



## Footprints

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY242050
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 November 2006
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Footprints is a privately owned and managed provision run by Footprints Day Nurseries Limited. It was first registered as a day nursery in 2002, having previously been a preparatory school. The nursery is situated in the West Park area of Macclesfield, Cheshire.

A maximum of 65 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round, with the exception of the Christmas period and bank holidays.

Children are cared for in age appropriate groups, with rooms on the ground, first and second floors, and a separate baby unit within the grounds. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 63 children under five years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs 26 members of staff including the manager. Of these, 19 hold appropriate early years qualifications and a further two are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted. The nursery is clean and well maintained, and staff consistently implement effective hygiene practices, such as when changing nappies, serving food and cleaning equipment. Hand washing is encouraged at appropriate times and children are reminded to place their hands over their mouth when they cough. This helps to minimise the spread of infection. Staff follow suitable sickness and exclusion procedures so that children are protected when they are ill. A high number of staff are trained in first aid, which ensures children's accidents are dealt with appropriately. Pre-school children have an understanding of the need to keep themselves clean and healthy, for example, most children independently deal with personal tasks, remembering to wash their hands after using the toilet; some younger children require staff assistance and gentle reminders to wash their hands. Children routinely wash their hands after messy play and before meals.

Children benefit from eating a healthy, nutritious and well balanced diet. Parents and carers have been consulted regarding the provision of meals and snacks, so that menus take into account children's preferences, allergies and special dietary requirements. A qualified cook prepares a wide variety of home cooked meals for the children to enjoy, and fresh fruit and drinking water is readily available in all rooms. Mealtimes are relaxed occasions, where children sit in key worker groups, enjoying good conversations with staff and friends. Pre-school children are developing a good awareness of eating healthily and having a healthy lifestyle. For example, during story time about a boy who wouldn't eat his vegetables, the children tell staff that eating apples and carrots is good for your health, as they give you energy and help to develop your muscles. At snack time, children celebrate a child's fourth birthday, telling staff that although cake is not necessarily a healthy food, it was alright on this day as it is a 'treat'.

Children's physical health is actively encouraged. Staff support the needs of babies and young children well, assisting them to gain control of their bodies as they learn to crawl, stand and walk. Children have regular access to fresh air and exercise as they use the well equipped outside play area. They show excitement as they take part in 'stretch and grow', and music and movement sessions, which help to develop their strength and coordination skills. Children over two years are developing good climbing skills as they negotiate several flights of stairs to their group rooms.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and child-friendly environment. The nursery is welcoming to children and parents, and space is organised appropriately to meet children's needs and promote their welfare. Children use a suitable range of resources and furniture to enable them to relax, play and eat in comfort, and staff ensure all equipment is safe and well maintained. However, the selection of items used for spare clothing is limited and should be increased so that children are dressed appropriately. Toys and resources are stored so that children can generally access them easily, and they are beginning to make some choices and develop their independence.

Children are well supervised and there are some good safety measures in place to keep children safe. For example, surveillance cameras are positioned at the entrance of the nursery and access is carefully monitored to ensure the safety of children and staff. Detailed risk assessments are carried out on premises and equipment to ensure hazards are minimised, and a designated member of staff takes responsibility for health and safety issues. However, the temperature of the food served at lunchtime is sometimes too hot for the children to eat. Also, room registers are not accurately maintained and some staff are not always aware of the total number of children present.

Children are beginning to learn about safety issues and how to keep themselves safe, for example, as staff remind them to hold onto the banister when climbing the stairs. Children's welfare is sufficiently safeguarded because staff show an awareness of child protection issues and the procedures to follow should any concerns be identified. Some staff have attended training in child protection to increase their knowledge and understanding, which further protects children from harm.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

All children are very happy, settled and enjoy their time at the nursery, and a good ratio of adults on duty ensures children are well supported. Staff are caring and interact positively with the children, for example, as they join in with imaginative play. They encourage children to be confident and independent, and warm relationships between staff and children are clearly evident. This helps children to feel valued, well supported, and develop a sense of belonging.

Staff organise a variety of activities and play opportunities, which provide children with valuable and enjoyable learning experiences. They are working well to implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance the care of babies and young children. For example, they regularly observe and record children's achievements and plan activities to promote their development. Established and well balanced daily routines provide children with opportunities to engage in free play, structured activities, outdoor play, music and movement, singing and stories. They also enjoy frequent trips to the local park and the library.

Children are busy and involved in activities that promote their learning and enjoyment. They are beginning to make choices in their play as they help themselves to a range of age appropriate

resources and equipment. Babies are learning to communicate because staff encourage them to make gestures and sounds as they explore the play materials on offer. They take part in sensory activities, such as gloop, jelly and pasta play. They enjoy playing with household objects and using items made from natural materials. For example, they show excitement as they try to find objects in the large tray of shredded paper.

Children enjoy opportunities to experiment with resources, for example, during a painting activity they enjoy the sensation of painting their hand, arm and face. They develop their creative skills as they paint using leaves from pine trees and use their imagination as they explore interesting objects in the sand tray. Staff engage in conversations with the children and are actively involved in supporting and encouraging their play and learning.

Pre-school children enjoy a good range of interesting activities and play experiences, which are planned in line with the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff who work with pre-school children have a good understanding of the curriculum and how children learn.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use the Foundation Stage curriculum to plan a range of interesting activities across all six areas of learning. Written planning is detailed and shows what children are expected to learn and the purpose of activities.

Children arrive happy and settled, showing an eagerness and excitement to involve themselves in the activities offered. Children's confidence and self-esteem is developing well as a result of the positive praise they receive from staff for their efforts, attempts and achievements. Children are independent as they make choices about their activities during non-planning week, as they deal with personal tasks, and as they put on and take off outdoor and dressing up clothes. Children are developing good relationships with one another, which is observed as a group of girls play happily together with the dressing up clothes, helping each other to put dressing up clothes on, and as a group of boys and girls cooperate together to build a 'park' with small building blocks. Children are excited as they are involved in interesting activities, for example, as they join in with 'tumble tots' and as they play with the recorders during outdoor play. Children's behaviour is good, they are polite and well mannered, they share and take turns and help one another, for example, children wait patiently whilst all children are given a musical instrument during a music session. Children learn about keeping themselves healthy through general discussion and themes, for example, children are able to articulate that fruit and vegetables are healthy foods and are good at giving you energy.

Children are becoming skilful communicators and confidently talk about themselves and their families, they talk about new members of their family, holidays and places they have visited. Sentences are well constructed, their vocabulary is good and words are used in context. Children's language for thinking and communication is developing through activities that encourage the children to think and predict, for example, they are asked to consider what might happen next at story time, or predict what might happen when involved in experiments. Children's pencil skills are developing well, some children are able to form letters and write their own names. Children sit well during story time. Staff take opportunities when reading stories to develop children's language, thinking and concentration by asking questions about the story, and

encouraging children to discuss the content. For example, children talk about visiting an aquarium when they listen to a story about sea creatures. Children enjoy regular visits to the local library.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding of number and number operations, for example, a group of older pre-school children are able to put numbers from one to nine in order on a number line when these are muddled up. Plans show children have been involved in activities that develop their understanding of shape and size and mathematical language, such as big and small, in front and behind. Some children are beginning to understand simple calculation; for example, when needing six copies of a picture when photocopying, after one is copied, children are able to say that they need five more. Plans show children are involved in developing their understanding of mathematics, however, staff do not consistently make use of everyday spontaneous opportunities to develop children's understanding of numbers. The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world is well planned and involves the children in a range of activities. Children's early science is well promoted through planned activities and access to a variety of resources. For example, children experiment considering what sinks and floats, selecting items from around their group room and predicting whether these will sink or float. Children are developing a good understanding of the wider world through varied themes of work, for example, during a theme on 'water' children look at how they and children from around the world access water. They are developing an understanding of one another and people from around the world as they look at similarities, such as going to school, and participate in French sessions on a weekly basis. A variety of appropriate resources supports children's understanding technology, for example, children access a computer, cash register and use an interactive white board. Children have access to and competently use a variety of construction equipment to build three dimensional models, for example, train and car layouts and replicate the local park.

Children's physical development is well provided for as staff plan a range of appropriate activities to promote both large and small physical skills. Children competently climb using alternate feet as they negotiate the stairs to their group room, they use bicycles and scooters skilfully, use a climbing frame and slide, and balancing equipment. Children excitedly enjoy regular 'stretch and grow' and 'tumble tots' sessions. Children understand the need for exercise and healthy eating in promoting a healthy lifestyle, knowing which foods are healthy and good for them, for example, they state that vegetables are good for you as they give you energy and help to develop muscles. Children are developing good manipulative skills and hand-eye coordination as they build train tracks, complete jigsaws and use small magnetic building blocks to build three dimensional models. Children use a range of textures and techniques to create individual pieces of art and craft work, for example, displays show children have painted self portraits. Children have regular opportunities to listen to music and play musical instruments during the weekly music session.

Activities are well planned and involve the children in a range of interesting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning. Senior managers and the room supervisor are experienced and have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and use this well in planning. A new system of planning has been introduced recently, this continues to be monitored. Planning is detailed and links closely to the early learning goals, clearly showing the learning intentions of planned activities. Long and medium term plans are devised, and weekly planning takes

place at the end of the previous week. All key workers within the pre-school have copies of plans and, at the end of the week, complete evaluations of planned activities, along with the progress and achievements of their particular key group of children. These evaluations are used by the room supervisor and senior managers to plan for the following week, including the next steps for individuals or groups of children. At the time of the inspection, senior managers and the room supervisor had just implemented non-planning weeks; this was to enable children to have the freedom to choose their own activities and initiate their own play. Children are becoming used to choosing what they would like to play with from the toys and equipment available. Although only the second week of offering activities in this way, staff on the whole are working well with the system and are generally clear about how to develop children's independent play. However, the system needs to be monitored and evaluated, and staff need to be clear about the purpose of this method in observing children's progress and achievements, and ensure that children's choices are appropriately resourced.

Key staff make regular observations of children's achievements both spontaneously and at focused activities. These observations are made on individual children or groups of children. These observations are used by key workers to complete developmental records. Staff understand the need to ensure that observations of children's achievements are checked more than once to ensure accuracy. Staff also use photographic evidence to support observations and records of achievements. These records are available for parents and carers to view at any time and are shared at parents' evenings.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals, and extensive information is obtained from parents regarding their needs. This means that staff know the children and meet their needs well. Children are beginning to learn about diversity through a selection of planned activities, for example, as they taste some cultural foods and as they contribute to displays, such as 'Handa's Surprise'. Some positive images of ethnicity are reflected through posters and resources, such as play figures, books and dressing up clothes. This goes some way in helping children to develop a positive view of the wider world. Pre-school children have good opportunities to develop their understanding of their own culture and the wider world through interesting themes that enable children to look at similarities with their own and other people's lives. For example, children consider their own access to water and how people across the world obtain theirs.

Children behave very well. Staff act as good role models and use positive strategies to manage children's behaviour effectively, but there is no designated staff member responsible for behaviour management issues. Staff consistently use a good level of praise and encouragement to reinforce positive behaviour. This means that children are learning to be kind, confident and well mannered. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good and staff develop open and friendly relationships with them. Parents are kept well informed about the children and the operation of the nursery, for example, through daily information sheets, newsletters and an informative parent handbook.

Regular parent questionnaires are issued to seek their views, and action is taken to address their suggestions.

Parents and carers of children within pre-school have access to information on the educational provision as well as plans of activities, which are displayed on the notice board adjacent to the pre-school area. This would be enhanced further by the addition of pictures or photographs to illustrate the areas of learning. Staff give verbal feedback to parents and carers as they collect their children at the end of their day. Staff also keep developmental records and photographic records of children's development and achievements, which are available at all times for parents and carers to view. Regular parents' evenings enable parents and carers to discuss their child's progress in more detail with key staff.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well cared for and enjoy their time at the nursery. There are some good systems in place to ensure the provision is managed efficiently, and managers are working hard to develop and improve operational procedures. For example, the outcome files contain extensive information about how the nursery promotes positive outcomes for children. The key worker system works well in practice to promote children's development. Most of the staff are qualified or training towards a recognised qualification. Their training needs are identified through regular staff meetings and appraisals, and they receive access to ongoing training to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Effective procedures are in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. Staffing ratios positively support children's care, learning and play, and additional staff are available to cover administration and domestic duties. This means that staff spend their time directly supporting the children and ensuring their needs are addressed.

There are clear, detailed and well organised policies and procedures in place to support good practice. Most of the documentation available to promote children's care and welfare are accessible and well maintained. However, the records of attendance for children and staff are not accurately maintained. Also, there are occasional days where children under the age of two are cared for in groups of more than 12, and this has an impact on their safety and welfare.

Leadership and management of the pre-school is good. Senior management within the nursery are very much 'hands on' and are generally supernumerary, which enables them to regularly monitor the nursery as a whole, spending time in each of the group rooms throughout the day, including pre-school. The pre-school room supervisor meets regularly with senior managers to discuss planning along with children's development and achievements. The senior management team are committed to the ongoing development and improvement of the educational provision and have plans in place to achieve their aims.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.



## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, a number of issues were identified as areas for improvement which related to: staff vetting procedures; safety issues; hygiene procedures when serving food; behaviour management, and emergency arrangements.

All of these issues have been appropriately addressed. There are effective procedures in place to ensure staff complete appropriate vetting to ensure their suitability to work with children. Bathroom cabinets have been installed to ensure all cleaning items are kept out of children's reach. The water in the downstairs bathroom is maintained at a suitable temperature for children to wash their hands.

Staff implement appropriate hygiene practices when handling and serving food, and adopt positive strategies when managing children's behaviour. Emergency contact details for children are accessible during fire evacuation, and consent for emergency treatment is in place for all children. These measures have improved children's safety and welfare.

Following the last nursery education inspection, four key issues were raised. The registered provider was asked to: increase opportunities for children to travel under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment; link the curriculum planning more closely to the early learning goals, so that the learning intentions of activities are identified; develop further the children's independence at snack and lunch times, and provide more opportunities for children to be made aware of everyday technology. All issues raised have been addressed appropriately.

Children have opportunities to develop a range of large physical skills through access to planned activities and appropriate resources. Children climb stairs to their group room several times per day, they also have access to climbing frames, balancing equipment and tunnels, either outdoors or indoors when weather does not permit outdoor play. They also have regular 'stretch and grow' and 'tumble tot' sessions. Staff are currently developing their expertise in planning for indoor and outdoor provision.

Plans have been revised recently and are now linked more closely to the early learning goals. They show the areas of learning and the learning objectives of planned activities.

Children have many opportunities to practise their independence skills, including snack and other meal times as they pour their own drinks at these times, and as they help themselves to drinks throughout the session.

Opportunities to learn about and use technological equipment are made available to children through planned activities and everyday play opportunities. For example, children access cash registers within role play, use a disc player to listen to music and stories and, with staff support, use an interactive white board, which they use to practise writing letters and numbers.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004, Ofsted received concerns regarding National Standard 2: Organisation. An investigation was carried out and actions were raised. Following a monitoring visit, a formal warning letter was issued to ensure the provider continued to meet National Standard

requirements. Appropriate action was taken to address the concerns identified and Ofsted are satisfied that the provider remains qualified for registration.

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**

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 good.

### **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):

- make sure food is served at a suitable temperature for children to eat
- make sure the registration system for children and staff is accurately maintained
- make sure children under two years are cared for in groups of no more than twelve.

#### **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):

- make use of spontaneous everyday situations to promote children's understanding of mathematics
- evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the free play sessions, ensuring children's choices are appropriately resourced and that staff are clear of the purpose of these sessions in relation to observing children's progress and achievements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)