

Next Step Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	113612
Inspection date	14/01/2010
Inspector	Chris Mackinnon

Setting address	Church Street, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5JZ
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Next Step Nursery was established in 1990 and opened at its current location in 1993. It operates within the former village school in Cuckfield, West Sussex. Children have access to the Victorian part of the old school house, with the use of a larger hall for specific activities. Children also have access to an outdoor play area, allotment and orchard. Daily outings are also made within the local village and surroundings.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday during term time, from 9.15am to 3.30pm. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children aged from two years to the end of the early years age group may attend. The nursery currently has 58 children on roll, and all are in the early years age group. The nursery receives funding for nursery education. The nursery is also experienced in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children with English as an additional language. There is a staff team of five and all have early years qualifications, with one staff member holding Early Years Professional Status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery is well organised, with experienced and well-trained staff providing good support for individual children's care and welfare. The nursery provides a safe and stimulating play environment for children and makes good use of the local surroundings, with many opportunities for outdoor activities. Staff show a high level of confidence with planning and presenting activities and children make excellent progress with their learning. Parents and other carers are well included in nursery's care programme and staff provide consistent support for children and families. Staff demonstrate a consistent approach to reviewing their practice and make good use of self-evaluation to promote improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further develop observation and assessment to further support children's next steps in learning

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery is confidently led and managed and has the benefit of a well-established staff team, including a high number of staff with level three childcare training. The manager is also well qualified and has gained Early Years Professional

Status. All staff have attended training in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and show good skill and confidence in their support for children's learning and development. The nursery's management staff, also successfully support key person practice within the nursery, and maintain the staff's level of teaching expertise. The nursery's approach to safeguarding is well organised and consistent. There is a clear range of written policy guidance and staff all have up-to-date child protection training. Staff also keep detailed records and give close consideration to the security of the setting and children's safety outdoors.

The nursery has several definite strengths within its practice, and most notable is the planning of learning activities and the confidence in teaching shown by the staff. Another successful aspect of the nursery's childcare provision is the well-prepared and stimulating play environment that offers a good range of activity choices for children and encourages many opportunities for child-led play and active learning. The setting makes good use of the space available in the old school hall, and children also have access to an adjoining larger community hall, for separate learning groups and specific planned activities. The range of play resources are also thoughtfully planned and prepared to successfully promote children's interests and encourage exploration. Children make much good use the setting's outdoor play area where a wide of range of learning about the weather, nature and the local environment takes place. Staff and children also take full advantage, in the season, of the setting's access to an allotment and nearby orchard.

The setting has a sound approach to diversity and staff effectively help children to develop a positive view of people's differences. A wide range of cultural festivals are included in the planning and children also have travel based activities and stories from around the world. A range of languages are featured within the children's learning and a suitable selection of resources and play items are available within the play environment. A good range of visual learning material is also in place to encourage children's understanding of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity.

The staff team maintain good reflective practice and meet regularly to consider and review the play programme. Staff key persons also take care to assess and promote individual children's healthy growth and progress. The nursery has a clear, organised development plan that identifies a range of future initiatives and ways to enrich the learning programme. The nursery has a clearly produced self-evaluation document, based on the Ofsted format, that clearly assesses outcomes for children. The staff team also have regular skill appraisals and practice development days, which shows the nursery's strong commitment to continuous improvement.

Staff are aware of the need to make links with other carers and are in regular contact with several local schools and day care settings that the children attend. Staff establish close partnerships with parents and families and are able to share information on individual children's learning and development. Staff key persons also work closely with parents and use a variety of means to involve parents in the play programme and the children's learning themes.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The setting provides a clear and detailed system of planned activities to effectively promote children's enjoying and achieving. Well devised and consistent learning themes are included, that use the six Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning as the basis for the children's play programme. Staff also confidently plan a series of learning activities, which effectively utilises the nursery's play environment and wide range of learning resources. Staff are highly confident in their presentation of learning and demonstrate excellent skills with teaching and extending children's abilities. Children benefit greatly from many close interactions and frequent one-to-one guidance with key their persons and other staff members. Staff also have a good understanding of the six areas of learning and show considerable skill in enabling child-led play and in encouraging children's critical thinking. Staff make much excellent use of questions and talking with the children, which leads to new areas of learning and successfully promotes development. The overall thoroughness of the activity planning and high quality of staff teaching marks the provision of children's enjoying and achieving as outstanding within the nursery.

The nursery staff have established a detailed system to observe and assess children's achievement. Staff key persons ensure individual children's learning records are kept up to date, and children's progress through the learning stages is clearly followed and recorded. The staff team are in the process if updating their organisation of assessment, and plan to have a clearer and more streamlined process, placing a closer emphasis on promoting children's next steps in learning. The ongoing improvement of observation and assessment shows the nursery's strong commitment to better ways of working and is identified as an area for further development.

During all the nursery's play sessions, children are provided with a wide range of experiences to promote their skills for future learning. There is a strong emphasis on the promotion of speech and language and staff effectively encouraged and support children's use of words and communication. For example, children as a group talk and share their ideas well when organising the wooden train lay out. Children also show good skills and aptitude for mark making and recognising writing. Children have many opportunities for problem solving within the play programme and many activities involve counting and matching shapes and colours. A particularly good example of problem solving was a project for the older children where they used compasses to learn about location and direction. The nursery's current learning theme is a response to the children's enjoyment of the recent snow and winter weather and promotes the children's involvement with creative development. For example, as a group the children cut out and make large paper snow flakes for a large winter themed art-work display. Children also have a good range of creative learning opportunities during role play and staff effectively encourage children to be inventive and imaginative when choosing and combining resources.

Children are effectively helped to feel safe within the nursery. Staff pay close

attention to security and daily checks are made of the play areas, equipment and resources. A thorough system of risk assessment is also in place within the setting, which is regularly reviewed. Care is especially taken when the children are outdoors on their walks and outings. Staff take good care to encourage children's participation and confidence. Key persons and staff provide close support to the younger children attending, making sure they feel settled and closely supported. Staff also help children to make good relationships and be aware of others. Children's personal and social development is consistently supported and children share and cooperate well during child-led activities and when gathered as a group.

Children's independence with cleanliness and their healthy development is also consistently supported. Staff pay close attention to the quality of the food and snacks provided and children have frequent learning projects based on types of foods and healthy eating. Many good opportunities are also provided to encourage children's physical development and children make good use of the free floor space available particularly in the larger community hall. Here they have well-presented activities that support balance and running, and provide a good range of physical challenges. Throughout the many play activities, children's knowledge of the wider world is well included. Staff and children work together effectively during the frequent outdoor activities that are provided. The nursery's field area, orchard and allotment also provide many opportunities for children to learn about nature, growing and the environment.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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