners and managers demonstrate an outstanding ability to drive improvement and benefit from owning another nursery, which broadens their outlook and experience in managing Early Years provision. The owners have an exceptionally clear vision for the future and clearly identifiable targets involving staff, parents and children in reviewing the setting's practice. Self-assessment is fully effective in identifying improvement. Managers are striving to develop liaison and transition arrangements with other settings and agencies in order to secure continuity of provision for children within the spirit of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. They are quick to attend to any problems and can promptly identify special educational needs.

The deployment of resources is outstanding. Staff feel valued and are able to put forward their suggestions and ideas, knowing that their ideas will be embraced by management. The team are actively supported in attending further training to develop their skills and knowledge. The good organisation of the indoor play areas means that children are offered a wide range of activities that promote their development and the outdoor play area is fully utilised to offer children an extended range of opportunities with emphasis being given to sustainability. This helps create a positive environment, where children feel secure and happy.

Managers and staff have a clear understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement appropriate policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. They work with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's background and culture and are therefore able to meet their needs and promote children's awareness of individuality. Good communication with parents means that staff are able to work well in partnership with them. For example, children who speak English as an additional language are supported by staff who have key words displayed in the room for ready reference. Parents receive thorough information about the setting and their child's progress, for example, through newsletters, daily talks with staff and review meetings with key workers. They share information, particularly about care routines for younger children, when their child starts and through ongoing daily discussions. They are increasingly involved in their child's learning with opportunities to add comments and complete observations at home for their assessments.

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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well supported in their achievements because staff have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have developed detailed procedures for observing and assessing children although these are not fully effective because staff do not consistently use the criteria from the Practice Guidance Document. This

information is then used to inform activity planning and ensure that children are offered activities that promote their individual development. Good use of the key worker system means that staff know the children well and can therefore provide appropriate support. Confident staff encourage children to explore and develop their own play, sensitively intervening to extend children's thinking and understanding. This means that children take an active role in their own learning and develop positive attitudes to this. Christmas carols play on a tape in the background, creating a gentle and pleasant environment. Equipment is generally accessible, enabling children to make independent choices. For example, children playing on the car mat extend their play by choosing additional figures and a construction set. Children's enjoyment is enhanced and their learning effectively extended because staff join in appropriately with their play and discussions. As babies explore a treasure basket, their wonderment at the shiny beads is supported by staff encouraging them to listen to the noise they make as they fall through the children's fingers. Staff include teaching about colours and counting in their commentary, so that children learn effectively through child-led exploratory play.

Children learn to write with purpose, demonstrated by a display of letters to Santa. They construct with a purpose in mind and gain an awareness of the cultures of others when making 'Christingles' to take home. Children enjoy familiar stories and rhymes. The popularity of the action rhyme 'Sleeping Bunnies', is extended by staff, who arrange for live rabbits to be brought into the nursery to promote children's curiosity in the features of living things. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about the relevance of healthy lifestyles. Regular trips to the local market enable the children to pick their own fruit and vegetables, choosing what they would like to eat and learning about healthy choices. Children brush their teeth after lunch, enjoy healthy food discussions and benefit from exemplary health and hygiene practice. The garden has been redesigned and the children harvested their first runner beans from the raised growing beds in the summer. They learn about sustainability through using a compost maker and contribute towards the recycling systems indoors. A relaxing water feature on the patio provides the focus for a quiet corner in the garden and the extensive range of outdoor toys and equipment provide daily opportunities for children to develop their physical skills in the fresh air. Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel safe. They confidently approach visitors to the setting, select resources and play independently or with other children and staff. They are encouraged to be active learners, for example, helping to tip out hats and scarves from the dressing up box. Children develop further skills for the future as they develop independence, share ideas and work together. For example, staff encourage children to try to fasten their own coats before going outside to play.

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

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	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
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	1
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

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	1
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