

First Steps Nursery and First Steps Playscheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY407433

Inspection date

07/02/2011

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.

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Description of the setting

First Steps Nursery and First Steps Play scheme was registered in 2010. It is owned by the National Health Service and operates from a purpose-built ground level building in the grounds of Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, Devon. The nursery serves National Health Service staff. Children are cared for within seven age related play rooms with a separate play room for the holiday play scheme. The nursery is open each weekday from 7am to 6pm all year. The play scheme is open from 7.45am to 5.30pm during school holiday periods only.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 138 children may attend the nursery at any one time, 42 of whom may be under two years. There are currently 168 children on roll in the early years age range. The nursery provides funded early education for three and four-year-old children, and supports children with special educational need and/or disabilities. Several children who learn English as an additional language attend the nursery.

A team of 26 staff are employed to work with the children. Of these, all have appropriate early years qualifications, which include two with qualifications at level 4, a qualified primary teacher and an Early Years Professional.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well cared for in this purposely-designed nursery by a team of enthusiastic staff who highly value each child as an individual. Children benefit from being in small groups where they flourish, as they enjoy learning through exploration and investigation. The excellent partnership with parents, and links with other professionals, contributes to staff successfully promoting each child's rapid progress in their overall development. Self-evaluation is effective in identifying areas for development, and staff are committed to continuously improving their knowledge to enhance children's experiences.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing systems for ongoing dialogue with other settings that children attend, to share information to fully support their learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The team of enthusiastic staff work together effectively, resulting in extremely well organised provision where children know what to expect and settle quickly. Staff implement clear policies and procedures to promote children's welfare and safety. They have a secure understanding of safeguarding children, which includes recognising signs and symptoms of abuse, and their responsibilities in following procedures if there are concerns. Staff attend training regularly to keep their knowledge up to date, and children's existing injuries are recorded as routine. All this helps to protect children from harm. There are robust recruitment and induction systems for checking that staff are suitable to work with children, and sure about their roles and responsibilities. Staff complete detailed risk assessments and daily checks to ensure that children play in a safe environment, both inside and out. Rigorous routines help to maintain hygienic surroundings, particularly for the younger babies. For example, by discouraging outdoor shoes where babies are crawling. All records are in place, completed accurately, and monitored to help identify any areas for improvement or extra support.

Children use an extensive range of high quality equipment and resources, which is thoughtfully selected and arranged to enable children's independence, safety and spontaneous choice. Effective staff deployment means that children are well supervised and supported. They benefit from being cared for in small age-related groups, where they become confident learners. Staff know children extremely well as individuals which enables them to meet their needs effectively. Children with specific needs are well supported and fully included. Staff are pro-active in seeking information to help children who learn English as an additional language communicate confidently.

Staff promote excellent partnerships with parents. Parents receive a wealth of information about the setting by way of a welcome pack, regular newsletters, a website and displays. Parent forum meetings offer opportunities for parents to be informed and make suggestions about decisions for changes. Parents feel they are an integral part of the nursery, one parent says 'it is like one big family'. Although transfer sheets are exchanged when children attend an additional setting providing the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are no clear systems for ongoing dialogue to fully support children's learning and development.

Management and staff have a clear vision for the future of the nursery. Effective self-evaluation systems that include feedback from parents are successful in identifying areas for development to enhance children's experiences. For example, including children in contributing to their 'Learning Journeys', so that they start to take some responsibility in their own progress. Staff are committed to continuous improvement, they attend training regularly to improve their knowledge and understanding of various aspects of children's welfare and development.

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

Children flourish in an environment that has been thoughtfully designed to meet their individual needs and promote learning through play and exploration. All children are extremely happy, settled and secure in the care of friendly and caring staff. From a young age, children make excellent relationships with staff and one another. They develop a strong sense of belonging as they see photos of themselves and their artwork displayed in the nursery. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They know what to expect through familiar routines and clear explanations. Young children learn to take turns and share equipment. Older children understand how to negotiate to maintain a harmonious group. For example, a child spontaneously asks an adult for a sand timer, explaining that they need to know when it is their turn for a piece of equipment. Children receive continuous praise and encouragement for their effort and achievements, which helps boost their self-esteem.

All children are involved in a broad range of stimulating activities, both inside and out that help them learn through play. Throughout the nursery children enthusiastically use their senses to explore an extensive range of objects and materials. Babies investigate everyday objects such as wooden spoons, whisks and pans. A baby enjoys experimenting with sounds as they bang a spoon on metal and plastic pots. Young children like to feel bubbles, sand, spaghetti or paint with their hands and toes. Older children's curiosity is encouraged as they take part in a treasure hunt in the outside area, or listen to the variety of sounds they make as they tap or rub sticks on different surfaces. Staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan stimulating activities linked to themes according to children's interests, such as 'Pirates'. They successfully use the inside and outside environment to promote children's enthusiasm to 'find out' and extend their own play and learning. Staff complete a clear observation and assessment system which identifies each child's learning priorities and effectively plans for their next steps. Staff are skilful in their interaction in children's activities talking with them to help them think recall, develop vocabulary and solve problems. Therefore, children are making excellent progress in their learning and development.

Children enjoy an extremely healthy lifestyle. Babies individual routines are discussed and respected so that they eat and sleep according to their own needs. Children understand and practise good procedures for their personal hygiene. They make choices from healthy options at meal times, with an opportunity for a freshly cooked hot lunch. Children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They develop competence in managing their outdoor clothing, which enables the freedom to enjoy outdoor activities in all weathers. Children develop confidence in keeping themselves safe. For example, young children are made aware of road safety and learn to use large equipment safely when they go for walks to a play park. Older children learn to take calculated risks, for example, when climbing trees or using real tools for woodwork.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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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