



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 226397

DfES Number: 581464

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	17/11/2004
Inspector Name	Janet Banham

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	First Steps Playgroup
Setting Address	The Old School Hall, Church Road Barlestone Nuneaton Warwickshire CV13 0EE

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	First Steps Playgroup 1020392
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	First Steps Playgroup
Address	The Old School Hall Church Road Barlestone Nuneaton Warwickshire CV13 0EE

## 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 Playgroup has been established for over thirty years and operates from the Old School which is situated centrally in the village of Barleston.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The provision is open each weekday during term time from 09:15 to 11:45. There are currently 39 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and surrounding area.

The playgroup employs seven staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and the setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

### How good is the Day Care?

First Steps Playgroup provides satisfactory care for children.

They and their families are welcomed into a warm and caring environment where children feel secure and settled. Staff establish close relationships with the children, know them well and are able to respond to individual need. Children are confident and enjoy the company of their peers. Behaviour is good. Staff act as positive role models and children respond to their clear guidance and praise.

The setting offers a range of toys and activities which develop play and learning although on occasions activities are not imaginatively presented and offer little challenge for the older and more able children.

Safety and hygiene practices are good, but the limited choice of food offered at snack time is not enhancing children's understanding for the need for healthy eating.

Staff establish comfortable informal relationships with parents and carers who receive information about the children on a daily basis. There is little written information available to families other than that in the brochure.

The setting is managed effectively. All statutory recording is maintained and most is

satisfactory, but some policies and procedures require reviewing to comply with the National Standards and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, carers and staff.

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

Following the last inspection the setting was asked to obtain written parental consent for emergency medical advice or treatment, and to keep a record of significant incidents.

Both have been addressed and systems included in individual confidential records, adding to the security and well being of the children.

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

- The management of children's behaviour. Staff create a positive and caring atmosphere which encourages confidence and self-esteem. Children are settled and secure in their surroundings. They respond well to the expectations of the staff.
- The provision of a warm and welcoming environment. The playroom is brightly decorated with the children's work and related topics and offers children an attractive place in which to play.
- The care of the children. Staff know the children well and are aware of and able to respond to individual need.

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

- the Operational Plan by bringing policy statements up to date in accordance with the requirements of the National Standards and ensuring that parents know how to contact Ofsted
- the management of snack time and the nutrition of the food offered to the children
- opportunities for children to have routine access to positive images of race and disability.

**PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)**

There are no complaints to report.

#### **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
2	Ensure the Operational Plan contains policies and procedures which are up to date and in accordance with the requirements of the National Standards
5	Ensure all children have routine access to a range of positive images of race and disability.
8	Review the management of snack time and ensure children are served a wider variety of healthy snacks.
12	Ensure the Complaints Procedure clearly defines Ofsted's role, contains the full details of the regulator and is made known to parents.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision is acceptable and of good quality. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Most staff have a good understanding of the curriculum but some practice is insecure, resulting in weaknesses in teaching. There is limited use of open ended questioning to develop learning and understanding. Generally staff use appropriate methods to help children learn, teaching in small groups or on an individual basis. However, the more able and older children are insufficiently challenged in their learning and personal development and consequently are not reaching their full potential.

Planning is comprehensive with aims and objectives clearly shown, but does not indicate how children are to learn. Assessment of the children's progress against the stepping stones is being carried out effectively but informally through the use of the key worker system and knowledge of individual children. The system does not show how children are moved on in their learning.

Management of the children and their behaviour is good. Time and resources are used generally well but occasionally consideration is not given to the way activities are presented.

Leadership and management of the group is very good. Staff's strengths and weaknesses are assessed and members work very well as a team. Training is well supported. Staff are receptive to change and many opportunities are taken to improve practice.

The partnership with parents shows significant weaknesses. There is no information available to them outlining the curriculum, nor how their children's skills and knowledge will be developed by the early learning goals enabling them to attain the Foundation Stage of learning. Whilst there are opportunities for daily feedback on progress, parents do not receive any written assessments of their children's development nor are they invited to be part of their children's learning process.

### What is being done well?

- The promotion of children's social and emotional development and their awareness of other beliefs
- The commitment of the leader and staff to continual improvement in practice and provision
- The creation of a welcoming and caring environment where children are settled and enjoy the company of the staff and their peers, where they feel secure, respond to instruction and behave well.

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

- the partnership with parents and carers so that they are provided with good quality information on the curriculum, are well informed about their child's achievements and progress, and encouraged to be involved with their child's learning
- planning, so that it evidences how children are learning, and assessment so that it shows how children are being moved on in their learning
- the challenges set for older and more able children
- more frequent opportunities for children to write and make marks using a variety of materials; to recognise familiar words and use name cards; to recognise and use number; to listen to a selection of music and develop a sense of time.

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

The setting has made generally good progress following the last inspection.

The Key Issues to be addressed were:

1. Continue to develop and review planning systems to give due emphasis to the 3 main areas, to include an overview to ensure full coverage and to link closely with assessments.

Staff have implemented a planning system which now indicates all the areas of learning and which highlights focussed activities indicating the areas of learning specifically being addressed. Assessments are being linked to the stepping stones but this is still being carried out informally and does not indicate how children are to be moved on in their learning. This aspect remains an issue in this report.

2. Improve the organisation of large physical play activities and the teaching of safe use and control of wheeled toys and equipment.

Physical play is now well supervised and part of a general learning process. A road safety system has been purchased and a garage/parking activity devised to improve the focus of using wheeled toys and extend learning.

3. Review the use of available accommodation to provide more opportunities for children to express themselves freely in both art and imaginary activities.

This applied specifically to the fuller use of the hall, rather than restrict it to physical play. The role play corner is now permanently set up and another activity presented so that children have a choice of play. Free creative activities are presented routinely and as focussed activities relating to the the current topic. Staff are continually monitoring the best use of the hall and it is anticipated that further choice of play equipment will be provided there.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enter happily, greet staff and inspect the play. Behaviour is very good. Children are encouraged to care for each other, to share and be respectful of adults and peers. They contribute to group activities, sit and listen attentively and respond to instruction. They are given some opportunities to develop independence both in thought and in practical ways but older and more able children are not given sufficient challenges. Their emotional development is fostered well.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Most children are confident communicators. They negotiate and interact well with each other and staff during play. Language skills and vocabulary are developed at focussed activities as is the linking of letter sounds. Children sit well whilst listening to stories and singing. They use books individually. However, there are very few opportunities for them to use and recognise familiar words such as their name. There is some opportunity to write and make marks but the presentation is uninspiring.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are familiar with simple counting during focussed activities and when supported by staff, and are beginning to understand calculation through singing songs. More able children add and subtract simple numbers spontaneously but few opportunities exist for number recognition and use. Older children are developing good skills using volume, size and measure when constructing the marble run and using wet sand. They are aware of pattern and shape and staff use positional language well.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are aware of their community and what happens around them but have little opportunity to reflect and develop their sense of time. They explore change, growth and the natural world. A computer is daily available and technical equipment is regularly incorporated into play. Children are developing good constructional skills using a variety of equipment and materials. They celebrate Christian festivals and have frequent opportunities to discover the beliefs and cultures of other nations.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Good use is made of a wide range of equipment and small tools. Children move confidently around each other and the activities, demonstrating a good sense of space both in the large hall and in the confines of the playroom where they move with particular care. They are co-ordinated and have good control over their bodies. They are developing a good sense of hygiene but lack of nutritious snacks is not enhancing their awareness of healthy eating.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are developing a sense of colour. They experience painting in a variety of ways. They create and build in small or large groups using a selection of materials. They enjoy singing and using musical instruments. However, music is not routinely available during sessions. They are developing their imaginations through role and small world play. Occasional drama is included in the curriculum.

**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

- Improve the partnership with parents and carers so that they receive good quality information on the curriculum, are well informed about their child's achievements and progress and are encouraged to be involved with their child's learning.
- Ensure planning evidences how children learn and assessment shows how children are being moved on in their learning.
- Provide greater challenges for older and more able children throughout all the early learning goals.
- Create routine opportunities for children to make marks and recognise familiar words; to recognise and use number, to listen to and use a variety of music and develop a sense of time.

*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.*