



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 218145

DfES Number: 539850

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	23/02/2004
Inspector Name	Michelle Smith

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	FIRST STEPS (ROCESTER)
Setting Address	ROCESTER COMMUNITY CENTRE HIGH STREET,ROCESTER NEAR UTTOXETER STAFFORDSHIRE

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of FIRST STEPS PRE - SCHOOL (ROCESTER) PLAYGROUP COMM
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	FIRST STEPS PRE - SCHOOL (ROCESTER) PLAYGROUP COMM
Address	ROCESTER COMMUNITY CENTRE HIGH STREET,ROCESTER NEAR UTTOXETER STAFFORDSHIRE

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 Pre-school opened in 1992. It operates from all areas of the community centre in Rocester, near Utttoxeter. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently twenty six children from two to four years on roll. This includes ten funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs.

The group opens 4 days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

Four part time staff work with the children. Over half of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

First Steps Pre-school provides satisfactory care for children. A warm and welcoming environment is provided in which to care for children. Staff are effectively deployed through good use of a key worker system. This is enhanced by resources being well organised. However, documents are not well organised and lack the necessary detail.

Staff are good at ensuring children are safe and well cared for. They are vigilant about children's safety at all times, however risk assessments of the premises have not been completed. Children's health is promoted well through good hygiene routines and providing children with healthy snacks in adequate quantities. Staff work well with parents and professionals to meet the care needs of all children.

A stimulating range of activities ensure children are able to make progress in all areas of their development. However, activities do not always stimulate more able children and there are limited opportunities for children to express themselves freely through creative work. Children are able to select equipment with ease and choose

what they would like to play with. They are keen to join in with discussions and enjoy practical group activities. Staff manage children behaviour well and make the pre-school rules clear for children to understand what is right and wrong. Children respond well.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the running of the pre-school through rota helpers and the committee. Information is not shared effectively with them and, as a result, they are not kept up-to-date with the setting and the progress their child is making.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

What is being done well?

- Staff know the children well and have good awareness of their interests. They are effectively deployed and organise resources well.
- Children enjoy a good range of group activities. They are keen to contribute to group discussions, share, take turns and work cooperatively.
- Staff manage children's behaviour well. They are consistent in their approach and work hard to develop children's understanding of what is right and wrong.
- A welcoming environment is provided for parents and their children. Parents are greeted warmly by staff and are encouraged to be involved in the running of the pre-school.

What needs to be improved?

- methods used to share information with parents and procedures to gain written permission from parents for emergency medical advice and treatment
- documents, including the development of a policy regarding lost or uncollected children; the child protection policy; the behaviour policy; risk assessments and the complaints policy.

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 must take the following actions by the date shown		
Std	Action	Date
14	Ensure that all records relating to the pre-school are readily accessible on the premises and available for inspection at all times.	08/04/2004
6	Develop written procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost or uncollected.	08/04/2004
12	Make available to parents the name and address of the regulator within the written complaints policy.	08/04/2004
13	Ensure that the child protection policy complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures, states procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made whilst the child is in the care of the provider and is easily accessible to parents.	08/04/2004

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection	
Std	Recommendation
6	Conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying action to be taken to minimize identified risks.
11	Develop the written behaviour policy to include methods to manage bullying.
12	Ensure procedures are in place which keep parents well informed of the provision and their children and gain parents written consent for the seeking of emergency medical advice and treatment.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of nursery education at First Steps Playgroup has significant weaknesses. Children are making generally good progress in most areas of learning but there are significant weaknesses in the progress they make in communication, language and literacy.

There are significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Staff do not have sufficient knowledge of the Foundation Stage or access to curriculum plans. The assessment of children's learning is inconsistent and is not used to help staff plan the next steps in children's development. This results in not all children being sufficiently challenged. Staff manage children's behaviour well although they do not always maintain children's interest during large group activities. They are good at encouraging children's sense of belonging to the group.

The leadership and management of the group has significant weaknesses. Although the group are generally good at evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, they do not always have the confidence to act on what they know. Due to a lack of knowledge of the Foundation Stage, it is difficult for the group to monitor the effectiveness of the nursery education. The group are currently working with the Early Years Development and Childcare partnership to improve their practice.

The partnership with parents has significant weaknesses. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the group but there are insufficient procedures to ensure parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and the setting.

What is being done well?

- Children are learning to negotiate and share with others. They are confident to speak when in a familiar setting and work cooperatively within a large group.
- Children show increasing confidence when using large equipment. They are developing good balance and coordination through a range of practical activities.
- Children use their imagination well within role-play. They enjoy role-play based on real or imagined experiences.

What needs to be improved?

- staff's knowledge of the foundation stage
- the availability and effectiveness of curriculum plans and the development of appropriate procedures to observe, assess and evaluate children's learning

- procedures to keep parents well informed about the setting and their child's achievements
- opportunities for children to see and use print, numerals and writing within everyday situations
- the range and organisation of resources to enable children to develop an understanding of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and to self select tools and techniques that enable them to join and assemble materials
- opportunities for children to explore texture within creative activities and to develop their imagination to music.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are making generally good progress in personal, social and emotional development. They separate readily from their main carer and enjoy their time at playgroup. Children have a good awareness of behavioural expectations. They are able to work as part of a group, taking turns and sharing fairly, however some children are not always sufficiently challenged. Children show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities and are confident to speak in a familiar group.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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There are significant weaknesses in the progress children make towards communication, language and literacy. Children interact, talk and listen to others with good opportunities to extend their vocabulary. However, children do not access books or understand elements of stories. They are developing an awareness of linking sounds and letters but do not see words in the environment or use writing within everyday activities.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are making generally good progress in mathematical development. They are able to count reliably up to 10 and some children can count to 19. Opportunities are not provided for children to count beyond 19 or recognise numerals within everyday activities. Children are developing an understanding of addition and subtraction through practical activities. They show an interest in and can name simple shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are making generally good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. They are encouraged to use their senses when exploring resources and are able to identify some features of living things. However, children do not develop an understanding of ICT. Children are able to use tools for a purpose but are not always able to select tools and techniques to join and assemble materials. They show an interest in the world in which they live

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are making generally good progress in physical development. They are learning about the importance of staying healthy and are beginning to recognise changes to their body when they are active. Children are developing balance and coordination skills and show increasing control when using climbing equipment. They enjoy exploring malleable materials such as play doh.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
<p>Children are making generally good progress in creative development. They have sufficient opportunities to use colour, shape, form and space through daily creative activities. However, few opportunities are provided for children to explore the texture they are using. Children show an interest and respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear and taste. They use their imagination within role-play but have few opportunities to use their imagination within music.</p>	

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Key issues
- Increase staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the Early Learning Goals.
- Ensure curriculum plans are easily accessible to all staff and observations of children's learning are effectively used.
- Implement procedures to share good quality information with parents about their child and the setting.
- Ensure children are provided with opportunities to write for a variety of purposes; to understand that print carries meaning and to recognise numerals within everyday situations.
- Develop and organise resources to progress children's understanding of ICT and design and making skills.
- Provide children with opportunities to explore and investigate creative materials and use their imagination within music.

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.