



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 200593

DfES Number: 584525

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 25/06/2004  
Inspector Name Sheila Dawn Flounders

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name FIRST STEPS KINDERGARTEN  
Setting Address 42 Arlington Avenue  
Leamington Spa  
Warwickshire  
CV32 5UD

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Sue Southworth

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

### Information about the setting

First Steps Kindergarten is a nursery to the north of the town of Leamington Spa. It offers full day care or sessional places to children from the town, and surrounding areas. The children are organised by age, into four groups, each of which have their own base room on the ground floor, with the pre-school children also having access to the first floor. All children access the large enclosed rear garden, which is divided into areas for older and younger children.

The nursery is open weekdays from 08:00 hours to 17:30 all year round, except bank holidays and Christmas week.

There are 51 children on roll, including 5 funded three year olds and 7 funded four year olds. They are also able to support children with additional needs.

A total of 13 staff work directly with the children, the majority of these have an early years qualification, with the rest working towards one. The nursery receives regular support from an advisory teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. They are members of the National Day Nurseries Association.

### How good is the Day Care?

First steps Kindergarten provides satisfactory care for children, with several good aspects. The environment is warm and welcoming for all, with displays of children's work in all rooms. The recent extension has increased space on the ground floor, so each group has their own base room with improved facilities for toileting. There are good amounts of furniture and equipment to meet the needs of those currently attending. All necessary policies and procedures are in place and fully shared with staff and parents.

A secure system is in place to sign in everyone on the premises. Sleeping children are monitored regularly, the information recorded and shared with parents. Safety measures and risk assessments are in place, but the kitchen door is not always closed. The nursery has good levels of first aid trained staff and obtains consent

from parents for medication, however paperwork is not always accurate. Hot meals are cooked on the premises and eaten in the children's own areas, with only older children going up to use the dining room. All staff are aware of allergies or special diets of the children they care for. Additional snacks and drinks are provided periodically through the day.

All children have access to age appropriate toys and resources, with some self-selection, which provide them with a balanced range of activities. Staff interact well with the children in all areas of the nursery and a good keyworker system is in place. They ensure that all children are included, valued and cared for as individuals. Several staff have past experience of caring for children with additional needs. The staff act as positive role models for behaviour and the children mainly behave well.

Parents are welcomed into nursery by staff, given good information before their child attends and kept informed regularly about their activities and progress. Staff work to ensure that children are cared for as parents wish.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At their last inspection the nursery were required to develop an action plan detailing how minimum staffing levels would be maintained, which they did, indicating that staff are deployed around the nursery according to required ratios with agency staff employed if needed. They have also put satisfactory procedures in place to ensure that unvetted persons are always accompanied, that children are supervised at all times, all accidents are recorded, Ofsted is informed of any changes and that nappy changing is done when required not just at set times.

#### **What is being done well?**

- Children in each room follow the same basic timetable and themes, allowing for minimum disruption when changing groups. They all have access to appropriate resources, although additional items are easily available for more able children from the next base room.
- Children are given individual care. Staff stay with the toddlers to ensure they are asleep after lunch and then monitor them with an intercom and 15 minute checks, whilst babies are put down for sleeps according to their individual routines throughout the day. Babies also have their own milk kitchen and are given bottles sent in by parents according to their own feeding schedules.
- Positive behaviour is encouraged in all the children with frequent use of praise and encouragement. There are age appropriate strategies in place to manage behaviour if necessary.
- Parents have full access to all policies and procedures before their child starts at the nursery. They are kept informed about the provision after that via the notice boards, newsletters, daily contact with staff and daily diaries for babies. They are able to see developmental records at any time and are given them to keep eventually.

**What needs to be improved?**

- the accuracy of medication recording
- the access to the kitchen
- the opportunities for older children to select resources or activities for themselves.

**Outcome of the inspection**

Satisfactory

**CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

*All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.*

*As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.*

**WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?****The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
5	Increase opportunities for older children to access toys and equipment more easily.
6	Ensure that children do not have access to the kitchen except with direct staff supervision.
7	Ensure that medication documentation is accurately maintained.

## INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

### How effective is the nursery education?

Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals with communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development being particular strengths of the nursery.

The quality of teaching is also generally good, with both staff having good knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum. Planning is done together and includes most of the necessary elements, with detailed timings allowing few opportunities for extended play sessions, but does not record activities to challenge more able children. A variety of methods are used, with the group often divided into two by age. Staff interact well with the children, especially in these group times, to extend their understanding and play. They act as positive role models and as a result children behave well. Time and resources are mainly well used, although self selection could be enhanced and some opportunities to reinforce numbers are missed. Frequent assessments, linked to the stepping stones, are in place, but do not sufficiently evidence what children need to do next.

Leadership and management is generally good, with a strong presence from managers within the setting and good liaison between staff. Recent work on accreditation has helped to identify strengths and weaknesses, alongside input from staff and regular appraisals. Systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of nursery education, though lack of detail limits their effectiveness. The nursery demonstrates a commitment to improvement.

The partnership with parents is generally good and they are fully informed before their child starts, or transfers into the pre-school room. There are opportunities to discuss their child's progress, regular contact with key workers and some have seen their written records. They are able to spend time with their child in the setting and can be involved in their learning via the reading scheme or sending things in for topics.

### What is being done well?

- Staff interact well with the children. They play alongside them, extending their vocabulary by modelling language, injecting ideas into role-play and small world play situations if appropriate, but giving older children more independence. Stories are discussed well, ensuring children understand what is happening.
- Children have access to a wide range of resources with specific areas for mathematics, role-play, graphics, the computer, circle time activities, creative activities and the adjacent outdoor area. As a result progress in most of the six areas of learning is very good.

- Imaginative play is well resourced and encouraged, with the focus changed every six weeks to fit in with the topics.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- the opportunities children have to play for extended periods at one activity
- planning, to provide detail of challenges set for children
- the assessment process, to show what children need to do next.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The improvement since the last funded inspection has been generally good. They were asked to 'expand the assessment of children's attainment and progress to ensure all aspects of the six areas of learning are covered' which they did fully by implementing a new assessment system detailing all the early learning goals and stepping stones. They were also to 'provide regular opportunities for these to be shared with parents and carers' so they inform parents that they can view their child's records at any time, although they do not all do so and eventually they are given the records to take home.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are interested in their play, confident, persistent and able to speak well in the group. Older children have good self-confidence and are beginning to be sensitive to the needs of others. They all have good relationships, are sociable, yet aware of the boundaries in different situations. They are able to manage their own personal hygiene with some opportunities for extended play and self-selection. They are aware of themselves as family members and are introduced to other cultures.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

They interact well with each other, talk to adults and extend their vocabulary. Language is used to express their thoughts and ideas. Older children link the initial sound of words to letters. They all have good access to books, individually and as a group, with fiction and non-fiction titles and know how to handle them correctly. Children are able to write for a purpose in the role-play area or adding captions to pictures and older children can write their own names well.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have daily group counting experience and practical examples of number in the 'travel agent' role-play. Older children recognise numbers one to nine well, but young children are not frequently reminded of one to five. They are introduced to addition by adding boys and girls and to subtraction in number rhymes. They have good experience of shape in topic work, on the computer and in matching activities. They are introduced to mathematical language such as high, short and big.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are curious, ask probing questions, like how and why, and have many opportunities to explore and investigate such as doing a traffic survey outside. They can access a range of construction, including larger resources and realistic tools. They are familiar with the days of the week, able to recall past events and talk freely about their families. The daily discussions of the weather and present topic of travel are giving them good experience of their own environment and other countries.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

They have regular opportunities to practise movements, both large and small, either inside or in the garden. Even the younger children are aware of their own personal space and can negotiate an obstacle course. They have been introduced to different parts of their body in movement sessions and recognise when they are hungry or thirsty. They use a range of small and large equipment daily and all show increasing skill with sewing, pencil control and other hand-eye co-ordination activities.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have many chances to explore media and materials in two and three dimensions, individually and in-group projects. They have regular singing and music sessions and all enjoy action rhymes. They have a wide range of role-play resources and dressing up clothes to support their imaginative play, with older children playing co-operatively in these situations. They are able to respond to their experiences using role-play, singing, painting and their senses with the 'feely box'.

**Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.**



## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

## **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES**

- increase opportunities for children to extend their play sessions
- extend planning to show challenge and extension activities more clearly
- increase the detail of assessment to provide evidence of what children need to do next, to inform future planning.

*The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.*

## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON**

*Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.*

### **STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION**

*The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.*

### **STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY**

*The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.*

### **STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.*

### **STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT**

*Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.*

### **STANDARD 6 - SAFETY**

*The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.*

### **STANDARD 7 - HEALTH**

*The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.*

### **STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK**

*Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.*

### **STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.*

### **STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)**

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is*

*proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.*

#### **STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR**

*Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.*

#### **STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

*The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.*

#### **STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION**

*The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.*

#### **STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION**

*Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.*