



Step By Step Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY295902
Inspection date	14 September 2005
Inspector	Julie Whitelaw / Anneliese Fox-Jones
Setting Address	Watford College Site, Park Avenue, off William Street,, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 2DD
Telephone number	01923 639333
E-mail	
Registered person	Step By Step Nursery Ltd
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?

Step By Step Nursery opened in February 2005 and operates from four rooms in an adapted building. It is situated in the grounds of the Watford college site in a residential part of Watford. A maximum of 49 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 until 18.30 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 13 children from 1 to 3 years on roll. Of these 1 child receives

funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery supports children with special needs and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 6 staff, 5 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children show enjoyment and enthusiasm when playing outside. They benefit from fresh air as they play in the garden. Children's health is promoted as they run, kick footballs, jump in puddles and ride bikes. They benefit from exercise as they walk to the local shops and run across the playing field.

Children learn about personal hygiene through their daily routine. Their health is protected because staff are aware of good hygiene practice in order to prevent the spread of infection. Staff follow the health and hygiene policies and procedures that are in place. For example, using disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing and cleaning surfaces after use, protects children from illness.

Children benefit from balanced nutritious meals and healthy snacks that include raisins, bread sticks and rice cakes. Information regarding children's dietary requirements is obtained from parents which enables staff to meet children's individual needs. Jugs of water and cups are available for older children. Younger children point to their named beakers when thirsty. Staff supervise the children to ensure they only use their own beaker and that they drink plenty of water throughout the day. This ensures children are hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, well maintained and secure environment. They can independently access the toys and resources safely. These are appropriately stored and regularly cleaned and checked to ensure they are safe. Staff complete six monthly risk assessments and daily checks to ensure the premises are safe. However, some potential hazards such as unprotected socket covers and sharp corners on furniture are evident. These must be addressed to ensure the environment is safe for the children who attend.

Particular attention is paid to the security of the premises. This ensures no unauthorised persons are on site and that children are not at risk. Staff ensure appropriate ratios are maintained when on outings and that first aid kits and contact details are always on hand to ensure children are safe.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect through the policies and procedures that are in place. Also by staff's clear understanding of what action they

should take if they suspect a child is being abused. Children are kept safe because staff are suitably qualified and have been through sound vetting procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Younger children separate happily from their parents and carers. They have formed close relationships with staff and confidently put their arms out when they want a cuddle. This ensures they are secure within the setting. Children enthusiastically explore their environment and investigate the range of resources, which staff attractively set out each morning and afternoon. Children are excited to participate in adult led activities. Young children show an interest in books. They independently look for their favourite and hand it to an adult to read. They listen attentively to the story and point to the pictures when asked where different animals are. Children are beginning to learn to share and happily help staff tidy away the toys. Staff plan a wide range of activities that ensure children make progress in all areas of their development.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and intend to develop their skills further through training. They offer a broad and balanced range of activities which are relevant to the needs of the children. Teaching interests children and enables them to become focused, concentrate and persist at what they are doing for long periods of time. Children are inquisitive. Staff follow children's interest, encourage thinking and extend children's learning through discussion. Planning is an area that needs to be developed to ensure it is informed by assessment, includes all aspects of the early learning goals and clearly details aims and objectives for children's learning. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. They are confident and can play well on their own or with others. They show good levels of concentration, independence, curiosity and imagination.

Children arrive happily, quickly settle and engage in activities. Staff have high expectations regarding children's behaviour and consistently reinforce the boundaries. This ensures children learn to share and take turns and understand what is acceptable behaviour. Children are developing independence in self care skills and confidently wash and dry their hands before lunch. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through books, singing and counting during the daily routine. They explore concepts such as quantity and volume through sand and water play.

Children are enthusiastic as they select and retell 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story. They speak clearly and are able to concentrate until the end of the book. They show delight when their efforts are praised by staff. Children's curiosity is promoted as they explore marble painting and show an interest in colours and shapes. The computer and tools in the workshop develop their understanding of technology. Children's knowledge of their local environment is promoted as they walk to the post box to post a letter and visit the local shops. A range of resources and activities develops children's understanding and appreciation of differences within our society.

Children are able to differentiate between colours. They use their imagination well when playing with Noah's Ark and the animals and when sweeping in the home corner. Children express themselves through a variety of creative activities. They show control when squeezing ink out of a bottle. As they kick, chase and catch balls they show coordination. Children's physical skills are developing well as they ride bikes and scooters. Children demonstrate they can balance as they walk along the lines of the football pitch. Staff need to ensure there are sufficient resources and activities that challenge children as they climb and balance.

Therefore children enjoy the provision and make good progress in learning, leisure and personal development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome from staff. On arrival they confidently separate from their parents and carers and begin to play with or alongside others. Children's individual needs are respected and their interests promoted. Parents reported that staff knew their children well. This ensures they have a sound understanding of how to meet their needs.

Children with special needs are supported well in the setting. Staff have completed training in this area and are aware of the need to work in partnership with parents and other agencies. Children are encouraged to reach their potential through individual educational plans.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered. They show wonder as they observe a daddy-long-legs on the window pane and listen to the rain on the roof.

Children are learning to play together and share toys and resources. They are developing an understanding of others needs. Children whisper while another child sleeps, aware not to wake them. Children's behaviour is managed well by calm staff who use praise and encouragement to positively reinforce good behaviour. Sticker charts are also used to promote good behaviour.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents receive good quality written information about the nursery and the Foundation Stage. Children's needs are met as staff obtain information about their background and interests from entry records that parents complete. Children's achievements are discussed with parents each day and more formally at progress meetings when assessment records are shared. Children's learning is promoted as staff encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning through newsletters and requests for items from home, such as photos, to support their learning. Parents praised the nursery and felt the environment was welcoming and stimulating. They spoke highly of staff who they reported were caring, approachable and listened to their concerns. They felt fully informed of the progress their child was making.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a committed team of qualified staff who are willing to develop their skills further through training. Staff are effectively deployed and work well together. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and use their initiative to ensure the smooth running of the provision. Staff are flexible within the daily routine and will follow children's interests, such as playing outside after the rain. They have a clear understanding of child development and know the children well. This ensures children are happy and making progress.

Ratios are met beyond minimum requirements which enables staff to give children individual attention. Sound vetting procedures ensure that children are well protected. Children's needs are effectively met because space and resources within the rooms are well organised. All records, policies and procedures for the efficient and safe management of the provision and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are in place and well organised. However, staff must ensure that all entries in the medication record are signed by parents.

The quality of the leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager and deputy have a clear vision for the development of the nursery and are good role models. A sound induction and supervision process is in place to promote the development of all. Management value their staff team and utilise their skills well. Questionnaires are used to gain parent's opinions and improve the provision. The setting is effective in monitoring and evaluating the provision of nursery education and management have highlighted areas that they are currently developing, such as planning and resources for outside play, to extend children's learning. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since registration.

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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):

- ensure all potential hazards within the nursery and garden are addressed
- ensure all entries in the medication record are signed by parents.

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):

- develop planning to ensure it is informed by assessment and clearly details the aims and objectives for children's learning
- ensure that resources are available that challenge children as they climb and balance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk