

# Early Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 301827  
**Inspection date** 28/02/2011  
**Inspector** Julie Larner

**Setting address** Tirecel Community Centre, Fulmar Drive, South Beach  
Estate, Northumberland, NE24 3RJ  
**Telephone number** 01670 367971  
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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*.

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## **Description of the setting**

Early Steps Pre-School opened in 1993 and is run by the South Beach Residents Association. It operates from South Beach Community Centre and has access to an enclosed outdoor play area. It is situated in the Blyth area of Northumberland. The day care is open Monday to Friday from 8.45am until 11.45am and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm during term time. They are registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 48 children at any one time, none of whom may be under two years. There are currently 73 children on roll who attend a variety of different sessions. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language. The pre-school employs nine staff. One staff member holds a relevant Level 2 National Vocational Qualification, seven staff hold a Level 3 and the other staff members holds a BTEC in Health and social care. The provision is registered to accept government funding for three and four-year-olds and receives support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by practitioners who know the children well and ensure they remain happy, secure and content in the setting. The setting has a sound capacity to continually improve and are beginning to use self evaluation to assess how they can further improve the outcomes for children. The setting works successfully with parents and other professionals to meet the children's individual needs to ensure that they make good progress in their time at the setting. Planning is mostly effective and records contain most of the relevant details. Inclusion is effective which results in children being recognised by staff for their unique abilities and skills. Overall resources are adequately organised to provide a mainly stimulating environment for children and most of the necessary nominated persons are in place.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- develop an attractive comfortable area where children can rest or play quietly
- nominate a named practitioner who is responsible for behaviour management issues and support them in acquiring the skills to provide guidance to other staff and to access expert advice if ordinary methods are not effective with a particular child
- rigorously monitor plans to ensure these show the opportunities provided for children to develop in all areas of learning
- ensure details are recorded in the fire log book of any problems encountered and how they were resolved.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Some adults working with children have a good understanding of child protection issues and are highly committed to following procedures which results in them successfully safeguarding the children's welfare. All staff receive regular training to keep them up-to-date with current guidance and improve their knowledge in this area. Daily safety checks on the areas that children use ensure that these are all safe and suitable for their purpose. Secure recruitment and selection procedures ensure that staff caring for the children have completed the necessary checks and hold appropriate qualifications in childcare. Space is organised mainly well in the setting. The staff team create different areas for children's play and provide daily opportunities for children to choose the toys and equipment they would like to play with. Areas are mostly well used by the children attending, although some such as, the book area and computer in the younger children's area are visited less frequently by the children independently. An adequate range of mainly well maintained resources are easily accessible for the younger children.

The setting have completed the recommendations from the previous inspection. They have accurate information displayed of how to contact Ofsted for parents. Drinking water has been made easily accessible throughout the session as it is stored at the children's height. This means children are easily able to refresh themselves during the sessions. Self evaluation is in it's infancy. However, the setting have identified areas that they wish to improve further. For example, the outdoor area is the main focus as they intend to provide areas for children to dig and plant, which will provide more opportunities for them to explore their natural environment. The staff team are committed to completing further training, which in turn, benefits the care of the children.

The setting has developed good relationships with parents. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting and are highly complimentary about the care their children receive. They broadly know what to do if they have a complaint. The staff team work closely alongside parents to find out about children's needs and interests when they first start to attend. The setting works hard to provide continually updated information for the parents by displaying relevant policies and plans of activities that children can participate in. Although the setting have increased the hours they operate, making it difficult to find sufficient time in-between sessions to continually update parents about their child's development, they make sure parents know they can access their child's learning journal. The staff team have developed good links with others providing the Early Years Foundation Stage. They invite teachers to the setting to enable them to share relevant information about the children who will move on to school or nursery. This results in professionals working successfully together to provide a continuous learning journey for the children who attend.

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

Children happily come into the setting and separate easily from their parents and carers. Children play with adequately maintained toys and equipment that interests them. They move around the setting confidently, making choices about what they want to play with. The staff team have very positive relationships with the children who attend. They know them well due to collecting sound information from parents when they first begin to attend and then completing highly comprehensive observations on children in their first week. This enables staff to gain detailed information about what children can do, what their interests are and think about how to plan to help them make good progress in the setting. Detailed observations are completed termly by the staff team that focus on what children can do and these are then used to plan activities to help children make progress in their learning, although some of these lack details of the areas of learning they relate too. There is also lack of rigorous monitoring of the planning, to ensure that this shows how all areas of learning are equally valued.

The staff team have a sound understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This enables them to meet children's welfare and development needs. Adult-led activities focus on helping children make progress in their learning, although there was a focus on child-initiated activities during the inspection to give children a chance to settle back into the group after the half term holidays. Children are engaged in opportunities to listen and talk at circle time. Older children are keen to share their experiences and enjoy talking about what they have done during the holidays. They enjoy taking part in activities that help them link letters to sounds as they keenly participate in 'jolly phonics'. The staff listen attentively to older children and ask questions to further extend the children's thinking. Older children keenly explore the buckets, spades and sieves in the sand tray and are encouraged by staff to count throughout the session.

Children benefit from daily opportunities to be outdoors. They enjoy using varied equipment such as climbing frames, scooters and a see-saw. Some equipment provides children with challenge, for example, staff provide lengths of guttering and small toy cars. Older children think of their own ideas about how to use these items. They ask the staff to fix them onto the climbing frame and have fun watching the cars go down the track. Children benefit from healthy snacks that meet their individual dietary needs. They pass around a plate of chopped fruit and vegetables which encourages them to begin to share and take turns. Sound procedures ensure that children's health is adequately promoted. The staff clean down tables before the children sit down to eat and encourage children to wash their hands in the water bowl before snack time. Children confidently approach the staff team to enable them to begin to take care of their own personal needs, for example, when they want to visit the toilet. The staff work hard to set up the hall on a daily basis with a varied range of activities and experiences for children to participate in, however, an attractive comfortable area, where children can rest or play quietly is lacking for the children.

Children are sensitively reminded by staff about how they should keep themselves

safe in the setting. They remind children not to run inside and how they should safely carry scissors providing them with appropriate explanations to ensure they begin to understand why they should not do this and think about what could happen. The staff team use a puppet at circle time to talk to children about safety which works well to get children to think about how they can make the puppet happy by acting in ways that keep themselves safe. Children behave well in the setting. The staff team show a good understanding of how to promote good behaviour in the group. They deal with any issues that arise appropriately to let children know what might happen, for example, when they both want to read a book at the same time staff explain that they might break it. The quality and availability of resources to reflect diversity differ between the older and younger children. Older children have some very good opportunities to explore different cultures. The staff organise visits from people of different cultures who help children to gain a good understanding of people with differing beliefs than their own. They attempt Chinese writing and have a lovely display with lots of high quality artefacts to help them learn about different cultures. This inspires children to gain a greater understanding of the wider world.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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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