



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 301827

DfES Number: 547291

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 24/06/2004
Inspector Name Jasmin Myles-Wilson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Early Steps Pre-School
Setting Address Tirecel Community Centre
Fulmar Drive
South Beach Estate
Northumberland
NE24 3RJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of South Beach Residents Association

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name South Beach Residents Association
Address 24 Dunkeld Close
Blyth
Northumberland
NE24 3SP

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

Early Steps Pre-school has been a registered service since 1993, has 98 children on roll, and operates from a community centre, located in an estate on the outskirts of Blyth. There is also a mobile classroom within the grounds of the centre which enables the group to be divided into suitable age groups. The group caters mainly for families living or working in the area but is also open to children from the nearby surrounding areas.

In the community centre and mobile classroom there is one main play area which is divided up into various area to cater for the different child developmental skills. An enclosed play area is available for outdoor play.

There are nine permanent members of staff working with the children. Most of the staff have an early years qualifications and the staff member that doesn't have an early years qualification is working towards obtaining one. The pre-school have student placements. Funded education is provided for children aged three and four and the group also receive support from the Early Years Development Partnership.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 08:45 to 11:15 and 12:30 to 15:00.

How good is the Day Care?

Early Steps Pre-school provides a good day care service for children. The staff work well together to ensure the children they care for are safe, secure, welcome and feel settled. All staff members have the experience, expertise and knowledge to care for the children in a warm and nurturing way. Most of the staff have an early years qualification and continue to enhance their knowledge and practical skills through training. The unqualified member of staff is working towards an early years qualification. All relevant and confidential documentation is in place to ensure the safe management of the provision and of the children attending although some of it lacks significant information.

Staff are pro-active in ensuring the well-being and safety of the children are met and actively promote good health and hygiene practices in their overall care. There is a positive reflection of equal opportunities throughout the nursery.

There is an extensive range of activities, resources and equipment to promote children's development, skills, learning, confidence and independence although sometimes activities seem to be more adult led than child led. Flexible planning enables the staff team to work with the children as needed to ensure their individual needs are met. Children's behaviour is generally well managed, the staff are friendly and consistent in their approach and the children respond positively by being well behaved.

Parents also have good relationships with the staff with daily discussions and information exchanged about the children. Staff are aware good relations with the parents are essential in order to meet the needs of the children they care for effectively.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

What is being done well?

- Provision for children over two is very good. Staff give excellent attention to meeting the individual developmental needs of the children. Activities are well planned, varied and give children access to a wide range of resources and experiences.
- Staff are aware and give close attention to children's safety both inside and outside the nursery. Good procedures and policies are in place for all safety issues.
- There is a high number of staff who hold valid first aid certificates and a level three qualification in early years.
- The use of a visual reward system which encourages positive behaviour and a caring attitude amongst the children.
- Good relationships are fostered with the parents and they are given very detailed information, both verbally and written, regarding their child's achievements and progress.
- Language development is worked on extensively and encouraged through the staff continually having conversations with the children and asking them questions to expand their vocabulary and knowledge.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

Jolly Phonics is a method used in educational schools as a way of extending children's language. Jolly Phonics can aide children who have speech difficulties to develop their language as each letter of the alphabet has an action which is done in a fun way when saying the letter. Children in this group are given two letters in a book every week to practise at home with their parents and it is also practised within

the group. The children are very enthusiastic about this activity and participate fully in it. Parents have commented on how well their children have come on since doing this and how enjoyable they find it. Once all the letters of the alphabet are completed then the child is free to keep this at home, so as to re inforce the learning. This is in preparation for when the child moves into the school and has resulted in the children having the pre-knowledge which makes it easier for them to adapt to school life.

What needs to be improved?

- polices for complaints and child protection
- activities, to ensure they are more child led than adult led.

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
3	Ensure the structure of activities provided give older children more opportunity to make decisions.
12	Provide Ofsted's details for parents so they know how to contact Ofsted if they want to make a complaint.
13	Ensure the child protection policy contains Ofsted's details and information regarding an allegation against a member of staff.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Early Steps Pre-school provides a welcoming atmosphere and offers high quality education. The children are confident, independent, happy and well behaved and are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a very good knowledge of the stepping stones. They use many fun and imaginative ways to introduce new skills. Staff use assessment very effectively to inform them about children's development and to help plan future learning although they recognise that more able children are not always sufficiently challenged. They plan purposeful activities to promote communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Staff have developed very good relationships with children and encourage their independence, enjoyment and curiosity.

Leadership and management is very good. It is effective in promoting all areas of the curriculum. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and work very well as a team. The management and staff teams are committed to high standards and continuously strive to improve their service.

Partnership with parents is very good and staff work hard to ensure there are good relationships with parents. Parents receive very good information about the foundation stage of learning and are very well informed about the progress of their children.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal social and emotional development is fostered very well. They are very confident, independent, self motivated and relate well to each other and staff.
- Children speak confidently in a variety of situations.
- Children develop very good counting skills by practicing them in purposeful activities.
- Staff respect individual needs and make learning fun. They use resources and the accommodation well to maximise learning opportunities.
- The setting is very well led and there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement.
- The very good partnership with parents and carers helps children's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- continue to develop the use of appropriate group sizes and effective deployment of staff so that more able children receive sufficient challenge at all times.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to develop more effective use of the stepping stones in their planning. They have ensured that all stages of planning reflect the curriculum for the foundation stage, staff are very well versed in all aspects of the early learning goals and stepping stones and apply this very effectively in the provision of themes and activities to promote children's development.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident, independent and well mannered. They relate well to each other and staff. They are very familiar with daily routines. They show very good interest and are keen to learn and try new experiences. They trust staff and respond well to staff approaches. They learn to share, take turns and co-operate very well, for example when sharing fruit at snack time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children confidently use a wide range of words, phrases and sentences to describe concepts and express themselves. Children are developing language skills very well through the many opportunities provided. They recognise and many can write their own names and they frequently use books for enjoyment. They are developing their vocabulary and speech very well because they regularly practice the sound and meaning of letters and words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Older children can count reliably up to ten and all children know numbers through regular practice in enjoyable counting activities. They develop very good calculating skills through regular opportunities to compare numbers in planned activities and incidental ways. They are developing mathematical skills in fun based activities and extending their learning by making patterns, comparing shapes and comparing quantities. Children develop positional language very well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children show good curiosity and interest in the environment through well planned activities. They learn to explore the natural world through topics such as growing and the weather. They confidently decide which toys and resources they need and are developing a very good range of skills through the use of a computer and other programmable equipment. Children are learning about different cultures, customs and beliefs through a variety of different activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move confidently and with increasing control, moving purposefully and safely about the environment. They are developing good balancing skills and show very good spacial awareness both in and out of doors. Children use a wide range of tools and materials safely and demonstrate increasing skill with large and small equipment. Children learn about their body and how to keep healthy and safe in a variety of situations.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have many opportunities to explore different media using all their senses. They know colour and shape very well. They practice using musical instruments in fun and imaginative ways and know many songs and stories and often dance to music. They have regular opportunities to take part in role play, for example acting out different roles in the hospital area.

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:

- There are no key issues to report, however, consideration should be given to improving the following:
- the effective grouping of children and deployment of staff to ensure that more able children receive sufficient challenge at all times.

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.