



First Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	105622
Inspection date	06 December 2005
Inspector	Christine Cutts

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Registered person	Rae Farmer
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

First Steps Day Nursery opened in 1986. It operates from purpose-built accommodation in the hospital grounds. A maximum of 58 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 06.50 to 18.00 all year. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 73 children aged from 12 weeks to under 5 years on roll. The nursery receives funding for 3 and 4 year olds in nursery education. The setting

provides day care for the staff of Wexham Park and Heatherwood National Health Trust. The nursery supports children with special educational needs although there are none currently attending. The group supports four children for whom English is as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 staff. Of these 14, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a range of energetic physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They develop self-confidence in their physical skills as they use a wide range of indoor and outdoor toys and equipment.

Excellent use is made of the outside play area to give all the children the opportunity to move with imagination. They climb over, under and through large adventure equipment, use their senses to see, smell and touch in the sensory garden, ride in cars, play ball games and generally enjoy being outside.

The children play in a clean and well-maintained environment. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-organised activities and routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack. The children are protected from infection because the staff have information about children's health care matters. Most documentation is in place although not all medication forms are signed by parents. Most practitioners hold current first-aid certificates.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy nutritious meals and healthy snacks and drinks. Everyday events such as snack times and topics include discussion and opportunities for children to taste and find out about a variety of foods. The staff take account of the wishes of parents and have a clear record of any allergies or medical condition as well as any dietary requirements to ensure all the children have appropriate and suitable meals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and well-maintained environment. The good organisation of age-appropriate toys and equipment means children can move around safely and freely to independently access available resources from tables, shelves and toy boxes at child height.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, for example socket covers, fire extinguishers and a fully secure outdoor play area. They develop a good awareness of safety through practising emergency evacuations, however not all staff

have experienced a fire drill. Visitors are not always challenged promptly, which may have an impact on children's safety.

Staff deployment is very good and guarantees children are well-supervised and safe at all times. However, systems in place to monitor that staff-child ratios are consistent are not effective.

Sensitive reminders, such as a request to remember we don't run in-doors and let's tidy up so we can move around safely, increase children's awareness of everyday safety in the setting.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff have attended training and show a good understanding of the procedure to follow with any concerns. They are fully aware of the types of abuse and signs to look for. Comprehensive policies and procedure are effectively implemented to ensure the protection of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy the wide range of resources available appropriate to their age and stage of development, enabling them to progress effectively,. Children show interest, they spend time concentrating on the resources and activities, and they are curious and want to play with the well-presented activities. The babies have a stimulating and challenging environment in which they can make good progress as they develop and improve their skills.

Children are developing good relationships and get on well with peers and adults. They play imaginary games together, co-operate and take part as a group at story and singing times.

Children make connections in their learning as they freely explore water, sand and different textures. Their regular use of a wide range of creative materials, such as paint, dough and pencils encourages them to represent their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.

Children's skills and knowledge are extended through staff's clear understanding of how children learn and of the steps to help them progress, for example, through the effective use of Birth to three matters framework, and the use of individual records and development charts which are regularly completed for each child by the key workers.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good; children are progressing well, supported by the staff team's confidence and secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planning covers all areas of learning, although it lacks detail of the children's individual learning needs during focused activities.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. They are actively involved in play and activities throughout the sessions. Children are skilful in their use of number and mathematical language; they talk about 'next to', 'in front of' and 'between' when sorting Christmas stockings. They count correctly to five and show a clear awareness of the order of numbers when counting the children round the table at snack times. They enjoy stories and readily select books to share with each other or with staff. Children have many opportunities to make marks and practise emergent writing, with free drawing, and when labelling their own work and in the role-play areas.

Children are able to freely explore everyday items and learn through practical play with items such as telephones and keyboards. They use computers and technology toys with age-appropriate programmes that link to other areas of learning. Children learn about time and are developing a sense of past and present, when talking about the days of the week, months and seasons of the year and by observing growth and change in the natural world, such as the growth of plants in the garden.

Children concentrate on activities, and they develop imaginative games, pretending to be doctors or having parties in the role-play area. They are confident and eager to join in, because staff praise and encourage children to try things for themselves and continue to practise to develop their skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued as individuals. The children and the staff show respect, consideration and care. Staff value children's input, listen to them and respond showing interest and concern. Children's work is well displayed throughout the nursery; children demonstrate pride in their achievements and want to show what they have done. Children learn to value themselves and others through well-planned topics and activities on countries and festivals. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There are systems in place to support children with special educational needs, however there are none currently attending.

Children's behaviour is good, they have a good level of independence, freely selecting equipment for themselves and taking responsibility for their personal care. The older children show concern for each other and enjoy the responsibility of laying out the tables for meal times and show care of younger children while playing outside.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from parents involvement in their learning. Parents have good information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and communication through newsletters, daily chats and detailed notice boards. This helps staff and parents work together to help children make good progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Induction training, policies and procedures are in place and work in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. The effective organisation of the available space, resources and staff levels ensure that all the children attending have full support. Committed staff consistently promote the children's well-being, offering a calm and happy environment where good relationships between adults and children are evident. However there is not an effective system in place to ensure that staff-child ratios are maintained at all times, particularly at beginning of the day.

The staff demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the standards for day care, the Birth to Three Matters Framework and Foundation Stage curriculum. This ensures all children have age-appropriate activities and experiences.

Leadership and management is good. The management and staff work well as a team and show a commitment to improving the standards of care and education. Staff training is provided, and is effectively linked to appraisals and professional development to meet identified needs. This supports the provision in improving.

Staff observe children's developmental learning, and keep detailed records that help them to formulate planning to promote children's progress. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are willing to undertake training to develop good practice.

All regulatory documentation is in place and is stored appropriately to ensure the children's welfare is promoted. Staff share information with parents on a regular basis to inform them about their child: for example day sheets and daily diaries for babies and young children. This supports and contributes to the continuity of care for the children.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

The nursery has made improvements since the last inspection. Children's individual learning needs are now clearly understood by staff through frequent and spontaneous observations, which are used to complete detailed progress records. The observations and profile records are used to influence planning and identify individual learning needs for the staff's key children. However, this information is not used when planning focused activities. Children's opportunity to link letters to sounds has improved as the group now use a phonic system to introduce initial sounds to children and have established a letter of the week for children to link sounds to letters.

Children now have opportunities to use simple calculation in everyday situations. They count the number of children round the table at lunch times - one child counts the table to seven, seven-and-one-adult makes eight; and they are given opportunities to solve simple practical problems, such as have we enough chairs.

The group now help children to develop good health routines encouraging the

children to wash their hands before snacks and after toileting and a hot food trolley is now used to ensure all food is served to the children at the appropriate temperature.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 medication records are signed by parents
- improve children's safety by ensuring that all visitors are challenged and identified before allowed access to the building
- ensure there are system in place to maintain staff-child ratio's at all times, particularly at beginning of the day.

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):

- continue to develop planning to include activity plans to enable staff to deliver focused activities to meet children's individual needs

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