

First Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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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 Steps Nursery opened in 2007. It is one of two privately owned nurseries and operates from a two storey building in Sheldon, Birmingham. The main areas used include two ground floor and two first floor play rooms; toilet, washing and changing facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden available for outdoor play.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round except for public bank holidays. Children attend for a variety of sessions from 8am until 5.30pm.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 44 children on roll, of which all are in the early years age range. The nursery provides funded early education for two, three and four year olds. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also those for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 11 staff, of whom all hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority and works closely with other professionals.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery which offers a welcoming and inclusive service. They make good progress in all six areas of learning as they access a wide range of interesting activities and resources. Effective partnerships are in place with parents and other agencies which ensure every child is well supported in the nursery. Most policies, procedures and documentation are well implemented, which contributes to children's welfare. Procedures are in place to identify potential hazards to children; however these are not fully effective in promoting children's safety. Systems are in place to continually reflect and evaluate the quality of the provision which continually helps to improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that the risk assessment identifies all aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis. (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) (also applies to both parts of the Childcare Register)
- 05/04/2011

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

- improve opportunities for younger children to access water more freely
- develop further opportunities to share information with parents on children's learning and development
- develop further systems for children who attend more than one setting, to ensure effective continuity and progression by sharing relevant information with each other and with parents.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the setting's safeguarding policy and talk confidently about their responsibilities with regards to protecting children. All staff working at the setting hold an appropriate Criminal Records Bureau check and evidence of this is held on the files, which are available for inspection. Security within the setting is good. For example, the main door has a glass panel which enables staff to see people before they open the door. A password system is also in place which ensures children are only collected by authorised persons. There are some good procedures to help identify and minimise risks to children. For example, staff regularly monitor the accident book to make any necessary adjustments to the environment to help prevent any further accidents. A risk assessment is in place which covers most areas of the nursery and staff carry out daily checks using a tick list and sign to confirm that checks are completed. However, risk assessments do not cover everything that a child may come into contact with and as a result not all hazards in the garden area have been effectively identified and steps taken to minimise the risks to children. For example, damage to the shed and pieces of wood stored behind the shed, one with a nail protruding, have not been made fully inaccessible to children and therefore pose a risk to them. When hazards were identified staff took prompt action to minimise potential risks.

Resources within the setting are well deployed to enable all children to freely access them in all rooms. Clear toy boxes are presented in low-level storage units with pictorial labels for easy access. In the baby room there is a range of extra small sized furniture such as tables and chairs which promotes children's safety and independence. There is a good range of resources to promote children's awareness of different cultures and beliefs in the wider world.

There is good support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. For example, staff work closely with other professionals such as the health visitor, the educational physiologist and the local area Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Staff help children to settle in the nursery and support their home language by working with parents to collate familiar key words.

The professional development of all staff is valued in the nursery. All staff have a training plan and record information about how courses enable them to make improvements in the nursery and their knowledge of childcare issues. Effective

methods are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision. Regular questionnaires and the parent's board which has replaced the suggestions box help to collect views from parents. More detail on children's activities was requested by parents and this has been addressed by providing written information for all children on a daily basis. The Ofsted self-evaluation has been completed which includes areas which have been recently improved. For example, in the garden there is a new sand box which opens up and children have access to large musical instruments which include a drum and a xylophone. Staff have also purchased a wide selection of electronic toys which help children develop skills for the future.

Positive relationships are in place between the nursery and parents which ensures each child's individual needs are well met. Parents receive useful information on all aspects of the nursery through newsletters, notice boards and daily discussions. Regular opportunities for home-learning are in place such as taking books home which ensures parents are involved in their children's learning. Staff support children well in the transition period to other settings and to school through discussions and by forwarding information on children's development. However, there are some children who attend other settings who deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage and effective links have not yet been established to ensure consistency in their learning. Parents comment that children were very happy and settled in the nursery. However, some parents highlighted that they did not have access to children's learning journals, but were kept very well informed about their children's progress through daily verbal feedback. A written system for feedback has been recently introduced to improve partnerships with parents.

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

Children are well cared for in an environment which is accessible, inclusive and welcoming. Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan a wide range of topics and activities which supports children's individual interests and ideas. Staff carry out regular observations which are supported by photographs and samples of children's work. They identify the next stage in children's learning and plan a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. This ensures children receive appropriate support and challenge to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their learning and development.

Children display good levels of confidence and have many opportunities to develop and increase their independence. For example, at snack time children find their place mats and attach a label to their cup. They use the toilet independently and most children need little support to put outdoor clothes on. Children work well independently and in small groups. For example, they play with the train track and remind each other to share the trains. Staff consistently praise children and use effective methods to promote good behaviour including rewards of stickers. The designated writing area enables children to make marks with pens pencils and markers. They write letters to each other and post them. Writing patterns continue in the sand and in paint. Children learn about numbers as they sort, match and compare pairs of socks and animals. They show high levels of perseverance and

patience as they complete 30 piece puzzles asking for staff support when required. Skills for the future develop as children use a wide range of electronic toys and games such as the use the computer, microphone and calculators. Children access a wide range of media to develop their imagination and creativity. Older children play with dry sand and later add water to it. They use tools and cutters to make patterns in play dough and in the paint. Younger children play with plastic sensory bottles which are colourful and contain a wide range of materials which make different sounds.

Children maintain a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise which includes outings in the community. They use a wide range of equipment such as swings, scooters and pushchairs with ease and coordination in the outdoor area. Children learn about living things as they water the plants and look for insects in small plant pots and in the soil. They also use magnifying glasses to further investigate their findings. Children learn about other religions and cultures through a good range of dolls, puzzles and books. They take part in food tasting sessions and make lanterns for the Diwali festival. Children are learning about being safe as the staff remind children not to climb on the furniture. They take part in regular fire drills which promotes their understanding of what to do in an emergency situation.

Children are provided with hot meals which are catered in. Staff ensure they check the temperature of the food when it arrives and also before they serve it to ensure it is at the correct temperature. Parents provide children's tea which is labelled and stored appropriately to promote their health. Older children are able to access water freely to ensure they do not get thirsty, however, younger children are given drinks at set times and when they ask for them. Lack of free access means children may become thirsty. Good hygiene practices across the nursery help to minimise the risk of spreading infection and promotes children's good health. For example, staff clean tables before food is served and older children know they need to wash hands before food and after using the toilet. Younger children have their hands cleaned with wet wipes at the table before food is served, which promotes their hygiene.

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	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	2
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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	2
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	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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