



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

## **NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT**

**URN 127184**

**DfES Number: 521509**

### **INSPECTION DETAILS**

Inspection Date      09/02/2004  
Inspector Name      Annie Williams

### **SETTING DETAILS**

Day Care Type      Full Day Care  
Setting Name      First Steps Nursery  
Setting Address      25-29 Thanet Road  
                                 Margate  
                                 Kent  
                                 CT9 1UA

### **REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS**

Name                      Mrs Hazel Ann Warren

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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 Nursery opened in 1994. It operates from a converted church and an attached house. The nursery has access to six rooms, an office, toilets, a kitchen and an outside area. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding towns.

The nursery is registered to provide a hundred places for children aged under eight years. There are currently eighty-eight funded children on roll. This includes thirty-eight funded four-year-olds and fifty funded three-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The nursery staff have experience of working with children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days each week throughout the year. Sessions last from 07:30 to 18:00. Parents provide a packed lunch.

There are nine staff working with the funded children. All have an early years qualification and attend short courses. The nursery receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Partnership.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

First Steps Nursery provides a caring and welcoming environment for children. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

Teaching is generally good in most areas of learning. There is a good range of resources to support children's progress but systems are not in place to monitor their use. Staff encourage and support children's behaviour. Children are confident, show consideration for others and are generally well behaved. The staff take responsibility for the long term planning. However this does not relate to the six areas of learning and the related aspects, consequently it is difficult to ensure all six areas are given equal emphasis. Planning for daily activities is in place but not yet fully effective with useful information to develop individual children's progress. The system for assessment of children's progress is developing but it does not yet identify what children need to learn next. Staff are familiar with the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and there are appropriate monitoring systems in place, however the Individual action plans are not yet linked to the stepping-stones.

Leadership and management is generally good. The management, supervisors and staff have worked hard to develop a strong team and are committed to providing opportunities for staff development. They are beginning to develop their role in monitoring the effectiveness of the nursery practice through observations and appraisal systems. Systems for evaluating and reviewing the service are not yet fully developed.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Staff provide information about the setting and it's provision and greet parents warmly. Parents receive regular newsletters and are welcomed into the group. Opportunities are developing for parents to learn about their children's attainments and progress within the curriculum, for example planned consultation meetings with key-workers.

### What is being done well?

- Children receive regular opportunities to count and recognise numbers and shape as part of the daily session.
- Children receive regular opportunities to recognise and write their names as part of the daily session. Staff provide an environment that reflects the importance of language through notices and labels. Children speak clearly and confidently as they engage both adults and their friends in conversation.
- Children receive good opportunities to find out about features of the local and wider world.
- Staff provide worthwhile and interesting activities that promote children's creativity through exploring materials with their senses.

- Staff encourage four year olds to use Information and communication technology and make regular use of the computer.

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

- the systems for reviewing and evaluating the nursery practice
- the individual action plans
- the use of the book corner in both rooms and the computer area in the blue room
- opportunities for more practical mathematical activities in the 'free-play' session covering all the aspects
- the system for planning and assessment.

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

Following the last inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report, but the nursery was asked that the following points for development be considered in the action plan:

Further improve the provision for language and literacy by ensuring that there is more emphasis on children writing their own names. Children now receive regular opportunities to practise writing their name for a purpose such as labelling work.

Further improve the partnership with parents and carers by including details of the six areas of the educational programme and the desirable learning outcomes next time the prospectus is revised. The parents information board leading to both the funded three and four year old areas now display photographs and information about the six areas of learning, however the prospectus does not refer to the six areas of learning.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Many positive relationships are made in the nursery. Children are able to work in groups and learn to take turns and share. Staff provide a secure, friendly and caring setting, which builds children's confidence and self-esteem, helping them to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are happy, settled, concentrate for appropriate times and generally well behaved. Staff miss some opportunities to develop children's independence for example snack time and self-selection.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Staff provide an environment that reflects the importance of language through notices and labels. Children speak confidently as they engage both adults and their friends in conversation. Opportunities for writing and recognising letters are available. Staff do not consistently encourage children to transfer these skills in a variety of play situations. The positioning of the book area and lack of staff deployment results in children not making full use of this resource.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children receive opportunities to count during the session and numbers are displayed. They practise naming shapes and numerals as part of the daily routine. A good range of mathematical equipment is available; staff do not consistently use 'mathematical' language to help children learn. Opportunities to encourage children to solve simple problems during practical activities and opportunities for children to learn about addition and subtraction in their play are missed.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Staff provide activities that encourage children to investigate a variety of materials. There are good opportunities for four year olds to use ICT and for all children to look closely at differences, patterns and change, for example changes to the African snail, mixtures when cooking and mixing corn flour. Staff provide good opportunities for children to explore, investigate and identify features of the local and wider world for example visits to the beach, library and park.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's fine manipulative skills are developing well as they display good skills when threading, cutting, whisking, painting, drawing and constructing. Regular opportunities to use large equipment ensure that children move around safely, displaying a good awareness of themselves and others. Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene and healthy eating through discussion, displays, topics and regular hand washing.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement: Generally Good

Children respond in a variety of ways when exploring with their senses for example describing the corn flour as 'squidgy' and 'sticky' and comparing the feel of the snail shell to 'a potato'. Children learn to use their imaginations in role-play and enjoy the music and movement sessions. Children are sometimes limited in their use of imagination in art and design when staff present pre-drawn templates. Although there is a range of musical instruments staff do not make effective use of them.

**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**

- continue to develop effective use of observations in order to i) identify individual children's next steps in learning; ii) use any information gained from observations to inform the planning of activities
- continue to develop planning to include a broad range of practical activities and details of i) what children are expected to learn; ii) the intended area of learning; iii) how staff will differentiate to develop individual children's progress
- ensure teaching supports children's mathematical learning through purposeful practical activities throughout the 'free-play' session

*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.*