



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 323014

DfES Number: 581254

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 25/03/2004
Inspector Name Victoria Gail Halliwell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name First Steps Private Day Nursery (Pennington)
Setting Address Kirkham Road
Leigh
Lancashire
WN7 3UQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs S Green

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 Day Nursery opened in 1997. It operates from four children's rooms in a purpose built single storey building, within a residential area of Pennington. The nursery is owned by Mrs Sandra Green. There are currently 78 children on roll. This includes 12 funded 3 year olds and 9 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting does not currently support any children with special needs or who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens 5 days a week all year round from 07:30 until 18:00. Part time sessions are from 08:00 until 12:30 and 13:00 until 17:30.

Four part-time and 13 fulltime staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Eight staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a Community Advisory Teacher from Wigan Surestart.

How good is the Day Care?

First Steps Day Nursery provides a good standard of care for children.

The nursery owner and manager have clearly defined roles and responsibilities; they work well together to ensure the smooth running of the nursery. Commitment to staff development and further staff training is particularly good. The purpose built nursery has been carefully designed to meet the operational needs of both the staff and children. Children are cared for in individually furnished rooms, each room is generally well equipped according to the age and developmental stage of the children. Access to the stimulating outdoor area is very good. Attention to documentation is excellent.

The premises are particularly well maintained and standards of cleanliness are good. Staff have a clear understanding of health and safety issues. They implement through systems to identify and minimise any potential risk to the children in their care. Children enjoy a varied menu which promotes healthy eating at lunchtime.

Staff awareness of child protection procedures is good.

All children participate in a wide range of interesting and age appropriate activities including outdoor play and sensory experiences on a daily basis. Staff observe and record what the children are doing and plan appropriately to help them make progress. Many children have formed secure attachments to staff who know individual children well. Older children are familiar with the nursery routine. They are confident in their surroundings and enjoy making decisions about the activities they engage in. Consideration should be given to the organisation of some structured activities for younger children.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are provided with an informative booklet and are made aware of the large range of policies and operational procedures which exist and are available on request. Parents are very well informed of their child's time at nursery, including their progress, the range of activities and mealtimes.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection First Steps Nursery agreed to;

conduct a risk assessment of the outdoor play area. An initial risk assessment was completed. Staff now carry out a visual inspection and complete a written safety check, to ensure the area is safe prior to use by the children.

provide evidence that the sand is protected from contamination. The sand has been replaced with an impact absorbing safety surface.

request written permission to seek any necessary medical advice or treatment in the future. Written permission has been requested to ensure staff act in accordance with parents wishes in the event of children requiring medical treatment.

give parents details of policies and procedures which are available to them. Details of all available policies and procedures are displayed in the reception area for parents information.

What is being done well?

- Staff relationships are good. Within small established teams staff support one another and work well together to meet the needs of the children in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.
- The commitment of both the management and staff to staff development through training is very good. Most unqualified staff are completing a nationally recognised qualification, whilst qualified staff continue to work towards higher levels and complete a range of short training courses.
- Attention to documentation, policies and procedures is excellent. All required documentation is well presented, accurate and accessible for daily use. Policies and procedures are routinely reviewed and updated in response to changes and new information.

- The premises both internally and the outside play areas are maintained to a very high standard.
- Staff caring for younger babies are very experienced and are particularly sensitive to individual needs. On admission they work closely with parents to find out about individual preferences and routines.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

All children have access to an excellent range of stimulating sensory experiences on a daily basis. Young babies smile with pleasure as staff drip silk mixture over their hands. 'Tinies' enjoy pouring rice from containers and splashing in coloured or scented water. Preschool children explore the texture of jelly, discussing it's changing texture as it's warmed by the heat from their hands.

What needs to be improved?

- The organisation of activities for children from 12 months to 2 years to ensure they are not seated for prolonged periods of time.
- The use of domestic style furniture for children from 12 months to 2 years.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

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	Provide some domestic style furniture in the 'tinies' room to assist children in developing mobility and to continue normal life experiences.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The nursery education provision at First Steps Nursery is of high quality. The children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six area's of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a clear understanding of the early learning goals and of how children learn. Long, medium and short term plans effectively promote children's learning in all areas. Staff provide an interesting and accessible low level environment. They encourage children to make meaningful choices and to learn from direct experiences. In practice staff effectively support children of all abilities, providing additional challenge or support as required. This is not always reflected in written plans which rarely link to individual stepping stones.

Staff skilfully question children to make them think and question the effect of their actions, for example when warming jelly in their hands. Staff use routine opportunities such as circle and snack time well. They enthusiastically complete planned and spontaneous discussions to support what the children have been learning, for example a discussion about feelings and facial expressions naturally leads to children expressing their feelings in turn as they become the crocodile in the action song.

Leadership and management is very good; the owner and manager are actively involved in planning the curriculum. They routinely monitor its effectiveness through direct observation of activities and monitoring the children's progress. Effective two way communication systems are in operation. The setting is committed to further improving the care and education for all children through additional training, self evaluation and participating in a quality assurance scheme.

Partnership with parents is very good, parents are well informed of the settings long and medium term plans. Informative notice area's detail current themes, learning intentions and activities. Written profiles detail individual achievements.

What is being done well?

- Children value the positive relationships they have with both adults and children, they are becoming increasingly aware of their own and the feelings of others.
- Children are confident and operate with increasing independence, they make meaningful decisions about the activities they engage in and carefully select their own resources to undertake a specific task.
- Children are interested in the written word. They understand that print carries meaning and are eager to dictate to staff so they can display children's explanations alongside their pictures.

- Children have excellent opportunities to learn through direct exploration and to express themselves freely through sensory experiences, role play and creative artwork.
- Staff have created an interesting and stimulating environment which promotes children's learning in all six area's. They understand how children learn and value the process children go through. They appreciate the individuality of children's own work.
- Children have many meaningful opportunities to solve mathematical problems.

What needs to be improved?

- The presentation of the book area.
- Links to the stepping stones when planning for children's future learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The progress made by the setting in response to the key issues raised at the last inspection has been very good.

Key Issue 1. make the book area more inviting to the children and encourage better use of books to develop their literacy skills. Books are routinely used by the children throughout the day. Books are frequently displayed on tables to stimulate the children's interest and make the book area more appealing. The book area itself is not well presented.

Key Issue 2. Capitalise on the use of everyday objects and incidental opportunities for children to sort, match, compare, order and count, to solve simple problems, and to develop an awareness of addition and subtraction through practical activities. Children have very good planned and routine opportunities to develop and refine their counting and their understanding of mathematical concepts.

Key Issue 3. Provide more opportunities for children to design and build for a purpose and to question why things happen and how things work. Children have daily access to a wide range of construction materials, they design and build recognisable items such as houses and cars. They are inquisitive and investigate new and interesting items spontaneously such as studying the movements of the water wheel, or the effect heat has on jelly.

Key Issue 4. Develop planning to include all six area's of learning. Planning now includes all six area's of learning.

Key Issue 5. Review assessment ensuring that it covers all aspects of the six area's of learning. Assessments of children's progress in all aspects of the six area's of learning are now maintained.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are motivated and confident, they approach new experiences with interest and enthusiasm and often become absorbed in activities of their choosing. Children are becoming increasingly aware of their own and the feelings of others. They are often kind and helpful, sharing their toys or making space for a friend to join them. They have positive relationships with both adults and children and routinely seek out others to share experiences or to request assistance with a difficult task.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children initiate conversations with both adults and children, they enjoy sharing their own and listening to the 'news' of others. Many speak confidently in group situations. With adult support they stop and think before making meaningful contributions to group discussions such as suggesting an appropriate ending to a story. Children routinely make meaningful marks to identify their own 'work'. They confidently use the well resourced mark making area to further develop their writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested in number. They have many interesting planned and routine opportunities to count and consolidate their understanding of number. They refer to the numeral on the wall to see if there is room for them to play; children explain that the 4 on the wall indicates 4 children and then count the children at the activity. Children use their own movable number line to add on and take away and enjoy mathematical challenges such as dividing the 10 children between 3 tables.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are inquisitive and explore objects to find out more. They are interested in the effects of heat and cold on different substances such as freezing water and warming jelly. Children are learning about the natural world through interesting themes such as 'living things'. They use magnifying glasses to examine insects and talk about their observations before drawing pictures and making clay models. Children use the computer keyboard and mouse with increasing skill and control.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children have excellent opportunities to practice and refine their large movements. They confidently explore a wide range of interesting and challenging outdoor resources; running, climbing and balancing on a daily basis. Through planned sessions children are learning about the effects of movements and are able to work cooperatively to make the rocker move or to negotiate large resources through confined spaces. They operate a wide range of small tools such as scissors with good control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children complete a wide range of planned creative activities which support topic work using a varied range of techniques such as painting, printing, collage and model making. Children work independently and individualise their own work expressing themselves freely. Individual interpretations of giraffes and ladybirds are proudly displayed. Children use their senses to explore a varied selection of made and natural materials daily. They play confidently in role play situations.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- The following are points for consideration.
- Improve the presentation of the book area.
- Further develop the planning system to show links to the appropriate stepping stones when planning future learning intentions.

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.