

First Step Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

18/10/2010

Inspector

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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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

First Step Day Nursery is one of three nurseries in South London. It opened in 2004. It operates from a converted house in Upper Norwood, in the London borough of Croydon. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 49 weeks of the year. Children are cared for in group rooms situated on the ground floor and first floor. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 51 children in the early years age group, of whom 21 may be under two years at any one time. Children attend on both on a full-time and part-time basis. There are currently 53 children on roll. The nursery employs 13 childcare staff, nine of whom hold relevant qualifications. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and disabilities and with English as an additional language. The nursery receives support from Croydon local authority Early Years department

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated with warmth and respect in a welcoming child-centered environment. They respond well to the care and support they are given and make positive progress in their learning and development. Staff provide an inclusive service, supporting all children to participate in activities which meet their individual interests and support their development. Good partnerships with parents help ensure that children's needs are met well. Partnerships with other settings that children attend are less well established. Required policies and procedures are in place, although some record keeping systems are not consistently maintained. The motivated manager and staff team demonstrate a positive attitude to self-evaluation and a commitment to continually improving the provision in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that parents sign the accident and medication records to confirm that they have been informed of any medicines administered or any accidents or injuries sustained by the child whilst in the care of the provider
- ensure that all equipment is regularly checked and replaced as necessary
- develop systems for partnership working by sharing relevant information with other practitioners where children receive care and education in more than one setting

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

There is a strong emphasis on safeguarding children. Recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that adults working with children are suitable to do so. Staff are extremely vigilant about ensuring children are well supervised at all times. Risk assessments and daily checks of the nursery rooms and areas used by children are completed to ensure hazards to children are minimised. Staff are well aware of the fire evacuation procedures, so children can be evacuated from the premises quickly and safely. Written safeguarding procedures are in place and staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Children feel safe in the setting and they approach staff easily. Most children are very self-assured and confident. If a child becomes upset at any time they are comforted by caring staff with cuddles and positive comments. Steps are taken to ensure babies and very young children are protected from choking hazards such as toys with small detachable pieces. As children mature they are taught the importance of keeping themselves safe and behaving in a manner that does not endanger themselves or others, for example handling scissors and equipment with due care. Children have access to resources and equipment that support their learning and development. The nursery is well stocked with resources and equipment to support children's learning and development. However, some equipment in the baby room is damaged and requires replacing.

Staff have appropriate qualifications and their knowledge of each child's individual needs ensures their welfare and learning are promoted. All staff have opportunities to access training to enhance their childcare practice. There is a wide range of toys and equipment to meet children's needs, and children are able to self-select from easily accessible resources. Required policies and procedures are in place for the safe management of the nursery, however, record keeping systems relating to accidents and medication have not been consistently maintained. The manager has begun to consult with the staff team about the strengths of the nursery and what improvements can be made to improve the outcomes for children and there is a commitment to ongoing improvement.

Parents are greeted in a friendly manner as they arrive and are provided with verbal feedback about what their child has been doing and the care they have received. Displays of photographs in the hallways and group rooms of children engaged in activities linked to the six areas of learning, provide parents with information about how children's learning is promoted through play. Staff complete daily communication books on children's care providing information for parents such as a record of how children have slept and what they have eaten. In addition, written observations linked to the early learning goals are completed on all children and shared with parents. These are used by staff to plan for next steps in children's learning taking into account their individual likes and dislikes and preferred learning styles. Parents can also access the setting's website which gives information about the nursery and the curriculum and advice about how parents can best support their children.

The staff are committed to providing an inclusive environment for all children. Systems are in place for supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the team are keen to extend partnerships with other settings that children attend. Staff show sensitivity to children who have English as an additional language, learning key words in their home language, resulting in them quickly settling in and enjoying their time at the nursery.

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

Staff have a sound understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They plan and provide a suitable range of adult-led and child initiated activities. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and development because staff provide activities that build on their interest and provide sufficient challenge and opportunities for children to develop new skills. Staff record comprehensive observations on each child, which are linked to the early learning goals and used to plan for next steps in individual children's learning.

Very good use is made of the nursery garden for all ages and children enjoy outdoor play on a daily basis. The garden has been extensively developed to create a welcoming and challenging area where children can explore, investigate and develop their imaginations in a safe and stimulating environment. They climb, hide, explore and play in the sunken sandpit, willow dens and natural rock, bark and earth landscapes. They make music and rhythms as they bang the cymbals and gongs hanging in the garden. Children develop their mobility skills and body control as they ride bikes and trikes and maneuver wheeled toys around the garden. They eagerly paint, draw, complete puzzles and share books and stories in the garden, enjoying the fresh air and unrestricted environment of the outdoors. Children's imagination and creativity is fostered as they run about the garden , engaging in a game of monsters or superheroes, dressed in flowing capes and dressing up outfits. They relax in the hammock and enjoy the gentle motion of being swung from side to side by the staff.

Children eagerly explore and use a range of malleable and natural materials such as play dough, earth, sand and water. Staff extend activities well, talking to the children about what they are doing and asking questions that help to extend their language and reasoning skills. Children develop their understanding of the world and of caring for living things as they help clean and feed the nursery goldfish and learn about the life cycle of the caterpillar. Children are developing confidence in using information and communication technology demonstrating increasingly good mouse control when playing learning games on the computer. Children are learning to recognise print from the use of labeling throughout the nursery. Children mark-make with pleasure using writing materials which are easily accessible to them and some more older children are able to form recognisable letters and write their names.

Babies and toddlers enjoy experiences that are tailored to their age and ability.

They investigate the contents of treasure baskets grasping and exploring the cardboard tubes, cake cases and other objects. They learn to roll, sit-up, crawl and develop their early mobility skills with support and gentle guidance from the staff. Comfortable furniture such as armchairs, cushions and low tables and chairs help to create a homely atmosphere where the babies and younger children can explore and play in a safe and stimulating environment.

Children move freely and safely around the play space available due to effective daily risk assessments. They show a sense of belonging as they follow the familiar routines, and develop independence and self-care skills as they select resources and help tidy away after activities. Children adopt good hygiene routines when they wash their hands before they eat, and staff follow written procedures for changing nappies and keeping the rooms clean, which helps protect children from the risk of cross-contamination. Children benefit from freshly prepared, nutritious meals and snacks that are prepared on site, and older children develop self-care skills as they serve their own portions. Children experience a balanced day with time for rest as well as active play, and nursery routines are adapted to meet individual needs, for example ensuring that babies are able to sleep at times that best fit their individual sleep patterns.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
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	3

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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

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