

First Steps Childcare (Cambridgeshire) LTD

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY417215
Inspection date	23/06/2011
Inspector	Emma Bright

Setting address	The Bowling Green, Lynn Road, WISBECH, Cambridgeshire, PE13 3DD
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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.

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Description of the setting

Wisbech Day Nursery and Out of School Club is one of two early years provisions run by First Steps Childcare Limited. It was registered in 2010 and operates from a converted building in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. The nursery is open five days a week from 7am to 6.30pm all year round, except Bank Holidays. All children have access to an outdoor play area.

A maximum of 76 children may attend the nursery at any one time, of whom 18 may be under the age of two years. There are currently 106 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff, 10 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, and two are working towards a qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Resources are well deployed to ensure children's safety and enable them to generally become active learners. Staff develop very good communication links between parents and others so that all children's needs are effectively met to help them make good progress. Children benefit from the close and nurturing relationships with staff, where they are valued and acknowledged as individuals. Effective leadership and management of the setting enables the staff team to identify areas for improvement to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the use of information gathered about children's learning so it can be used more effectively to identify learning priorities for each child
- maximise the use of the environment to further support children's learning so that they confidently explore and make choices about their play in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Clear records demonstrate the effective systems that are in place for recruitment and induction of new staff and students to ensure they are suitable to work with children. The setting is effectively organised and staff are well deployed so children are safe and supervised at all times. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and

understanding of safeguarding children procedures and they have attended child protection training to ensure their knowledge is updated. Thorough risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis to ensure that hazards are identified and minimised to safeguard children. Comprehensive documentation is in place for the safe running of the setting and underpins the good practice; policies and procedures are implemented effectively by all staff and shared with parents. All these factors contribute to safeguarding children effectively and ensuring they are kept safe from harm.

Although the nursery has only recently opened, staff work well together as an enthusiastic team. This has a positive effect on children's welfare and consequently, outcomes for children are good. Staff build good working relationships with parents and carers and they demonstrate a very good understanding of the benefits of working closely with them. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress and achievements and they have regular opportunities to share what they know about their child. For example, they contribute to their child's records with comments on what their child achieves at home and they receive information on activities they can do to further support their child's learning. Parents speak highly of the setting and staff, and the supportive and safe environment their children benefit from. Good settling-in procedures that are based around children's individual needs help to support them in the transition between home and the nursery. Staff work well in partnership with other early years providers and share information to promote children's learning, development and welfare.

Systems are in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the provision to identify priorities for improvement, which involve staff and parents. When parents were asked about their views and they indicated their preference for the toddler and baby room to remain 'open plan'. This means babies and toddlers have lots of space to move around comfortably, they settle readily and form relationships with one another, which aids the transition from the baby room to the toddler room. There is a very strong emphasis on raising standards and continually improving the provision, and self-evaluation is good. Most resources are well utilised, however, staff do not make full use of the outdoor environment to effectively support children's learning. For example, while the outdoor area is interesting and offers challenge for children, they are unable to access this area readily throughout the day. Children learn about their own cultures and those of others, and a range of resources are in place that help children celebrate the diverse society in which they live. Staff have clear strategies in place to care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with parents, carers and other agencies to support the children's needs to ensure they are included well in the life of the setting.

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

Staff provide opportunities for children to enjoy energetic play in the outdoor area; children confidently balance on logs and climb on large apparatus, and they enjoy demonstrating these skills. This is because staff create an environment which is

safe and supportive where children learn to be safety conscious without being fearful. In addition, staff help children to learn about safety through meaningful, practical experiences, such as carrying out simple risk assessments on a daily basis. Children are provided with a good range of meals and snacks which are healthy, balanced and nutritious. Where possible food is locally sourced and freshly prepared on the premises. Snack time is offered on a 'rolling' basis so that they can choose when they want to eat; this allows them to continue their activities and enhances the flow of the session. Menus are shared with parents and any special dietary requirements are fully met to ensure that children can eat safely. Children learn about their own cultures and those of others; staff value children's home languages to ensure cultural diversity is embraced and respected.

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and this enables them to provide challenging activities and practical experiences to support and extend each child's learning and development. Children's interests and stage of development are taken into careful consideration when planning activities to ensure all areas of learning are effectively promoted. Staff record each child's achievements through a balance of photographs, examples of work, information from parents and their own observations. However, this information is not always used effectively to clearly identify the next steps in each child's learning, in order to better inform the planning of activities and experiences.

Babies' emotional needs are well met as staff gently cuddle them when they are upset and they snuggle into their key person's arms when they are feeding. Children are relaxed and confident in the nurturing care of staff; they are developing good self-esteem because staff are attentive and value their contributions. Staff use effective questioning to challenge children's thinking and make good use of spontaneous opportunities to extend children's learning. For example, children enjoy re-enacting popular stories and then come back indoors to tell other staff about their adventures. Children enjoy a wide range of creative activities, such as making models with a range of unusual materials and junk.

The programme for communication, language and literacy is a key strength of the nursery. Children enjoy enthusiastic games which help them to develop their listening skills and to identify sounds, which they then begin to link to letters. Staff use Makaton and 'talking boxes' to enable children to communicate according to their ability and help develop their language skills. Children have opportunities to write for purpose; some write their name on their work and younger children confidently make a mark to indicate their own name. Babies confidently hold big, round pens and are delighted by the marks they make. Children enjoy an environment rich in print, which helps them to understand that print carries meaning; they dictate captions for staff to write with their pictures and labels in both English and other languages. Children competently use the computer and a range of programmable toys, while babies play with a range of pop-up or posting activities. Children count with confidence and demonstrate good problem solving skills as they place saucepans and crates to form stepping stones in order to reach the bottom of the slide. These stimulating activities lay firm foundations for children's future learning.

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
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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	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

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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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met