



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY243714

DfES Number: 517621

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 15/09/2004
Inspector Name Maureen Croxford

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name A Step Ahead Pre-School Nursery Ltd
Setting Address Leech Pond Hill
Lower Beeding
West Sussex
RH13 6NR

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The partnership of A Step Ahead Pre-School Nursery Ltd

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name A Step Ahead Pre-School Nursery Ltd
Address Leech Pond Hill
Lower Beeding
West Sussex
RH13 6NR

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

A Step Ahead Pre-School Day Nursery opened in November 2000 and is registered for a total of 28 children under 8 years of age. It operates from two main rooms, a kitchen and an office, in a purpose built building in the village of Lower Beeding, near Horsham. A fully enclosed area offers safe outside play. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding villages.

There are currently 54 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 22 funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has appropriate strategies in place to support children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week for 51 weeks a year. Sessions are from 08.30 until 17.30.

There are 9 staff working with the children. At the time of the inspection over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 3. Three members of staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

A Step Ahead Pre-school Nursery Ltd offers good quality care for children.

Appropriate qualifications are held by most staff and they all see training as very important. The space and resources are well organised to ensure that children are well cared for. The staff team work well together. They provide a welcoming environment by displaying the children's work and posters on the walls of the nursery. Children have access to a good range of toys and activities. All required documentation is in place and stored in line with regulation.

Good safety procedures are in place to reduce the risks to children and most

equipment is of a high standard. Health and hygiene practices are promoted by ensuring that the children wash their hands to prevent the spread of germs. Nutritious meals, snacks and drinks are provided at regular intervals, which are properly prepared by staff who hold suitable qualifications. All children are treated as individuals and staff are aware of their needs. Strategies are in place to ensure that children with special needs are fully integrated.

Staff provide many resources and toys that offer children a varied range of interesting and stimulating activities, which develop children's knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. They interact well with children, act as good role models and use praise and encouragement to build children's self-esteem and confidence.

Good relationships are developed between staff and parents and all staff make themselves available to discuss individual children's needs. Parents are kept informed of the nursery procedures through the prospectus, newsletters, notice boards and discussions with staff.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Most staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications or are on training programmes and have a good understanding of the National Standards. Their training and experience enables them to provide quality care for children.
- Staff are well deployed and good ratios are maintained at all times to ensure that children are well cared for and supported. Staff interact well with children to form firm relationships. They have a good understanding of children's individual needs.
- A good range of interesting activities are planned and provided that help children progress in all areas of their development.
- The premises are safe, secure and welcoming to children and parents. They offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.
- All staff have attended child protection training in West Sussex. They have a sound understanding of child protection procedures and issues surrounding confidentiality.

What needs to be improved?

- The slide in the garden should be made secure.
- The table covering should be made safe.

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	Ensure that toys and equipment are clean, well maintained and safe.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at A Step Ahead Pre-school Nursery Ltd is acceptable, is of a high quality and children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good and staff are skilled in their methods. They have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and use their knowledge to enable each child to progress. Appropriate qualifications are held by most staff and all are experienced. They work extremely well together to create a calm, welcoming child-centred environment where children are motivated and feel secure. Staff use excellent questioning techniques and encourage children to think and express their own ideas.

All staff share responsibility for planning and assessment. Staff plan a variety of excellent, practical activities, both in and outside, and understand what children learn from them. Evaluation against the stepping stones and early learning goals takes place. Staff independently support all children and help them progress, although plans do not show extension of more able children. The children are encouraged to be helpful, supportive to each other and behave very well.

Leadership and management of the provision is very good. Staff work well as a team, are well deployed and are supported by the providers. Professional development is valued and staff are actively encouraged to attend further training. There is an effective management structure in place. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities, and teaching is regularly monitored and evaluated.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are kept well informed about the provision, forthcoming events and they are made welcome in the nursery. There are effective systems in place to share information, including discussions with staff, newsletters, notice board and prospectus.

What is being done well?

- Staff create a well-planned stimulating environment, where children learn through a wide range of practical activities, making good use of resources. Many learning opportunities are provided throughout the daily routine.
- Staff make good use of the local environment to help children explore the natural world, learn about people and places and become familiar with their immediate surroundings.
- The organisation and accessibility of resources and materials provides opportunities for children to develop high level of independence and complete tasks without the support from an adult. For example, children are encouraged to dress themselves for outside play including putting on their

own shoes and coats, after collecting them from the cloakroom.

- Staff make good use of the outside play area. Opportunities are provided for children to explore sand or water, which are always available outside, as well as free access to bicycles, balls, climbing frame and play house.
- Parents and staff work together and share information about the children's individual progress and development through formal and informal discussions and developmental records. Staff provide suggestions of activities for parents to try at home with their child that are linked to the nursery topics. This helps increase parental involvement in their child's development.

What needs to be improved?

- The improvement of planning to include how activities will be extend for the more able child.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no significant weaknesses to address at the last inspection although there were two points for consideration;

Ensure that the focus is on practical activities that challenge children's learning.

In planned key activities that are often art based, focus more on learning intentions rather than the end product. In these activities broaden the learning opportunities for children.

Very good progress has been made in these areas. Staff now plan and provide many activities that challenge the children's learning. Learning intentions are now included in the planning and activities are evaluated and used by staff to ensure that opportunities for children are more focused.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are developing independence and confidence, and are learning to co-operate with each other. They play an active role in their learning, choosing their own resources and equipment. Children show high levels of concentration and clearly enjoy the stimulating variety of activities offered. They are developing good relationships with staff and their peers. Children behave well and are encouraged to share and take turns, and to be polite and considerate to others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Staff use language that is rich and use correct grammar, which helps children to develop their linguistic skills appropriately. They enjoy listening to stories and are encouraged to notice the wealth of print displayed around the nursery on labels and posters. Some children recognise their own names and some write their names. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters. They explore sound patterns, for example, when singing rhyming songs.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children effectively use and recognise numbers in planned everyday activities. Most are able to count confidently to 10 and some more able to 20 and beyond. They show a developing understanding of shape and measuring. There are many activities provided for children to develop their understanding of addition and subtraction and staff enable the children to use the appropriate mathematical language.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children are able to investigate objects and materials, including living things and man made objects. They are provided with many opportunities to select tools and appropriate resources to develop their designing and making skills. They are encouraged to learn and talk about their environment and events in their own lives. Children are offered opportunities to observe and find out about the natural world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are provided with many opportunities to practise their co-ordination skills both inside and outside. They are able to balance, run and jump and staff are on hand to offer support and encourage new skills. They are confident when using tools and materials such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes with increasing control, and are able to access many of these independently.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children learn about colour, texture, shape and form using a wide variety of media. They enjoy worthwhile activities which explore three-dimensional space when making collages and creating models. They have regular music and dance opportunities and enjoy playing with the musical instruments. Planned role play activities offered are varied and interesting, and staff fully participate to encourage the children's imagination, such as role play.

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 significant weaknesses to report but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- ensure that planning shows how activities will be extended for the more able child.

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.