

# Early Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspection date</b>	22/04/2010
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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).

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## **Description of the setting**

Early Steps Nursery was registered in September 2009. The provision is an integral part of the independent school and makes up part of the schools Foundation Stage unit. Children are cared for in self-contained premises within the grounds of Polam Hall independent school. Children also have access to the school hall, the foundation rooms, the library, the activity centre and associated facilities. There are extensive outdoor play facilities which the nursery children share with the primary school aged children. The provision serves children from the immediate community and the surrounding areas. The provision operates during school term time only Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. The provision has a rabbit.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register. It is registered to care for a maximum of 12 children in the early years age group. There are currently 17 children on roll. The provision provides care for children aged two to three years. The provision has systems in place to support children with physical disabilities and learning difficulties.

There are two members of staff working directly with the children, both hold appropriate qualification. The manager is presently working towards a BA Honours degree in Education Studies. Bank staff are available to work from the school. The provision receives support from the local authority.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are provided with excellent opportunities to engage in a variety of stimulating and interesting activities within a safe and secure environment. Children benefit from the caring, friendly relationships established with well qualified staff that recognise the uniqueness of each child attending. Children's individual needs are on the whole met well. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, resulting in children making good progress towards the early learning goals. There is a strong and positive partnership with parents. Regular self-evaluation by management and the staff means any priorities for future development are identified and acted on, resulting in a service that is responsive to the needs of all children and their parents.

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

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

- develop the systems of sharing information with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to ensure there is continuity in children's learning and development.

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

Documentation which is required for the safe and efficient management of the setting is organised well and used effectively to promote all aspects of children's health and safety. Comprehensive written risk assessments reflect the requirements of new legislation and contribute to keeping children safe. The recruitment system and induction procedures are robust and staff are well supported in their training and development through regular reviews. Children are safeguarded as all staff are knowledgeable regarding the procedure to follow if they were concerned about a child in their care. In addition, they have recently completed in-house child protection training. Policies and procedure are displayed on the noticeboard complete with the complaints policy and details of how to contact Ofsted. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and paediatric first aid certificates. They are highly motivated and experienced practitioners who undertake additional core training to keep themselves up-to-date with new legislation, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The manager and the staff are enthusiastic and eager to drive improvements to continually develop the provision so that all children benefit from attending the setting. Self-evaluation has been undertaken across all areas and the setting's strengths and weaknesses have been fully identified and make up part of the schools action plan for future improvements. In addition, the open-door policy and sharing the equal opportunity policy with staff and parents further promotes inclusion for all children. Children celebrate a wide range of festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Saint George's Day, Diwali and Christmas. This, along with the wide range of resources and pictures which reflect positive images, helps children respect others and learn about differences. Staff deployment is good, ensuring all children are fully supervised and receive support and encouragement throughout the day. Good use is made of the environment. Resources are easily accessed by the children, giving them choices about what they do. This is conducive to children's learning and promotes their good progress towards the early learning goals.

Close relationships with parents are founded on trust and cooperation. The strong links developed reflect staff commitment to working in partnership, so that parents feel confident and assured in leaving their child. Parents speak highly of the excellent quality of the care and education their children receive and the friendly, supportive and approachable staff. Staff share information about planned activities in children's digital learning journey files, assessment records, newsletters and on the noticeboard. All children are fully included because of the good systems in place to gather important information about their individual care needs, routines and interests. Similarly, the systems to identify and work with other professionals are fully in place to ensure the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met well. However, the systems of sharing information with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage where children attend are yet to be fully developed. This does not ensure continuity in children's learning and development.

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

Children are made to feel welcome and wanted. They are well supported in their learning through the staff's secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and guidance. Key persons take responsibility for named children and this enables staff to address individual needs. Children are provided with a rich environment which offers them a varied range of hands-on experiences through a positive balance of child-led and adult-led learning through play. This includes wonderful opportunities offered outdoors all year round for all the children. The staff know the children very well as individuals and they set appropriate challenges and targets for each child. Therefore, the children are making good progress in their learning and development. Staff are very enthusiastic and this reflects throughout the nursery which in turn has a positive effect on children who become enthusiastic and inquisitive learners themselves. Staff routinely observe children's progress and use this information well. They are building individual learning journey portfolios to reflect children's learning. Assessment profiles are used to track and monitor progress over all areas of learning. Effective use of photographs help to share the many and varied experiences enjoyed by their child. Attractive displays of the children's artwork help to promote children's self-esteem and confidence. Children are well-behaved and staff are good role models, giving children praise and encouragement for their achievements. Staff talk to children calmly which contributes to the children's sense of trust and develops a positive attitude to learning.

Children learn about the natural world through seasonal activities. They enjoy planting bulbs, potatoes and carrots in the garden area and have great fun watering the plants outdoors. They harvest their produce and take them to the chef to cook for their lunch. The outdoor play areas are well organised and resources are brought from inside the nursery to allow children free flow and continuous provision outdoors. All children enjoy the outdoor play where they can further develop their physical skills. For example, they skilfully climb and slide, they balance on the stepping stones and have great fun scampering through the camouflaged area, which they have made into a den. They enjoy using a range of equipment in garden activities, such as painting, chalking, playing with sand, catching balls and riding around on bikes and cars. Children also explore and investigate using the 'metal detector' discussing the properties for wood and metal. Children from the nursery often merge together with the children and teachers from the Foundation Unit. For example, they thoroughly enjoy singing action songs, such as 'the farmers in the den' and 'ring-a-ring-a-roses' on the school playing field. They also go on outings and trips together to places, such as the theatre, the shopping centre and walks in the community. This helps to create a smooth transition to the next stage in children's schooling. Children have good opportunities to begin to develop skills for their future development. For example, they use the computer well, using the mouse and keyboard appropriately. The IT teacher comes into the nursery often and helps to develop children's knowledge and skills at using the equipment. A good range of mark making resources are available, such as paints, chalks and pencils, providing opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills. Everyday routines and activities allow children to

begin to recognise numbers, shapes and colours. For example, children enjoyed making and eating the fruit rainbows with strawberries, kiwi fruit, grapes, pineapple, blackberries and blueberries. Displays of children's artwork, for example, opposites, such as light and dark, big and small, ensure children's continued learning. All children have opportunities and enjoy taking part in group activities, such as circle, story and song time.

Children routinely wash their hands before snack, learning about personal hygiene. Children's health and well-being is supported effectively as they develop healthy eating habits, with fresh and dried fruit and drinks of milk and water offered at snack time. Meals are all freshly prepared on the premise using seasonal fruit and vegetables. Children are supported very sensitively when they eat their hot dinner in the school hall. The staff give careful consideration to children's safety at all times. Gentle reminders to follow safety rules ensure children are able to move around freely and safely. For example, staff remind children to hold each other's hands as they walk in twos to the dinner hall and they remind children about road safety when they are out. Practising regular fire evacuations also helps to develop children's awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

## 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>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	2
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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