



First Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289832
Inspection date	12 December 2005
Inspector	Lisa-Marie Jones

Setting Address	26 Church Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1SB
------------------------	--

Telephone number	020 8681 8430
-------------------------	---------------

E-mail

Registered person	First Steps Co. 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?

First Steps day nursery has been open since January 2004. It provides full day care for up to 32 children aged between 6 weeks and 5 years. The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, 52 weeks of the year. The building is a two storey renovated chapel in the centre of Croydon's shopping area.

The nursery is divided into three areas: a baby room; toddler room; and preschool room. There are also outdoor facilities and a kitchen on site.

The nursery currently has 33 children on roll; of whom 6 children aged 3 years have funded places.

There are nine employed members of staff who are qualified and one member of staff who is undertaking a level 2 qualification in child care.

They gain support and mentoring from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff take positive steps to promote the good health of children. Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment, where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. They have a clear understanding of why they must wash their hands after messy play, garden play and after using the toilet, to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Children are further protected from the risk of cross-infection because staff ensure that they follow effective health and hygiene procedures.

Children's health is protected because accurate records are maintained and appropriate measures are taken when children are ill. All staff are first aid trained.

Children benefit from having regular healthy and nutritious drinks and food, which are prepared on the premises by a fully trained cook. Menus are varied and take into consideration children's dietary needs. Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. Activities are planned to teach the children about the importance of healthy eating and how the body works.

Children enjoy a range of activities which contribute to their good health. Each day there are planned activities outside to help them develop control of their bodies, for example when using balancing games and kicking balls. The climbing opportunities are limited; resources are being researched to find the best equipment to suit the building and the children's needs. Children become increasingly aware of the way activity affects their bodies and know when they need a drink or a rest. Children's fine motor skills are developed well through activities such as construction and threading. Children demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently around the building.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. Children have ample space to play and are able to move around safely, freely and independently; effective risk assessments take place on a regular basis. Children understand how to keep themselves safe and to maintain their own safety inside and outside of the nursery.

Children's welfare and safety are given high priority and local child protection procedures, approved by the area child protection committee, are complied with. Suitable procedures and documents are in place for the collection of children. Children are highly supervised at all times by suitably qualified and experienced staff who have all undergone relevant vetting procedures.

Children have access to a wide variety of appropriate resources and equipment that are well maintained and conform to safety standards. They are organised to create an accessible and stimulating environment where children can independently select activities. Staff monitor and supervise children's choice of toys to make sure they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's needs are met and their welfare is promoted. They settle well at the nursery, they enter confidently and make themselves at home. They relate well to each other and socialise with other children. Children's independence is developing; they choose between a variety of toys, books and activities, which appeal to all. Staff have an understanding of the Birth to three matters framework, they plan and adapt activities accordingly. However, planning and organisation of activities in the toddler area can be uninspiring and lack challenge for the children. All staff are very good at gathering evidence of children's progress but these are not evaluated to aid planning for individual needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A new member of staff has recently been appointed in the pre-school area. Vast changes to the organisation, resources and record keeping have been made. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals with the support of staff, who have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children develop and learn. They plan a range of activities based on real life situations that help children progress in all areas of learning. They are good role models and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning with an enthusiastic manner. Staff encourage children to make choices by organising the toys and resources so that they are easily accessible. Children's written assessments are up to date but do not show the next steps of learning; therefore are not used to aid written planning for children's individual needs. Action plans show that further development is to be made to ensure that staff's underpinning knowledge and understanding of promoting a varied curriculum is paramount.

Children develop good relationships with adults and other children in the nursery. They learn to co-operate and work well together by playing games, taking turns and helping to tidy up. Children are beginning to understand differences in their lives, to the lives of others around them, through looking at festivals and countries during topic work. Children talk happily about their home life and family. Children listen and concentrate well on chosen and adult-led activities. Children are very independent and happy and enjoy their time in the nursery. They attend to their personal needs such as dressing and undressing and helping themselves to snacks and drinks.

Children speak very confidently to peers and adults. They talk openly during activities about themselves and their families. They express their ideas and experiences well using good vocabulary. Children have access to a range of writing materials and have opportunities to recognise and to practise writing letters and simple words. Children enjoy books and handle them carefully; they spend time 'reading' and sharing books with friends and adults and can retell well-known stories by looking at the pictures. Children benefit from having opportunities to take books home to share with parents.

Children count confidently and recognise numbers that are important to them. They choose number activities during free play and enjoy number rhymes and songs. Children are beginning to understand the concept of simple additions and subtraction; they can say what is one more or one less and attempt to add two groups of objects. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They recognise the properties of simple shapes and 3 dimensional shapes and make patterns using shapes and pegs. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations and show that they understand size and shape through practical activities.

Children investigate using their senses. They discuss similarities and differences using natural objects such as leaves and can use equipment, for example, magnifying glasses to do so. There are opportunities to use information and communication technology and programmable toys and equipment to aid their learning. Children are beginning to understand past and present. They discuss people, places and events in their own lives, for example birthdays. Children learn about different cultures and beliefs through well-planned topic work. For example looking at the differences in countries and religious festivals. Children have access to a good range of resources.

Children use their senses to explore and describe experiences such as: tasting and smelling food; listening to music; and feeling a range of textures including manufactured and natural. They play musical instruments and experiment with sound. Children have good opportunities to develop their imagination in role-play situations and craft activities. Children have regular access to play dough and paint; they make collages with recycled materials and take part in cooking sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. For example, the children talk about celebrations across the world and look at cultural differences across countries.

The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children of all abilities are given fully inclusive care by staff encouraging children to participate in the activities provided. This ensures children have equal opportunities to maximise their enjoyment and potential. There are good systems in place to

support children who have special needs. Close liaison with parents ensures all children's needs are planned for and worked towards. Bilingual children are supported well, parents are encouraged to provide words and phrases that are used at home.

Children are helped to understand responsible behaviour. Staff reinforce appropriate strategies, according to the age and stage of development, to help children understand right from wrong. Children are treated with respect and are given lots of praise and encouragement to promote their self-esteem.

Children are cared for by staff who work closely with parents to meet their needs. Parents receive good information about the Foundation Stage and The birth to three matters Framework. The information outlines what and how children will learn. This ensures parents understand that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Staff involve parents in their child's learning through regular newsletters which give suggestions regarding activities that can extend learning at home. Parents contribute to their child's assessment at regular parents' meetings. Partnerships with parents is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel at home and at ease in the well-organised environment. This means they are confident to initiate their own play and learning. Staff follow good policies and procedures to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. Parents are kept very well informed about the service and their child's activities and progress; this contributes to continuity in the children's care. Children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff who have a good understanding of child development. Robust recruitment procedures are in place to ensure staff are vetted appropriately.

Leadership and management of the care and nursery education is good. The registered provider takes an active part in the daily running of the nursery and has devised and implemented effective actions plans since the nursery has been open. Lots of efforts have been made to build up the staff team and promote a positive team spirit; which is evident as the staff work well to support each other and they respond positively to new changes within their working practices. There is a strong commitment to develop and improve the provision and good use is made of available outside support.

The systems in place to monitor and evaluate the children's assessments and planning are not effective.

The required records, policies and procedures which contribute to children's health, safety and welfare are all maintained. Policies and procedures work effectively, in practice, as staff are kept up-to-date through meetings and formal supervision sessions.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

care.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last Children Act inspection the setting has devised and implemented effective systems to: record accidents and incidents in a confidential manner; record the arrival and departure time of staff and children; and notify Ofsted of any staff changes.

Staffs awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour has improved and on the whole is consistent. Children's behaviour is therefore good.

Management updated the behaviour management policy and in house training was given to all staff. Additional external training has also been sought for staff.

Children now have access to an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice; therefore giving them a wider insight and respect for the community and world around them.

Mealtimes are now organised so that a member of staff can support each table of children.

Staff now spend more time talking and listening to children to develop their language and imagination, through role play and by taking part in activities with children.

Since the last nursery education inspection children's planning and assessments now include learning outcomes, but still need to identify the next stage of children's learning.

Children are given more opportunities to scribe, for example within role play. Children now have ample opportunities to explore free art activities and use malleable materials imaginatively.

Children now have access to a computer and a range of programmable toys and equipment to aid their learning.

Staff are now deployed well to enable them to respond to children's individual needs particularly when counting and reading stories.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted has received one complaint since the last inspection.

Concerns were raised on 19/10/ 2005. The concerns related to National Standard 6 - safety. The registered provider supplied us with details of the steps they had taken to address the reported concerns. We visited the provider and following an investigation of the concerns a recommendation was set: 'Make sure that the kitchen and bathroom doors are safe and do not pose a hazard to children. No evidence was

found that the National Standards had been breached. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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.

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 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 that staff are aware of the developmental needs of children to ensure that activities are planned accordingly and that children's assessments identify the children's next steps and are use to inform planning

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):

- devise and implement a robust system to monitor and evaluate the care and education that is on offer

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