



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 305058

DfES Number: 541182

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 05/10/2004
Inspector Name Susan, Helen Spencer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care, Out of School Day Care
Setting Name First Steps Kindergarten
Setting Address Yewtree Lane
Poynton
Cheshire
SK12 1PU

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The partnership of Maureen Chester, Susan Southworth & Raymond Earp

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Maureen Chester, Susan Southworth & Raymond Earp
Address STEPS Holiday Kids Club
Bertie Road
Kenilworth
Warwickshire
CV8 1JP

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 Kindergarten and Out of School Club is situated in Poynton within the Macclesfield Borough of Cheshire. The group is open from 07.45 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, throughout the year. Full Day Care is provided for up to 50 children aged from birth to five, children may attend on a full or part-time basis. Out of School Care is provided for up to 24 children of primary school age. Children are taken to and collected from five schools in Poynton; Worth, Lower Park, Lostock Hall, Vernon and St. Paul's. During school holidays the provision is also open to children who attend other schools.

More than half the staff team have a recognised childcare qualification. Support staff are employed to carry out cooking, cleaning and maintenance duties.

The groups premises are two large single storey demountable classroom buildings, within the same grounds. The Kindergarten building comprises of four play rooms for children of different ages and a sleep room, while the out of school building has one large play room and a computer room. Toilet and nappy changing facilities directly adjoin each of the children's play rooms. Play rooms are divided into different types of activity and play areas, and have carpet and vinyl floor surfaces. Children are able to participate in physical and outdoor play activities in one of the three enclosed outdoor play areas which provide grass and hard standing surfaces and directly adjoin the buildings. There is a kitchen, laundry, office, staff room and staff cloakrooms.

Snacks and meals are prepared on the premises, special dietary requirements and preferences can be catered for.

The group is registered to receive funding from the DFES in respect of Nursery Education for three and four year olds.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

First Steps Kindergarten provides a friendly, welcoming environment where children make generally good progress in personal, social, emotional, mathematical, physical and creative development. They make very good progress in communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff are cheerful, caring and work well together to provide a range of captivating activities using time and resources well. They provide good role models for children to follow, and generally manage behaviour well by fostering the children's self-esteem through fair expectations, praise and encouragement. Children are generally provided with appropriate challenges, though opportunities to extend, for example, the children's independence or their mathematical concepts, are sometimes missed. Planning is conscientiously completed, although daily plans do not sufficiently link the planned activities to the areas of learning and what children are expected to learn. Assessments are conscientiously completed.

The leadership and management are generally good. Staff are well aware of their roles and responsibilities, resulting in the smooth running of the sessions. Annual appraisals are held, but ongoing training opportunities are not sufficiently facilitated. The monitoring and evaluation of the provision is informal, however, staff are open to change and committed to improving the care and education of the children.

Partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents have a positive view of the provision. Staff provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere and communicate well with them regarding their child's daily experiences. They are provided with a helpful welcome pack and ongoing newsletters, while the ongoing topic title is displayed. However, details of the weekly curriculum, and what children are expected to learn, are not shared with parents.

What is being done well?

- Children are happy and confident. They form good relationships with staff and their peers, they take turns, share, care and respect each other.
- Children maintain attention well during activities. They are totally captivated during story time, listening carefully and anticipating what might happen next.
- Regular opportunities are given for children to practise their early writing skills, recognise letters and link sounds to them.
- Lots of exciting lively opportunities for children to listen to music, sing and join in the actions of a good repertoire of songs and rhymes.
- Staff work very well together, constantly caring, listening, questioning and talking to the children, encouraging and nurturing their learning, identifying

well the features of where they live and the people who help them.

What needs to be improved?

- the planning so that it notes what children are expected to learn in each activity and the sharing of it with parents
- the opportunities for children to develop their concept of adding to and taking away during practical activities
- the opportunities to raise children's independent skills by enabling them to access a wider range of resources and practising more difficult skills such as serving themselves at snack time.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children happily and enthusiastically participate in activities, developing good relationships with adults and with each other, sharing, negotiating and taking turns. They concentrate well, listen and when invited eagerly contribute, especially during story time. They are developing good personal independence, but have insufficient opportunities to develop skills such as accessing resources and pouring drinks. Most behave generally well, recognise the boundaries and respond to guidance.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children's vocabulary is well developed and they frequently initiate conversations with their peers and adults. Many demonstrate a love of books and stories. They handle books correctly and understand how books 'work'. They recognise letters of the alphabet and link sounds to letters. For example, they know those that make up their own name and recognised some in their early reading books. They are able to hold their pencils correctly and effectively practise their pre-writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are able to count and recognise numerals and spontaneously use number in their play with growing accuracy. However, some opportunities are missed to reinforce the children's concept of adding to and taking away. Children are able to recognise and match shapes such as squares, triangles and circles. They make good use of mathematical language in many activities using words such as big and small and during physical play, up, under and over.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have a good sense of time as they talk freely and confidently about significant things that happen and are able to differentiate between past and present. Children are aware of changes around them such as the approach of autumn as the weather becomes colder and the leaves fall off the trees. They show interest and enthusiasm when using the computer, can use simple tools competently and appropriately and can build and construct with a range of construction materials.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are good movers and energetically enjoy action songs and rhymes, and are beginning to recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. They demonstrate a good sense of spatial awareness, moving carefully when indoors. They show increasing dexterity when using a range of tools with increasing control such as pencils and brushes. However, the outdoor area's design and size limit opportunities for using the pedal cars and bikes, and climbing and balancing equipment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children enjoy exploring materials and experimenting with colour and texture. They often name and select colours to match a purpose such as seeking autumnal colours for their pictures. All enjoy tactile experiences. However, opportunities to use a range of materials to design and make 3D models are more limited. Children have a good repertoire of songs and rhymes and join in gleefully with words and actions. They use their imaginations well in role play, confidently communicating their ideas.

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

- link the curriculum planning more closely to the areas of learning so that the learning intentions of activities are identified
- increase opportunities for children to use practical everyday activities to develop their concept of adding to and taking away
- develop further the children's independence by enabling them to access a wider range of resources and to practise more difficult skills such as pouring drinks.

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.