

First Steps

Inspection report for early years provision

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16/03/2011

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*.

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Description of the setting

First Steps Nursery was registered in September 2010 and is owned by a private provider. It operates from a converted, detached house in the village of Great Lumley, in Chester Le Street. The nursery is close to local amenities, such as shops, the community centre, primary school and play park.

Children are accommodated on both the ground and first floors of the premises and there are three main playrooms, two bathrooms and a kitchen. There is also an enclosed outdoor play area with some physical play equipment available.

The provision is included on the Early Years Register. Up to 22 children in this age group may attend at any one time, with no more than six children being under two years at any one time. There are currently 20 children on roll, all are cared for on a part-time basis. Some children are also taken to and collected from the nearby primary school and school nursery.

The nursery operates each weekday, all year round, with the exception of a week at Christmas and on public holidays. They are open between the hours of 8am and 6pm. Four members of staff are employed to work directly with children: two are currently employed on a part-time basis. All staff have an appropriate early years qualification, most at Level 3. Two members of staff also have relevant first aid qualifications. There is a volunteer member of staff who undertakes cooking and domestic duties.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a very warm, welcoming and homely environment where inclusion is promoted. However, the provision is not effective in meeting the needs of children in the early years age range as adult to child ratios are not maintained at all times. Not all records required for the safe and efficient management of the provision are available and some records do not include all relevant information. The premises are safe and secure and effective risk assessment procedures are implemented, however, risk assessments are not available for outings. An adequate self-evaluation system is in place to support the continuous improvement of the provision. The provider also demonstrates a very positive attitude and a commitment towards making improvements.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- extend the safeguarding policy to include the actual procedure to be followed if they have concerns about a child, and include the procedure to be followed if allegations are made against a member of staff or volunteer (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 23/03/2011
- ensure that adult:child ratios are maintained at all times (Suitable people) 16/03/2011
- keep a record of risk assessments conducted for outings (Documentation). 23/03/2011

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- extend documents and procedures to include all relevant information, such as the procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost, a child not collected at the allocated time, complaints and recording of accidents and incidents
- ensure that attendance records are consistently and accurately completed
- ensure that resources to cover all areas of learning are easily accessible for children
- use information gained from observing children to plan for the next stage of their individual learning
- develop and vary the menu and promote babies independence relating to feeding themselves.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Adults caring for children demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues and a statement about protecting children's welfare is in place. However, there is no actual procedure in place to be followed if there are concerns about children, or if allegations are made against a member of staff or volunteer. Appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures are in place and comprehensive staff induction procedures are implemented. Deployment of staff is not always effectively managed to meet minimum adult to child ratios, such as when children are taken to or collected from a nearby school nursery. Attendance records are not consistently maintained and as a result they are not always accurate. This has the potential to compromise children's safety.

Appropriate risk assessments are conducted and relevant steps are taken to ensure a safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment for children. However, there are no risk assessment records available for outings. Other records and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the provision do not include all relevant information. For example, the procedure to follow in the event of a child going missing or not being collected on time, the complaints procedure and a record of any existing injuries children may have.

Appropriate self-evaluation procedures are in place to support the continuous improvement of the provision. Staff are committed and are keen to develop the provision for children. They have a positive attitude towards personal development and have attended additional training courses since registration. These relate to safeguarding children, first aid and leadership and management.

Children are cared for in a very warm and welcoming environment, which has a friendly and 'homely' feel about it. The deployment of resources is satisfactory, however, children cannot easily access resources to promote all areas of learning. For example, construction toys and other resources to develop their early problem solving skills.

The setting works well in partnership with parents and carers and their views about the provision are actively sought through questionnaires. They are kept informed of their child's progress and development through regular discussions and access to their child's development file. Parents have good access to the policies and procedure of the setting and receive a copy. Staff also work well in partnership with a local school and a childminder and appropriate information is shared to support children's consistent care and learning.

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

Children feel safe and secure in the setting and develop good relationships with adults and peers. They begin to learn to keep themselves safe, for example, when involved in regular fire drills. Children's development is adequately observed and recorded by staff. However, information gained is not effectively used to help move them onto the next stage in their individual learning. As a result, activity planning is weak and is not specific enough to support individual children.

Some children demonstrate good communication and language skills, which are promoted by staff who ask questions. However, not all children are encouraged to communicate or participate in discussions. They have some opportunities to develop their early problem solving and numeracy skills, such as when counting cakes they help to make. Children's independence is not always promoted, for example, older babies are not encouraged to learn to feed themselves. However, a self-registration system is in place to promote some independence. Children enjoy outdoor play and have opportunities for mark making both indoors and outdoors, for example when using chalks outside.

Children have access to some electronic and programmable toys and equipment, such as interactive and musical toys for babies and early play computers. They participate in some worthwhile activities which help promote their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. For instance, they plant seeds, go for walks and enjoy local trips including a visit to a pet shop to buy straw for a theme around different homes people live in. Children have access to some basic resources which reflect wider society, such as play people and books. They participate in activities

relating to Diwali and Chinese New Year, involving the local Chinese take away owner, who provided the setting with food and decorations.

Children receive some nutritious meals and healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit. However, the dessert menu is not varied, resulting in children having two different desserts on alternate days. Children participate in exercise, and physical skills are promoted both outdoors and inside the setting. For example, they participate in action and jumping activities indoors and also learn to use scissors. They engage in various creative activities and examples of their art work are attractively displayed, which helps to promote children's confidence and self-esteem. Some children show an interest in books and babies enjoy a sensory experience using a mixture of cornflower and water.

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?	4
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	4
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	4
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

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	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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