

# First Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	134322
<b>Inspection date</b>	08/06/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Hilary Tierney

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<b>Type of setting</b>	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 Pre-School registered in 1997 and is managed by two joint supervisors. It operates from a new building owned by the Girl Guiding Association and is situated in the grounds of a park in Thame. The group have the use of a large hall with adjoining toilet and kitchen facilities. There is access to outdoor play spaces surrounding the building. The pre-school serves the local area.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register to accept a maximum of 26 children in the early years age range at any one time. There are currently 38 children in the early years age group on roll of these, 24 are funded three and four-year-old children. The group also offer care for funded two-year-olds. The pre-school opens on weekdays during school term times, from 9:15am until 12:15pm and there is a lunch club on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12:15pm until 1:15pm. The pre-school supports children for whom English is an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are five members of staff who work with the children, three of whom hold an appropriate childcare qualification; one member of staff is working towards achieving a childcare qualification.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting and take part in a wide range of challenging, interesting activities. They are happy, confident and have built good relationships with the staff who meet their individual needs well. The partnership with parents is satisfactory and information is shared with them regularly. The partnership with other early years settings that children attend is not fully in place. The staff have completed the self-evaluation process and this has been fairly effective with areas to improve clearly identified. However, it did not identify that some paperwork and organisation of routines require development.

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

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

- analyse observations and assessments on children, in order to highlight any interests and achievements or their need for further support
- make records of observations and assessments clear and accessible to everybody who needs to see them, in particular for parents and other practitioners
- develop further older children's independence with particular attention to

snack times

- make greater use of the outdoor play areas to offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, be physically active and exuberant and to give children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world.

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

Children are safeguarded well. Staff are clear about procedures to follow should they have any concerns about children in their care. They ensure that injuries that children arrive with are recorded and shared with parents. Clear risk assessments are completed and cover all areas that children come into contact with. The premises is secure and staff are vigilant in their supervision of the children as they play and move around the building. Children feel safe and secure in the building and have a sense of belonging. All necessary parental permissions are in place.

Resources are well balanced and used effectively to support children's learning. Staff provide challenging, interesting activities for the children. For example, children enjoy developing their knowledge of colours and numbers through adult-led activities using coloured cards and toy bears. Children were seen putting these on their fingers and counting and confidently identifying the colours. Staff have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage of learning. The key person system works well and the staff know the children and their families well. Consequently they are able to complete detailed observations and assessments, but they do not clearly highlight children's interests, achievements or those who require extra support when planning activities. Staff promote equality and diversity well at the setting and treat each child equally. They offer good support to children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and any who have English as an additional language.

There is a satisfactory partnership with parents. They receive information at the end of the session when collecting their child. Detailed newsletters, an informative notice board and verbal communication with staff help to keep parents informed about their child's day. However, children's progress records are not always easily available for them to read or add their contribution. Parents spoken to have very positive comments about the care provided, the approachable staff and how happy their children are at the setting. The partnership with local schools and other agencies is developing well, but at present there is limited contact with other early years settings that children attend, which means that not all adults are contributing to children's learning and development.

The self-evaluation process has been completed successfully. Clear areas for improvement have been identified and these target areas that will benefit the children. However, it did not identify that some routines may require development. Staff developed a clear action plan which has contributed to them successfully completing recommendations from the last inspection. This demonstrates that staff are driving improvement and are committed to providing good quality childcare.

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

Children are confident, polite and well-behaved. They are eager to learn and enjoy their time at the setting. Children take part in a wide range of activities that provide challenge and help them make generally good progress in all areas of learning and development. Children play well together and enjoy devising their own role play games. For example, a group of children enjoy dressing up and wearing hats, pretending to drive cars and catch burglars. Children make friends and interact with the adults well. Staff ensure they ask open questions to help children think and problem solve. Older children show care and concern for younger children for example, an older child sits next to a younger child and tells them to be careful when banging the nails into the wood as they are sharp and can hurt. Children play well independently and are active, curious and inquisitive learners. They develop a good understanding of the wider world and most children are very well equipped with the skills they need in order to secure future learning.

Children have easy access to books and staff have created a cosy corner where they are able to sit and look at them alone or with others. Children are confident in using scissors and writing materials and enjoy developing early writing skills. Children enjoy measuring each other against the height chart on the wall, they talk amongst themselves about how big each one of them is and who is taller. Staff show care and concern for all children and treat them with respect. Staff offer children plenty of natural praise and encouragement as they play and achieve. Children enjoy painting and are able to create their own designs, they proudly show the staff when they have finished.

Children are beginning to learn about healthy lifestyles. They have daily access to fresh air and exercise when they use the playing fields by the setting. Children are closely supervised when using the large play park equipment. There is a large grass area which is fenced off to allow children to play safely in this area. However, children are not able to decide for themselves when to access the outside grass area and for how long, which has the potential to be a disadvantage to those who learn better when outside.

Children understand about the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Children enjoy snack time, they sit and socialise as they eat. However, children are given their drinks already poured by staff, this means that their independence is not fully encouraged. Children who stay for lunch club sit well and eat their packed lunches well; staff sit and eat with the children which helps to promote good table manners.

## 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>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### 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>	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	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

### 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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	3
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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