



First Step Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY297574
Inspection date	05 January 2006
Inspector	Gillian Cubitt
Setting Address	11a Harold Road, London, SE19 3PU
Telephone number	0208 771 7727
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Registered person	First Step Day Nursery
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Step Day Nursery is one of two nurseries in South London. It opened in 2004. It operates from a converted house situated in a residential area in Upper Norwood which is in the borough of Croydon. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 49 weeks of the year. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from 3 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these 6 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area of Norbury and Norwood. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff including the manager and the part time cook. Seven of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards level three childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health within the nursery is appropriately supported by staff who have an understanding of the procedures to ensure that children follow regular routines for washing hands before meals and after going to the toilet. Cross infection is also reduced as children play with toys that are regularly washed with anti-bacterial cleaners.

Each child's dietary needs are noted and they enjoy healthy snacks, such as fruit and freshly cooked food is prepared for them each day. Menus are provided for parents, although occasionally there is some deviation from the meals stated. This means that not all children receive the full variety of foods available. Babies and toddlers are given individual attention as staff warmly respond to babies basic needs for nourishment.

Children learn about their bodies through themed activities, although staff miss opportunities to reinforce older children's body awareness through daily activities such as washing their faces and teeth care.

Children are well cared for should they become ill at nursery; over half the staff have a current first aid certificate. This means that they are able to provide appropriate care in the event of an accident.

Resources available for children are all within easy reach, which assists with their developing independence and self-esteem. Their fine motor skills are developing as they use spatulas for sticking as well as playing with other small world toys.

Children have opportunities to run around and play in the garden with the outside equipment such as prams, hoops, balls and small climbing apparatus. The organisation and layout outside, however, is restrictive for babies and toddlers, especially when it is wet. Children have fresh air on their visits to local parks and other outings, although this is not provided on a daily basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from plenty of play space within a safe and secure environment. Staff greet children each day as they hang up their coats on their personal pegs. This helps children to feel secure and settled.

Inside, children have a wide variety of age appropriate equipment to support their play and learning. These are well-maintained and checked for safety and are thoughtfully placed, so children of all ages are able to access toys that appeal to them. Outside play areas are fully secure and staff complete a risk assessment before children go into the garden. For children's safety, staff prevent children from using the garden when equipment is not prepared due to being left outside to the winter elements.

Children are safe whilst on the premises and when they go on outings. Staff have rigorous systems for signing children into the nursery and procedures at collection time ensure that children are only released to known persons.

Policies in place for child protection promotes and safeguards children's welfare. Most staff are aware of these procedures and which ensure children are protected. However not all members of staff are fully knowledgeable on aspects that affect themselves.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel settled and secure in the warm and welcoming environment. Staff work closely with them and take an interest in what they are doing and have to say. Staff are caring and actively encourage children to have a sense of belonging. They help children to develop self-assurance and independence by providing toys that are easily accessible.

Children are confident learners and they participate in activities with enthusiasm such as singing sessions. Babies and toddlers are able to crawl freely to reach toys that appeal to them whilst toddlers enjoy walking around with their trolleys, transporting items from one place to another. Through the key working system staff are able to connect with individual children which makes them feel special.

Staff work with the framework of Birth to three matters, although the planning is still in its early stages. Staff have not yet developed sufficient skills in observation which impacts on their planning for individual children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make progress in their learning as key staff have an understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Staff plan a range of topics which encompass the six areas of learning. Activities however are not planned as a result of staff's written observations of children's progress. This means that children do not always benefit from structured

learning sessions as staff do not identify individual children's strengths and weaknesses. There is a particular weakness in promoting awareness of mathematics as children are not encouraged to count in everyday situations.

Children are competent communicators and they enjoy story time. They pick their favourite books and eagerly participate in well known stories, confidently answering questions the staff put to them. Children have plenty of opportunities to make marks as they keep their daily diary where they draw and create pictures that have a meaning to them.

Their independence and creativity is fostered as they access a wide selection of materials for sticking and constructing. They use scissors, spatulas, crayons and pencils which help to develop their fine motor skills as they cut out shapes and stick them in their books.

Children learn about the world about them through regular outings to parks and libraries. They have access to telephones, tills, calculators and a computer although this not yet used effectively as a tool for teaching. Children's imagination is nurtured as they develop their own designs and ideas in their art work. They also enjoy their role play area where they make the best use of dressing up clothes and other resources available.

Although children have a large garden with resources to promote their gross motor skills, insufficient attention is given to the provision of activities to challenge and develop children's control and co-ordination of their large scale movements that stretch their physical capabilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children interact positively with staff who show warmth and care in their attention towards the children. Each child is included and they feel settled in their environment. They are encouraged to play harmoniously with their peers, learning to give and take and share their toys. Most children behave well as staff are calm and positive in their encouragement for children to build their social skills whilst playing together. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development this therefore fostered.

Children participate in the celebration of a variety of cultural and religious festivals to increase their understanding of the world around them such as Eid, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Staff have some understanding of caring for children with special needs, however they are not fully aware of the procedures involved. The manager therefore oversees this provision, so children's needs are fully met. There is close contact with parents and other external agencies to identify any special educational needs to ensure that children are cared for according to their specific individual need.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff provide parents with a comprehensive prospectus and they are kept informed through regular newsletters. Parents are given information about the Foundation Stage and the manager arranges individual consultations to parents about children's progress. This exchange of information

helps children to settle and feel secure. Parents however are not fully informed about the procedures for making complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work well together, they are flexible and they fully support and cover each other at times of holidays and staff breaks which ensures that the children are cared for with the correct number of staff. Children are well grouped with a key worker system in place, so each child is observed and their progress is monitored. There is plenty of space for children to move around and they are able to have free choice of activities that are easily accessible within the rooms.

For babies and children under three years, staff are working with the framework of Birth to three matters although this is in the early stages and methods of planning through observation are not fully developed.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new manager liaises with the owner each day so that staff have support from the management team. The manager is currently reviewing current practices, including staff induction training and planning. She is currently developing staff's knowledge of the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage so that all children benefit from a diversity of activities. Staff make observations on children's progress, although this is sporadic and not structured. Consequently the information available does not make it clear that all children are making the best use of the resources and activities available.

Staff, as yet, do not effectively produce planning that links in with children's individual needs. This however is being monitored and through regular team meetings and proposed appraisals, staff are developing these skills.

Overall, the needs of all children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At registration, the provider was asked to ensure children's safety from the low level glass in the pre-school room. The provider has now covered these panels with safety film which ensures children are protected from exposed glass.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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 staff are fully informed about the procedures of child protection if an accusation is made against them
- develop staff's knowledge of Birth to three matters so they are able to plan effectively to meet children's individual needs
- ensure the system for recording complaints is made known to parents and available for inspection at any time
- maintain consistency with the meals that are offered to all children
- ensure all children enjoy fresh air by having daily access to the garden

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):

- ensure that staff's knowledge of the foundation stage is improved, so that they are able to link their observations with the children's progress with the next step in their learning
- develop children's awareness of early counting and understanding of the meaning of numbers through everyday routines
- improve children's understanding of information and technology by providing opportunities for them to access the facilities available
- develop staff's knowledge of caring for children with special educational needs and the procedures involved when monitoring their progress.

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