



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY217413

DfES Number:

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 09/03/2004
Inspector Name Christine Hands

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name First Steps Nursery
Setting Address Meadowbrook
Ruskington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9FJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Diane Smith & Susan Jenkins
Address 112 Harrowby Road
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 9DS

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 has been open since 1990, although it has only been in these premises since 2001. The current premises have been purpose built. The nursery is situated within a residential area in the village of Ruskington. There is a large car park providing off road parking. First Steps nursery is part of a small chain of nurseries within Lincolnshire. The nursery has separate rooms for each age group of children and a large enclosed play area which is part grassed and part tarmaced.

It is open from 07.30 until 18.00 daily, with the exception of bank holidays and Christmas week. There are currently 121 children on roll, including 28 funded 3 year olds and 7 funded 4 year olds.

There are no children attending at present who speak English as an additional language nor who have been identified as having special needs.

There are four members of staff working with the funded children, 3 of whom hold a child care qualification. The fourth member is currently undertaking training.

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 within a well organised friendly environment. A varied programme of activities is offered which supports the children's learning in all six areas. Children and staff have established good relationships within a stimulating and well organised environment.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff foster children's self esteem, and positively promote good behaviour. Planning and assessment systems are linked to the Stepping Stones, however they lack a clear identification of learning objectives, and focus for next steps for learning. Insufficient opportunities are provided for spontaneous mark making and for children to use their imagination during "prep" time. Although there are no funded children registered as having special educational needs, there is an effective system in place to support their needs.

The leadership and management of the nursery is very good. All staff are positively encouraged and supported to undertake further training. There is an appraisal system in place.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are welcome in the nursery and are kept informed of events and themes through regular newsletters. There is written information about the nursery and the foundation stage curriculum. Parents are aware who the key worker is for their child and they have opportunity to talk to staff and share their child's achievements.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good and a strength of the setting.
- Children are developing confidence and are interested in the activities on offer. Behaviour is very good.
- Organisation of key worker groups enables staff to develop close relationships with children and support their learning through activities.
- Very good and positive relationships are established with parents/carers who are encouraged to be involved with their child's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- planning to ensure clear identification of learning objectives
- assessments to ensure these are used to inform future planning
- the provision of mark-making opportunities to enable children to express themselves and experiment spontaneously and independently

- the range of simple equipment and programmable toys which children can operate.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Parents are now provided with written information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum and children's assessments which is re-enforced during open evenings.

Separate planning is now undertaken for each age group.

Staff's questioning skills have been developed and were seen to be effective in extending children's thought processes.

Children are given opportunities throughout the day for free choice.

The way children's assessments and records are recorded has been developed.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are keen to join in at circle time, are confident and enjoy recounting tales about home and family as well as discussing past events. Children are beginning to have an understanding of social conventions and are becoming aware of other's individual needs and that people have different views and opinions. Staff reinforce acceptable behaviour and children have a good understanding of their actions and right from wrong. Children relate well to one another and to the adults

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children speak clearly and use a good range of vocabulary to express themselves. Their listening skills are developing and children understand the importance of listening to others during stories and group times. Pencils and paper are out on a daily basis, however, there is a lack of spontaneity in their use. Children make good use of the book corner for independent reading. Most children are able to write their own names and are able to link sounds to letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children take part in a good variety of planned practical activities which introduces them to simple mathematical ideas, however, correct language is not always used. Children can count to ten and have an understanding of the meaning of number. Children successfully sequence objects and have a sense of place and order. They begin to understand problem solving and predicting as they take part in cooking activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are developing a good understanding of their own and differing cultures through a wide variety of activities and resources. Children are developing some understanding of communication and information technology, however, there are insufficient resources available to support children's further development in operating simple toys and equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's fine and gross motor skills are developing through effective use of a wide range of small equipment and resources, and through regular access to apparatus outside. Space is well utilised and children move spontaneously and safely with an awareness of self and others. They are developing an understanding of healthy eating and good hygiene.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have imaginative opportunities for role play, music and dance. They have opportunities to experiment with sound using musical instruments. Children are encouraged to make independent choices when selecting materials and are able to explore colour and shape through a variety of play materials and planned activities.

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

- complete planning to ensure clear identification of learning objectives
- complete assessment records which are then used to inform future planning
- provide opportunities for mark-making to enable children to express themselves and experiment spontaneously and independently
- provide a range of simple equipment and programmable toys which children can operate.

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.