

# First Steps Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY392081  
**Inspection date** 27/07/2010  
**Inspector** Debra Elizabeth Jean Dahlstrom

**Setting address** 175 Buxton Road, Furness Vale, HIGH PEAK, Derbyshire,  
SK23 7PZ  
**Telephone number** 01663746632  
**Email** sheila@firststepsnursery.wanadoo.co.uk  
**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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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 Nursery Ltd was registered in 2010. The setting is registered to care for children on the Early Years Register, and compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from a converted bungalow in Furness Vale, High Peak, Derbyshire. Access to the building is up a slope. Local amenities such as schools, a park and train station are within walking distance. Children have access to two outdoor play areas and a large paddock. Children spend their time in several designated ground floor rooms according to their age and stage of development. A room designated for sensory play is sited on the first floor.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum 40 from birth to eight years. There are 38 children on roll. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 7.45 am to 6:00 pm. The setting closes during all public bank holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year. There are 10 staff currently based at the nursery and a further two who provide additional support when needed. All staff hold relevant childcare qualifications, there are three at level 6, two working towards level 5, six at level 3 and one at level 2. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting is highly effective in meeting the unique needs of every child. In offering an outstanding service each child makes rapid progress given their starting points and capabilities. An extremely skilled and experienced management team supported by the inspirational leader and owner of the setting ensures aspirations are high to achieve best practice. Often taking the lead role in it's partnership with others, the nursery is committed to working joint working. Partnerships with parents are effective as staff are committed to sharing information about their children's progress and learning.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- build on existing good practice to develop further more frequent summaries of children's progress to share with parents.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are extremely well safeguarded, as there are highly rigorous monitoring systems in place to ensure any staff appointments meet constantly high standards. An extended induction and trial period ensures any new staff are fully conversant

with the comprehensive policies and procedures along with the nursery ethos prior to being granted any unsupervised responsibilities. Designated persons responsible for safeguarding are well qualified and experienced in the role. Such is the commitment of the nursery to keep children safe that private consultants are appointed to ensure that all health and safety matters and all things relating to employment law are robustly adhered to and regularly reviewed. As a consequence, risk assessments are meticulously maintained as staff ensure daily checks are carried out.

The leadership and management of the nursery is exemplary in almost all aspects. They are a well established and highly motivated and reflective team, working closely with their 'sister' setting near by in order to deliver a high quality service. The team are exceptional in that in a relatively short period of time they have inspired staff so successfully in enabling them to work towards such sustained and ambitious targets. Staff team are well qualified and are very well supported, morale is extremely high with excellent opportunities for them to progress with further training to degree level should they wish to do so. The management team have high expectations of the staff, that at every level staff make the most of their potential in order to share best practice to benefit children. As a consequence staff are valued, confident and dynamic in their work. They are creative in their use of space for children, creating exciting and stimulating environments for them both inside and outdoors. Furniture, equipment and resources are of the highest quality and eminently suitable for the ages and stages of children's development. The outdoor area, children can play music with a large imposing xylophone, or wooden adventure play fixed equipment and newly planted orchard, helps to ensure resources and the environment are fully sustainable. Strong attachments, are formed with the children as the staffing ratios are high and staff are deployed very well to enable key worker roles to be extremely effective.

Partnerships are highly effective as the nursery works very closely with all agencies and other settings involved in the children's care. Thus, creating a warm and inclusive environment for all children to ensure each child receives any additional help and support needed. Close links with local primary schools have facilitated very good relationships, a number of collaborative projects have arisen from this. For example, children from the local primary school join them at 'Forrest School' and make dens with natural materials and explore their environment outdoors. In doing so nursery children have opportunities to work cooperatively and become familiar with staff and other children attending the school and so assist in their smooth transition. Partnerships with parents are good as staff are committed to working closely with them to establish their children's individual starting points. Parents evenings provide opportunities to talk together about children's progress and well-being. Parents are very happy with their children's progress and able to contribute to their children's learning through regular information sharing about activities and achievements at home. Staff value parents contributions and make very good use of this information to inform their planning for the children's individual learning. However, summaries of children's overall progress are less frequently shared with parents.

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

Children overall, show a strong sense of security and feel safe within the nursery. Staff are particularly skilled in enabling early years children to learn about safety matters without being fearful. Therefore, even the youngest of children in the nursery develop high levels of confidence and move competently using furniture to pull themselves up or lean against as they explore their wondrous environment. They climb in and out of their low level sleep nests, or crawl towards toys or resources out of reach, showing great persistence and determination to reach their goal. Older children show exceptional understanding of safety issues and readily take responsibility for their own and others safety. For example, they spontaneously tidy up the shoes, wellingtons and slippers near the coat pegs in a neat line 'so no one falls over'.

Children overall, thoroughly enjoy their time in the nursery, they are curious and highly independent learners as staff are extremely skilful. Staff offer a wide range of highly interesting and challenging activities and experiences across all areas, carefully considering the benefits of adult or child led learning. They consider at every opportunity, ways to maximise children's learning through sensitive intervention or questioning to promote children's thinking. Great emphasis is placed upon children being given both the time and access to resources to complete tasks and practise skills in order to make effective links to their learning. Staff are highly committed to inclusive practice. They know their children well having an exceptional knowledge of their differing backgrounds and able to support their differing needs including those with additional language. In undertaking detailed observations they quickly identify their differing learning styles and interests and plan for their next steps. Toddlers for example, who enjoy domestic play with dolls are fascinated by the beautifully presented imaginative area with 'babies' and cots and a mini washing line complete with small clothing hung over it. They worked with sustained concentration for more than 15 minutes with no intervention. Therefore, through play, children can repeat, rehearse and refine their skills needed for future learning.

Staff are committed to providing a rich childhood experience for children in their care to enable them to achieve well. Therefore, exciting activities develop through children's interests are meaningful, practical and fun. The seaside theme arising from children's holiday experiences, for example provides lots of exciting and challenging experiences for children to investigate and work collaboratively. They hide objects in the sand tray and ask their friends to guess what they are. They are amazed at the flow of air coming from the inflated rubber ring they had helped to blow up, they feel it on their fingers and listen intently in wonder to the slight noise it makes as they work together to deflate it. They repeat these activities a number of times as they work exceptionally well together showing excellent negotiation and cooperation skills.

Children from an early age develop and show an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene. Even toddlers make valiant attempts to wash their hands with minimum support. Older children readily

describe how brushing their teeth after eating their meals is good for them. At nursery they use novelty 'egg timers' to measure the time taken to brush their teeth properly. They benefit from attractively nutritious meals and snacks within the setting. Appetising, home cooked foods sourced from local producers are on offer at lunchtime, with children as young as two learning the skills to serve themselves.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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