

First Steps Children's Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique reference number | EY349607 |
| Inspection date | 31/03/2011 |
| Inspector | Patricia Dawes |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Setting address | First Steps Nursery, Stonehouse Farm, Stonehouse Lane, Quinton, Birmingham, West Midlands, B32 3DX |
| Telephone number | 0121 427 9056 |
| Email | info@firststepschildrensnursery.com |
| 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 Children's Nursery registered under the current partnership in 2007. It is a privately owned setting and is one of three nurseries owned by the partnership of First Steps Children's Nursery. It operates from seven rooms within a large, three storey, grade two listed building in Harborne, Birmingham. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area available.

First Steps Children's Nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07:30am to 06:00pm all year round. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 80 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery provides funded early education for three and four year olds. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery provides support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 members of staff. Of these, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Overall the quality of the provision is Outstanding. The setting has a wonderful ethos which provides a warm, welcoming, stimulating child centred environment in which children flourish. Exceptional systems are in place to ensure that all children's individual needs are routinely met. Staff are motivated, highly qualified and experienced and have a wonderful knowledge of each child's individual needs and interests. Children benefit extremely well from continuity of learning and care because the setting liaises with parents and other agencies to ensure individual children's needs are met and, their protection assured. Commendable monitoring and self-evaluation by the providers and staff, ensures that any priorities for future development are promptly identified and acted on.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to use self-evaluation and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are fully safeguarded and very well protected from harm because all staff are passionate about protecting children. Child protection procedures are clearly understood and meticulously applied. In-depth policies and procedures, including a whistle-blowing and mobile phone use policy, are meticulously implemented. The nursery has excellent, robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place which when backed by ongoing relevant staff development and training, ensure that all staff working with the children is suitable, capable and well qualified. Detailed risk assessments are carried out and regularly reviewed. The manager links accident records to risk assessments on a monthly basis and staff conducts daily checks of all areas of the setting. This procedure enables children to safely enjoy a wealth of activities whilst developing their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe.

The premises are very welcoming, brightly decorated with children's work and well maintained. Children's care and early education is successfully promoted by a very dedicated, caring and motivated team of adults who are very passionate about the service they provide. Morale is high and their energy and enthusiasm has a positive impact and results in a setting of an exceptionally high calibre where children's needs are fully met. The development of a very effective key person system means children's needs are understood and met. Staff work closely with each child's family and the other agencies involved in their care and early education to enable all children to participate and feel special and included. Staff makes the most of diversity to help children understand the society they live in. The resources are very good, fit for purpose and support children in their development. Children are taken out daily into the extensive gardens to play on the full-sized tractor, tend the chickens or use the story chair. All of this helps children becoming aware of the society in which they live.

The setting is proactive in fostering strong partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals. Parents' views are highly valued and the setting is keen to respond to the needs of the families who attend the nursery. For example, staff have recently introduced a parent's communication board with specific information about individual rooms, key groups and children's activities. Parents have attended a 'coffee morning' and have booked in for a place on the 'inspire workshop' due to take place shortly. This stems from the prompt action taken to make improvements to the aspects of communication highlighted in recent parents' questionnaires. Parents receive high quality information about the provision. They are given written and verbal information about their child's day. Parents are encouraged to review their children's learning journals and write comments. Regular newsletters are also sent out to parents highlighting themes and coming events. Parents are delighted with the setting and written comments displayed speak highly of staff who they say are approachable and dedicated. They are happy that their children smile when they come to nursery and they are confident to leave their children with the staff knowing that they will be well cared for. Parents speak very highly about the nursery and state that the key strength is the well established experienced staff team and the home-from-home ethos of the nursery. The nursery is starting to develop effective working partnerships with

other early years' settings which some children attend. They have forged links with the local children's centre, signposting parents to their services and accessing training for staff. Staff are focused on helping all children to make very good progress in their learning and development, and in promoting their welfare.

Extensive documentation enhances the excellent practice throughout the nursery and ensures the safe and efficient management of the provision. Excellent monitoring systems are in place for the maintenance of records and the implementation of policies and procedures, which are required for the safe and efficient management of the nursery. The provider's records are extremely well maintained and kept confidential. All staff has been involved in the self-evaluation process, and have completed a very detailed evaluation of their setting. They complete ongoing action plans which are very clear and achievable. Morale is very high and all staff take responsibility for what they do within the nursery. The management of the setting have high aspirations, drive and commitment to providing top quality care for children. They are totally committed to continuous improvement and the capacity for this is admirable. They work closely together to find and implement systems to develop the provision and ensure that children consistently receive a high level of childcare and education. All recommendations from the last inspection have been successfully and comprehensively addressed. This results in a setting that is forward thinking, exceptionally well organised and demonstrates a shared vision for the future to ensure that continuous improvement is sustained.

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

The setting is totally child orientated and staff endeavours to ensure that children have fun and enjoy all aspects of their time here. Children are making outstanding progress in all areas of learning and development. They benefit from the support of experienced and enthusiastic staff that capably organise varied and adaptable activities to foster children's curiosity and motivation. Staff provides a well balanced day that contains suitable periods of time where children mainly follow their own initiated ideas as well as some adult-led activities. Staff plans what resources children have access to with care and take account of each child's interests and learning needs. Comprehensive revisions to planning, assessment and the organisation of activities in all areas of the nursery have resulted in the very successful promotion of child-centred learning. The changes to planning and observations have recently been cascaded throughout the nursery and are now fully embedded to ensure that children continue to make progress in line with their capabilities and starting points.

From the time they arrive, the children are eager to explore whatever is available to them and they meet every new challenge with a real enthusiasm. The stimulating learning environment helps children to confidently decide what they want to do, relishing the opportunities to play both indoors and outside. Children are very eager to play and join in with the activities; they get excited at what they are doing. Their levels of concentration are excellent as they are allowed to spend time at their own chosen activity and go back later to consolidate their own

learning. Babies delight in tactile experiences as they investigate and taste jelly cubes, raisins and angel delight, collect flower heads floating in water or paint a blue pond on paper and decorate with some bright yellow ducks. Toddlers enjoy playing with 'gloop' and different cardboard shapes, or catching different coloured sequin shapes with fishing net. All of the children became totally engrossed in their chosen activity and staff supported them well. Through their interaction with the children staff draws out the learning and ensure appropriate levels of challenge are available for all.

Children's social skills and ability to communicate with others are rapidly enhanced, so that they are developing the underpinning skills needed for their future success. Older children enjoy the activities that they participate in. For example, children self register in the morning, writing their name on the black board. They play together well in the role play area which is currently a shop or play with the fort and train track on the carpet. Any minor disagreements are dealt with swiftly by staff. Children are encouraged to say sorry and hug which they do quickly with the minimum of fuss. Behaviour is exemplary and is supported through clear and concise behaviour management strategies. Staff acts as positive role models. They foster children's self esteem and offer praise and encouragement at all times as they sensitively remind children to share with their friends, to be polite and to be kind and helpful. The setting is wholly inclusive and all children are integrated and included in activities.

Children discover the wider world as they learn about different countries through tasting food and celebrating festivals. Children in pre-school have created a giant globe of the world, highlighting Ireland, China, India and England with their national flag, familiar words and numbers and festivals the country celebrates, such as St Patrick's day, St Valentines day and Chinese new year. Children are also learning French from a teacher who visits weekly. Children develop valuable life skills. They show care and consideration for the nursery pets, a goldfish and 3 chickens which run freely in the garden. They help raise funds for charities like Children in Need, Comic Relief and Kidney Research. Children expertly ride on wheeled toys or use the large wooden tower structure and tunnels on the large climbing frame with agility whilst learning to keep themselves safe. The children also enjoy taking part in weekly sessions from visiting instructors for 'rhythm and rhyme' and football. Children's experiences of their local community are developed as they regularly visit the local 'forest school' learning to take risks in a safe environment such as chopping up tree trunks using adult equipment and lighting a camp fire, all supervised by experts. All of this promotes children's physical development and understanding of safety exceedingly well.

They are confident, increasingly independent and very helpful, competently tidying up at the end of a session. They learn the importance of following simple hygiene routines; understand the importance of washing their hands before eating or after messy play and proficiently show staff and visitors the correct procedures for hand washing after visiting the toilet. They are very well cared for if they become sick or have an accident and there are stringent procedures in place to protect them from infection. They enjoy healthy meals and snacks which consist of a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables. Excellent procedures have been implemented to ensure that children's dietary requirements are recognised and met appropriately. Meals and

snack times are sociable occasions when children and staff sit round the table together and chat about their day. Children are beginning to understand about staying safe as they practise evacuation procedures and learn how to use equipment safely. The support and care they receive from staff and the bonds they are forming with them enable children to feel secure and safe in their environment.

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 | 1 |
| 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 |
|--|---|

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 |

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