

First Steps Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	226397
Inspection date	22/02/2011
Inspector	Dianne Sadler

Setting address	The Old School Hall, Church Road, Barlestone, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV13 0EE
Telephone number	07903 132279
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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 Steps Playgroup opened over 30 years ago and operates from the Old School Hall and is situated in the village of Barlestone, near Hinckley, in Leicestershire. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 32 children in total. Currently, there are 49 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup is open each weekday morning from 9.10am to 12.10pm and on Monday afternoons from 12.30pm to 3.30pm during term time. There are nine staff working with the children, six of whom hold an early years qualification Level 2 or 3. Three members of staff are working towards a Level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This fully inclusive setting secures strong relationships with parents to ensure each child's uniqueness is identified. Relationships with other providers are being developed. Children are fully involved in the setting and make good progress in a safe environment which promotes child-initiated learning. Systems to evaluate and monitor practice are secure and result in a continually improving setting. All policies and most procedures are effective in practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- use information from observations to assess the progress children make from when they enter the setting and plan for their next steps in their learning towards all early learning goals
- use the full range of evidence as detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make decisions about staff suitability
- improve further the two-way flow of information with other providers to include information with regards to children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded well. The setting has a strong knowledge of child protection issues and has implemented a well-written safeguarding policy which is

shared with parents. All adults attend training in this area and are confident about their responsibility to protect children from harm and neglect. Appropriate recruitment and vetting systems ensure children are cared for by suitable adults who are enthusiastic and well-motivated. However, the setting does not demonstrate that references are obtained for every member of staff and procedures to monitor staff's ongoing suitability do not include information about their medical history. All aspects of the environment, both indoors and outdoors, are subject to thorough risk assessments. The setting also carries out risk assessments for outings. This ensures children learn in a safe environment without restricting their development. A wide range of well-written policies are effectively implemented and shared with staff and parents to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the setting. Staff work closely together to clearly identify the strengths of the setting and areas for future improvement which is recorded well in a written self-evaluation document. This ensures all outcomes for children continue to be improved upon.

The setting develops positive relationships with parents and there is a regular exchange of information. Parents benefit from being given a prospectus on admission and a daily record sheet detailing, for example, activities planned for the session and foods children have eaten. Various notice boards displayed throughout the setting keep them well-informed of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting seeks the views of parents through interviews planned after a child has settled and when a child leaves the setting. In addition, parents also complete written questionnaires on a regular basis. Parents comment positively about the friendly approachable staff that provide a stimulating, safe environment in which children settle very well. The setting is also developing positive relationships with the community and other providers. For instance, children benefit from visiting local beehives to observe bees and discuss how honey is made. The bee keeper then visits the setting and shows children how to make bread and make butter using a churn. However, the setting is not fully sharing information with other providers about children's learning and development.

The setting is well maintained and the interesting and friendly environment fosters children's sense of well-being. Displays of children's work and age-appropriate resources create a child-friendly environment in which children develop a good sense of belonging. Children make good choices and decisions about their play. They benefit from accessing various areas by choice throughout the session which includes a very stimulating outdoor play area in which children can explore. This ensures children are very well-motivated and eager to learn through play. Staff know the interests and lifestyles of each child very well and encourage all children to learn to value differences and diversity, through well-planned activities and experiences. For example, recently children explored the country of Sri Lanka. At this time, parents brought in items from home, such as their favourite doll and children sampled foods such as rice and curries.

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

Children make good progress in their learning and development. All staff observe children's learning and record the information in each child's individual 'Learning Journey' folder. Observations are detailed in text, photographs and through examples of children's work. Information from observations is used to identify some priorities in children's learning and transferred to tracker forms to assess the progress children make. However, staff are not consistently assessing each child's learning from when they enter the setting towards all the early learning goals. This may compromise the progress some children make.

Children benefit from a safe and secure environment which helps them to develop warm and caring relationships. They learn about possible dangers and how to keep themselves safe through daily routines and well-planned activities. For example, whilst walking to a local landmark children wear high visibility jackets to keep themselves safe. They collect twigs at this time and learn about the dangers of fire. Children learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle very well. For instance, they choose when to have their snacks throughout the session, which is a sociable activity available in the kitchen area. Children enjoy items, such as, cucumber, apple, grapes and pita bread and a drink of milk, juice or water. Children develop their independence very well at this time as they help lay the table and place their dirty utensils in a box after use.

Staff plan to meet each child's developmental needs through activities and experiences based on their interests. This ensures children thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting developing skills they will need for the future. For instance, when children show a particular interest in super heroes, resources are made available and the concept is included in the current planned theme of transport. Children are encouraged to express their ideas and develop their imagination very well as they create structures, such as, a 'red-eyed dragon' out of large cardboard boxes and different materials. Whilst outdoors children show an interest and a great deal of curiosity in observing items through magnifying glasses that they have collected on a walk. This develops their knowledge and understanding of the world. They become very excited when they find plastic bugs hidden by staff in the leaves, twigs and cones. Younger children develop their language for communication and thinking as they name a frog and jump up and down showing adults how a frog moves. Children are then encouraged to hunt for more 'animals' within the environment. They become very animated as they huddle around a bucket to observe a 'live' spider. They are supported to take turns and share resources which help them to consider the needs of others.

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

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	2
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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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
--	-----