



**Office for Standards
in Education**

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 405451

DfES Number: 530489

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	13/10/2004
Inspector Name	Jennifer Liverpool

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Full Day Care
Setting Name	First Steps Mont.Prepare Sch
Setting Address	5 Sebert Road Forest Gate London E7 0NG

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Maria Adesegha
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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 Montessori Prep School opened in 1990, and is privately owned. It operates from three rooms in a two storey converted house. The property is located in a mainly residential area and is in close proximity to transport facilities, schools and shops. The outdoor area is currently undergoing refurbishment and is not in use. The prep school serves the local area.

There are currently 20 children from 14 months to 4 years on roll. This includes 8 funded three-year-olds and 3 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. None of the children attending at present has been identified with special educational needs. All children speak English as their first language.

The prep school opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 8:00am until 18:00pm.

Five part/full time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The prep school practices Montessori teaching method with their curriculum programme.

How good is the Day Care?

First Steps Preparatory school provides satisfactory care for the children. Staff have a reasonable understanding of the National Standards, which they mostly interpret well. The policies reflect the standards though some are more detailed, and others are not yet seen in some of their practices. Staff warmth creates a welcoming environment where children can feel secure and confident in their surroundings. The deployment of staff is sufficient for most of the day. Overall the physical environment is in a reasonable state of repair, though staff make best use of the appearance through the displays of children's work and colourful visual aids. Staff are able to identify most areas of risks within the setting and there is a satisfactory level of safety. Staff have an appropriate understanding of how to provide a healthy environment and meals in particular are varied and well balanced. However, some

hygiene issues were not fully addressed at the time.

The prep school operates a key worker system and all staff get to know the children very well. There is a daily routine in place and children are familiar with it. Children are offered a range of activities that is mostly to their level of abilities. They are given good opportunities to be creative and are developing painting techniques. Younger children are encouraged to explore natural materials, and are provided with opportunities to develop their language skills. Overall, staff provide equipment most of which are appropriate to children's needs. The management of behaviour policy is in operation and displayed although not consistently implemented by all staff. They are committed to equal opportunities and this is reflected in their policies, practices and resources.

The prep school has good relationships with parents and carers, and they regularly exchange details. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to become involved in their children's work and learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the provider agreed to obtain written permission from parents for seeking urgent medical treatment. All children's personal information forms now request for parents to give their permission for their children to receive urgent medical treatment. The provider also agreed to keep records of significant incidents and obtain a copy of the special educational needs code of practice. Staff have a system in place for recording significant incidents, if the need was to arise. The code of practice has been obtained.

What is being done well?

- Staff are aware of and meet children's individual needs, and they have a good understanding of equal opportunities and this is reflected in their policies, practices and resources.
- Children are developing creative skills and are learning painting techniques through being offered a range of activities.
- Staff create an attractive environment for children to work and play through displaying children's artwork and colourful posters throughout the entire prep school.
- Staff are fully aware of children's dietary needs and provide them with healthy balanced meals.
- The staff work in partnership with parents and carers to meet the developmental and learning needs of the children.

What needs to be improved?

- the provision of resources which meet the developmental needs of children aged under 2 years.

- the maintenance and details of written documentation for uncollected and lost children, and fire evacuation procedures.
- children's safety with regards to the procedures for protecting children from persons who have not undergone suitable checks, and safer evacuation escape route.
- the application of good hygiene practices, particularly during nappy changing.
- staff's own knowledge and understanding in managing children's behaviour.

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	review and update written procedures for uncollected children, and lost children to give clearer details as to the actions taken when: a) children are left on the premises, or b) in the event they are lost when taken out on trips.
1	ensure that there are effective arrangements in place to protect children from persons who are not vetted
5	ensure that sufficient and suitable furniture (tables and chairs) are available to meet the needs of children aged under 2 years
6	review fire escape procedures and seek advice for a safe fire evacuation route
7	improve the consistency of hygiene procedures, particularly during nappy changing
11	further develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development

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

How effective is the nursery education?

First Steps Montessori Prep School provides a friendly, caring and warm environment, where children enjoy learning through a wide range of interesting activities. Effective teaching and good use of resources helps children make generally good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is generally good with some very good aspects. Greater emphasis is placed in the programmes for communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. Children are making very good progress in those areas. They happily engage in activities and are gaining confidence in their surroundings, speech and when using large scale play apparatus. Children behave generally well, are forming friendships and learning about each other differences. Children's independence skills are not always consistently encouraged. All children are encouraged to express their feelings, and they are developing mathematical concept and ideas. The range of provision for role-play is limited and children are not always encouraged to initiate their own imaginative play. Written assessments are regular, comprehensive and clearly show children's progression. The current system for planning though detailed do not as yet show how activities are extended for those children who are more able.

Leadership and management are generally good. Overall, the management team are clear about their roles, is readily available to offer support to staff and gets to know the children very well. Staff members are supportive to each other and share an understanding of early years practice. The current system for monitoring of the provision is too informal and therefore areas for improvements are not always identified.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are kept well informed about the provision, and are encouraged in a variety of ways to become involved in their children's learning.

What is being done well?

- Staff are sensitive and have a caring approach. They treat children with respect, build on their self esteem, value and praise their work.
- Children have opportunities to learn from first hand experiences, which includes outings.
- Staff offer children a range of suitable activities to help them understand about each other differences and to celebrate diversity within their community.
- Children are developing a good understanding of the environment and community through regular visits to local park and amenities.

What needs to be improved?

- the written plans in order that there is indication as to how adults are to work with children, and the methods used to extend activities for those children who are more able.
- the programme for creative development for the purpose of encouraging children to initiate their own imaginative play, and also increase provision in this area of play.
- the organisation of mealtime in ways which enable children to become more independent.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The system for written assessments is carried out regularly on each child, it is comprehensive and detailed, and effectively identifies the next step of each child's learning. Regular trips to local play facilities have enabled children to gain confidence and develop good physical skills. Children are now able to select and choose resources for themselves and they are encouraged to make requests for changes to activities. Children are given good opportunities to access a wide range of arts and craft media both in two and three dimensional forms, and children are developing a range of painting techniques. Written assessments reports are detailed, comprehensive and identifies the next stage of each child's learning. This information is now used to inform future curriculum plans.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children play happily and with confidence. Younger children are learning to cooperate and the older children are forming firm friendships with their peers. They are familiar with the daily routines and are receptive to changes to activities. Children are able to select resources for themselves and carefully return to its rightful place. They readily attend to their personal needs though self help skills is not fully encouraged at meal times. Children are able to express a range of feelings.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children listen attentively to conversations and instructions, speak confidently and ask lots of questions when participating in activities. Children are learning to use words to describe how they feel. Appropriate games and activities are provided to enable children to develop pre-reading skills and some older children are learning to recognise some simple three letter words. There is good provision for writing, and children are developing good pencil control.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children know and can understand the value of numbers well and can count and recognise numbers up to 15. There are good opportunities for children to sort, match and order. Children can recognise and name two dimensional shapes and they are learning the vocabulary for three dimensional shapes. Older children are beginning to solve simple mathematical problems through simple adding and taking away of objects, and all children are developing mathematical language.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children talk about their families and home life, and share their experiences with each other. They go on regular trips to the local community and observe different forms of transport, collect leaves, and learn about road safety. Good range of reference books, interest table and discussions effectively enable children to investigate and explore the changes of properties and observe living things. The computer is used effectively to support children's learning in all areas.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children show good awareness of space as they carefully walk around each other, and run around play apparatus when outdoors. Regular music and movement sessions enable children to develop confidence in movement and coordinating actions. Children are gaining confidence and extending their physical skills through a range of outdoor activities such as climbing, balancing and ball games. They use knives carefully and properly and can handle a range of small equipment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
<p>Children are given good opportunities to explore colour, shape and form when using paint and a variety of media, and they are developing a range of painting techniques. Cooking activity is a regular feature and children are able to respond to smell, taste and texture. Children enjoy singing, and they use a variety of traditional and cultural musical instruments. Despite dressing up clothes are seen regularly in plans, children are not always encouraged to initiate their own imaginative play.</p>	

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

- further develop written plans to clearly identify the role of the adult, and how activities are extended for the older children and those who are more able.
- enhance the programme for creative development through increasing the provision for role-play, and provide more opportunities for children to initiate their imaginative play to develop and create their ideas, stories and role-play situations.
- evaluate and improve the organisation of meal times to ensure that children develop more independence and self-help skills.

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.