



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 134322

DfES Number: 513678

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	19/05/2004
Inspector Name	Joanne Graham

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	First Steps Pre-School
Setting Address	Guide Headquarters Southern Road Thame Oxfordshire OX9 2ED

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Tracey Louise Daubney
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ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public 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 Pre-School opened with the present owners in December 1997 and had been previously established with different owners. It operates from one room in a Girl Guide hut situated within a public park in Thame. It serves the local area.

There are currently 48 children on roll. This includes 15 funded 3 year olds and 17 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children with special needs and for whom English is an additional language. The group open 5 days a week during school term time only. Session times are 09:15 - 12:00 Monday to Fridays and 12:45 - 14:45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Three full time and three part time staff work with the children. Three hold suitable childcare qualifications.

The setting receives regular support from a teacher / mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

First Steps Pre-school provides good quality nursery education overall which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Children make very good progress in communication, language and literacy, physical and mathematical development. They make generally good progress in personal, social and emotional development and creative development. There are significant weaknesses in knowledge and understanding of the world.

Teaching is generally good. Staff have a generally good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. However, they do not introduce different cultures and festivals into the curriculum planning. Creative activities are over directed, preventing the children's imaginative skills to develop completely. The children access age appropriate and interesting activities and resources, developing their learning. However, opportunities to self-select are still limited. Systems are in place to adequately support children with special needs to ensure they are included in all activities. The assessment system records children's progress towards the early learning goals. This is regularly reviewed to ensure it contains sufficient detail to meet children's individual development needs. The children's behaviour is good and they take turns and share well. Their spiritual and cultural development is not being developed fully.

Leadership and management is generally good. Staff have sufficient time to complete the children's developmental records. The managers value their staff and their commitment to the group. Some weaknesses have not been assessed nor addressed.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. This contributes to their child's progress towards the early learning goals. They are informed of the topics and activities with newsletters, progress interviews and daily communication with staff. They have regular opportunities to share their observations and discuss their children's progress.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident to share their news. They listen well and have consideration for the speaker. Children show an interest in books and storytelling. Books are used effectively to reinforce themes and for enjoyment.
- The children can recognise and name simple shapes and colours. The children problem solve through sorting by shape, colour and sequencing. They create patterns through a variety of situations and equipment. Staff reinforces mathematical language.

- Children move freely with coordination and confidence. They can jump off an object and land correctly and can adjust and change directions to avoid obstacles with ease. Children have opportunities to handle tools, objects and construction safely and with increasing control.
- Parents are well informed about nursery, its routines and activities provided. Daily communication with all staff ensures parents have opportunities to share information about their child's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- introduction of other cultures and beliefs into the curriculum
- opportunities for the children to self select activities and equipment
- opportunities for children to express their own creative ideas.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made since the last inspection. Parents and carers attend a progress interview with their child's key worker once a term. This provides opportunities for the parents to share their observations with staff and to be up dated of their child's development within the setting. Regular newsletters and parent's notice board supports this improved system.

The children do now have access to paper, pencils and crayons to use in free activities. However, the availability is limited due to storage of these products being within the writing area trolley. There is no provision for the children to choose and self select from a range of construction toys, games and puzzles. This continues to be a key issue.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's behaviour is good; they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They respond positively to staff and are forming good relationships with their peers. They take turns, negotiate and share well, showing consideration and support for others. They are confident to try new activities. There are limited opportunities for the children to self select their own toys and equipment. Staff do not plan to enable children to learn that people have different views and cultures.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are confident speakers and listen well to each other and the staff, showing awareness of the listener. Their contributions to circle time are encouraged and valued. Most children recognise their name and some are beginning to write it with confidence. Children listen with enjoyment and respond to stories. They show an interest in books and know how to handle them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are able to count in everyday situations, including using number rhymes to count forward and back. Pattern and sequencing is introduced and is reinforced by staff, especially using the beads and the sunshine craft activity. The children recognise and name simple shapes. Children problem solve within everyday play situations and to use a wide range of mathematical language.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children use a variety of construction equipment, tools and materials to cut, join and build, developing and practising a variety of skills. They have the opportunity to use and access everyday technology through IT equipment and cassette recorders. There is no evidence of the children having an understanding of their own culture and beliefs and those of other people. Resources depicting positive images are very limited.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move confidently and imaginatively, showing an awareness of space for themselves and others in their physical play. They have access and opportunity to develop and extend their physical co-ordination in a variety of situations for example using the play park equipment. Children handle tools, materials and objects safely and with increasing control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children participate in songs and rhymes eagerly. They enjoy learning through all their senses, especially during cooking. The children have good access to role play through use of dressing up clothes and equipment. The children paint, cut and stick regularly. There are limited opportunities for the children to be independently inventive with their artistic creations as the activities are very adult led and prepared.	
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

- introduce other cultures and beliefs into the curriculum and develop the children's understanding
- create opportunities for the children to self select activities and equipment
- develop opportunities for children to express their own creative ideas.

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.