

First Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY101370

Inspection date

10/10/2011

Inspector

Linda du Preez

Setting address

1 Pond Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 9JL

Telephone number

0208 852 1233

Email

carrol.powell@btinternet.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 Pre-School has been registered since 1994. It is a privately owned and managed group. It is located in Blackheath in the London borough of Greenwich and offers a service for children from the surrounding areas.

It operates from a church community centre and has sole use of two rooms with kitchen and toilet facilities. A fully enclosed area is available for outdoor play.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register for 32 children, all of whom may be in the early years age range with none under the age of two years and no more than eight under the age of three years.

The pre-school opens five days a week during term time. Opening hours are from 9.30am to 3pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school does not receive funding to provide free early education. The pre-school also provides after school care for children over the early age range under the conditions of the Childcare Register.

There are currently 55 children on roll. The pre-school supports children with special education needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language.

There are eight members of staff including the registered provider. Of these one holds Qualified Teacher Status, including Early Years Professional Status, and seven hold a level 3 qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in this highly stimulating and welcoming pre-school where they make outstanding progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The unique needs of the children are promoted exceptionally well and staff are highly committed to meeting children's learning and welfare needs. The provider and her team are extremely reflective and show a strong capacity to maintain continuous improvement. The pre-school has a strong partnership with parents overall. Highly productive links with other agencies and provisions within the community ensure extremely positive outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider ways to fully enhance the development of children's independence skills during snack time, in particular the preparation of food
- develop systems to extend the existing partnerships with parents providing continuity in children's learning and improve outcomes for children

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Highly effective safeguarding procedures are fully in place and understood by staff. All staff are aware of what to record and how to raise concerns about child protection. Effective risks assessments check that children have a safe and secure environment in which to play. Robust recruitment procedures help to ensure that all staff are suitable to care for children and have appropriate background checks. Access to the premises is through a locked secure door and visitors are required to sign in a book. Regular practise of the evacuation procedure on different days ensures all staff and children have sound knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

The staff team contributes to the overall evaluation of the pre-school. The pre-school has continued to maintain meticulously high standards. Recent changes include ensuring that children are able to access resources independently and be in charge of their own choices. The strong willingness to reflect on practice and embrace change improves outcomes for children and has a very positive impact on learning and development. Children access an abundance of highly stimulating resources, which promote all areas of development extremely well. Children are able to self-select resources indoors and outdoors and, consequently, are in charge of making their own decisions about what to do. Staff are highly skilled at captivating children's interests and they continually encourage their ability to think critically by asking open-ended questions. Staff are very well deployed and offer an excellent balance of adult-led and child initiated play.

Equality and diversity are actively promoted through celebrations of cultural festivals and the positive images displayed around the pre-school. Staff have an extensive knowledge of children's backgrounds, which enables them to meet their individual needs extremely well. There is also a clear understanding of how to meet the needs of children learning English as an additional language. Staff place a strong emphasis on preventing gaps in achievement between different groups of children, for example, by ensuring resources are available to enable children with disabilities to enjoy an enriching and stimulating experience whilst at the pre-school. Partnerships with other professionals and agencies are securely in place; for example, the provider instigates visits to local primary schools to ease the transition from pre-school to a school environment. Parents express their admiration for how well the pre-school establishes links with other providers such as occupational therapists and speech therapists. This helps to support cross-provision working, continuity for children and highly effective planning to meet children's specific needs. Relationships between parents and key persons are relaxed and very well established. Parents are always welcome to attend sessions and often come in to read stories to the children or share information about their

home culture and traditions. The provider collates useful information from parents about children's starting points, interests and routines when they first attend the pre-school. This enables staff to plan for children's learning effectively. However, there is not a system in place to formally share learning priorities and encourage parents to contribute observations of progress from home.

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

Children confidently leave their parents as the effective key person system ensures that children form strong attachments to staff. Staff show tenderness and kindness towards the children with cuddles and verbal reassurance when necessary. Staff take every opportunity to encourage children to think critically, for example, comparing the weather in the afternoon to that in the morning. The children talk about how the sun has gone behind the clouds and the air feels cooler. Children communicate with confidence, talking with a great deal of enthusiasm about their activities. Children particularly enjoy exploring natural materials; their curiosity is encouraged through exploring the environment. They gather leaves, conkers and strips of tree bark for the discovery table. They enjoy looking at conkers counting them out and comparing their sizes and weights. They extend their play further by imaginatively creating a pretend fire in the outside area, throwing the conkers on and pretending they are chestnuts roasting. Adults fully exploit this opportunity to discuss safety issues regarding fire and children demonstrate their own sense of safety as they explain that the fire would be hot if it were real and that children should never play with fire.

Children's well-being and good health is encouraged throughout the setting. They wash their hands well after toileting and before eating. Children make great strides in their physical development; they relish playing physical games outdoors using a rich variety of equipment to try their skills by climbing through hoops and balancing over beams. Children enjoy fresh fruit and crackers for their snack and bring in a healthy packed lunch from home. There are however, missed opportunities to enhance the children's independence as staff mostly prepare the snacks and lay out packed lunches for the children.

Emerging writing skills are actively encouraged through the availability of pens, paper and chalkboards. Children make marks enthusiastically, producing recognisable symbols and letters; they enjoy drawing and create pictures. Staff place value on their contribution by displaying their work creatively around the room. Children enjoy the abundance of books and review stories by creating basic book reviews. They particularly enjoy using the computer; they work out what they need to do in the game and are adept in moving the cursor around the screen by using the mouse.

Children are encouraged to support one another. They clap and cheer to acknowledge achievements, showing extremely positive relationships existing across the pre-school. Children are exceptionally well behaved and share and collaborate with one another in their play. Staff work very closely together and are

extremely positive role models for the children. They are highly skilled in creating an environment, which is calm yet enriching and vibrant. Consequently, children of all age groups and abilities experience effective challenges, and opportunities to learn are limitless.

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
--	-----