



Second Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY308855
Inspection date	06 February 2006
Inspector	Greg Wolff
Setting Address	Durham Rd, Laindon, Essex, SS15 6PJ
Telephone number	01268 410937
E-mail	
Registered person	Sharon Anne Harrison
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Second Steps Day Nursery opened in 2005. It operates from a purpose built building in Laindon. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 71 children from birth to eight years on roll. This includes 18 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs.

The group opens five days a week for 51 weeks per year. Sessions are from 07.00 until 19.00.

There are 15 members of staff working with the children. Of these, seven have qualifications to NVQ level 2 or above. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's individual health requirements are well met. The staff team's good knowledge and understanding of the setting's health policies and procedures ensure that children's wellbeing is robustly supported. Staff are knowledgeable about individual children's needs, and ensure they are suitably trained to provide necessary intervention where there are risks, for example administering treatment for allergies. Very clear, comprehensive, and well maintained routines are in place to ensure children benefit from a very clean and ordered environment. This is supported by a range of information given to parents regarding children's health issues, such as exclusion times relating to childhood ailments, thus reducing the possible risk of cross infection for children.

Children develop good levels of personal independence, with even very young children being encouraged to develop responsibility. For example, toddlers who need help to use the toilet are encouraged to wash and dry their hands and dispose of paper towels with minimal help. Older children manage their personal care needs very well and are developing an understanding of things that may affect their health, such as germs and eating healthy foods.

Snacks and meals provided are healthy and children enjoy a good balance of foods. Children use meal times as an extension to their formal learning activities by discussing what they are eating and helping practitioners to set up and clear away equipment.

Children of all ages take part in a range of activities that promote physical development and co-ordination. Daily access to outdoor play and a variety of resources ensure that children are developing large motor skills and good spatial awareness. For example, they throw and catch balls, use skipping ropes, hoops, bikes and assorted equipment as they negotiate their environment with co-ordination and control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn to keep themselves safe in welcoming and stimulating facilities, where they are able to freely move around the learning environment across the session. Practitioners are mostly vigilant about children's safety and ensure this by the highly

effective implementation of thorough daily risk assessments and detailed health and safety policies and procedures across the provision. However, they must ensure that children have no access onto the street from the outside play area and that children are always safe whilst playing on the hard floor downstairs. Children talk about safe practice, for example they recognise that they must not throw sand as it can hurt their own or other children's eyes.

Children are well protected because practitioners have a good knowledge of child protection issues, recognise their role and responsibilities and know how to implement nursery and local child protection procedures. The recording of all staff, children and visitors to and from the nursery, policies for the collection and non-collection of children and arrangements for recording pre-existing injuries contribute to ensuring children are safeguarded from harm.

Children benefit from the well organised and vibrant learning environment, particularly in the baby and under twos' rooms, and an extensive range of equipment and resources is available suitable for the ages of children attending. Robust procedures are in place to ensure equipment is safe and well maintained. Children and babies access their own resources independently across the provision, which helps to develop and sustain good levels of independence.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled within the nursery, particularly in the baby room. Staff are aware of the individual children; they offer a good level of support and assistance to children who require help in leaving their main carer. Children thoroughly enjoy their time within the nursery. Their achievements are satisfactory, and would be improved with the implementation of a system for observing what they do and using these observations to inform planning.

All children are able to select the toys and resources they wish to use within all the rooms, for example, toys are displayed on shelving at appropriate heights within the baby room. Children are very comfortable within their environment and receive a high level and quality of support from the staff. Older children make friends with their peers and all children develop good relationships with the stable staff team. All children play happily and older children initiate conversations and involve other children and adults in their play.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are confident in their surroundings. They enthusiastically select the toys and resources they wish to use from the variety available. Children develop their independence skills through a very good range of planned activities, toys and equipment. They are enthusiastic to assist in daily tasks, for example, tidying up and selecting books. Children sit and listen well at group times, though when they access books independently there is very little space for them to read either alone or with their peers; staff encourage them to put forward their thoughts and feelings, which they do with confidence, such as ideas

about what will happen next in stories that are not known to them. Children are well behaved and are aware of the expectations and boundaries in place, for example, using equipment appropriately and sharing the toys and resources.

Staff provide children with many opportunities to mark-make and practise their emergent writing through everyday and fun activities. Children count up to 10, and many count beyond this. They are confident in their use of simple calculations and have opportunities to use these skills each day, for example, comparing the number of cups to the number of children. Children use mathematical language in their play, such as 'longer', 'shorter', 'above' and 'beside'. Children are keen to discover about the world around them but have few opportunities to contribute their work or ideas to displays around the nursery. Children are very competent in their use of technology and have opportunities to use a good range including tape recorders and a computer. Children enjoy and participate in a very good range of physical activities to assist them in developing their large and small motor skills.

Staff find out about the child right from the beginning, through discussions with parents and staff from other areas of the nursery. They have a good awareness of the needs, interests and skills of the individual children in their care and use these to plan a stimulating and exciting range of activities. Planning is flexible and is adapted to meet the interests of the children, though is not currently differentiated to meet the needs of individuals. This is due to the lack of observations made on them and the work they are doing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show a good attitude towards one another and are confident and self assured. They flourish in the nursery because they are well supported by practitioners who encourage them to become autonomous and competent learners. Children play well together, learning to share and take turns, and they negotiate this with confidence. They show genuine concern for one another and benefit enormously from the example set to them by the staff team.

Children develop a secure sense of belonging and confidently take on responsibilities within the nursery, such as helping to clear up after themselves. Behaviour is good and children show high levels of independence, confidence and self-esteem as practitioners continually praise and value their achievements. All children and their families, including those with special needs and English as an additional language, receive good support from practitioners, enabling them to thrive and make progress. Children gain a well developed respect for themselves and others as they learn about their local community and the wider world and value and celebrate their differences and similarities, though there are few examples of their work in this area displayed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Babies and young children enjoy cuddles from practitioners and are extremely self assured, developing high levels of independence and a sense of security and belonging. They benefit from a very good partnership with parents, ensuring their individual needs are fully met and they make rapid progress in their development.

Parents are fully involved in their child's learning and how they can support this in the home because highly effective communication takes place between practitioners and themselves, for example through daily discussions.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Practitioners give high priority to establishing and securing the links between home and nursery, ensuring parents are actively involved in their child's learning. Parents receive detailed information and discuss the curriculum and the philosophy of the nursery, which helps them to understand how their child learns and develops through play. They receive good levels of support in extending their child's learning at home, for example through practical play experiences. They work together with practitioners to assess their child's ongoing achievements. This helps to ensure all children make progress and allows parents to play a full part in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff team use their knowledge to ensure that children make progress in all areas. Practitioners demonstrate a good knowledge of the setting's policies and procedures and implement these effectively to ensure that children are kept safe and well.

There is a very strong emphasis on training and development for staff and this ensures that children benefit from practitioners who are confident and up to date in their knowledge. For example, staff have completed training in using the "Birth to three matters" framework to monitor the progress of younger children. They have wholeheartedly embraced this and their implementation of the framework is excellent. Children benefit from good staff ratios which ensures that they are consistently well supported.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The proprietor and the manager are developing a skilled, enthusiastic and dynamic staff team. Staff show strong commitment to children's achievement and development, which is demonstrated by the children's enthusiasm for, and involvement in, their learning. Processes for monitoring and evaluating children's progress are yet to be put into place, but management are aware of this and have identified this as an area for immediate development.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received a complaint which raised concerns in respect of National Standards

1 (Suitability), 2 (Organisation), 6 (Safety), 8 (Food and drink) and 11 (Behaviour management). Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 02 September 2005. Ofsted found no evidence to substantiate the concerns about Standard 8. There was however evidence that Standards 1, 2, 6 and 11 were not being met. The provider was therefore given 6 actions to complete as follows:

Standard 1 ensure staff who are not vetted do not have unsupervised access to the children at any time; Standard 2 devise and implement an operational plan; Standard 2 ensure child/staff ratios are maintained at all times; Standard 2 ensure that the registers reflect a true record of children's arrival and departure times; Standard 6 ensure that the garden area is made safe and that any risks are identified and minimised in the future via a formal risk assessment policy and procedure; Standard 11 ensure that staff have up to date information regarding behaviour management and consistently implement the policies and procedures for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour. Following a response from the provider, the setting remains registered to provide care for children.

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.

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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 that the children cannot leave the outside play area unattended
- reduce potential hazards on the premises regarding solid floor in the nursery room.

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):

- Develop and implement a system of observation which informs planning for the appropriate next steps for all children

- ensure that children are able to contribute to displays regarding equality of opportunity, the celebration of diversity and the wider world (also applies to care).

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