

# A Step Ahead Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY243714  
**Inspection date** 30/09/2011  
**Inspector** Lindsay Osman

**Setting address** Leech Pond Hill, Lower Beeding, West Sussex, RH13 6NR

**Telephone number** 01403 891012

**Email**

**Type of setting** Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

A Step Ahead Pre-School Nursery opened in November 2000 and is registered for a total of 50 children under eight years of age. It operates from purpose built premises in the village of Lower Beeding, near Horsham, Sussex. Children are accommodated in three main rooms, according to age. A fully enclosed area offers outside play. The nursery serves the local area and surrounding villages. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 72 children from birth to five years on roll. The supports children with special educational needs and /or disabilities and who learn English as an additional language. Children aged three and four years receive funding for free early education. The nursery opens five days a week for 51 weeks a year. The nursery is open from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are 24 staff working with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification at level 3. Two members of staff hold Early Years Professional Status. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The outstanding commitment of the leadership and management to continuously improve outcomes for children, and their ability to do so, is significant in the great success of this nursery. The well qualified and enthusiastic team of practitioners focus on promoting each child's wellbeing, learning and development very well overall. Excellent partnerships with parents and others involved in children's care and learning are established. These partnerships ensure that the children are fully included and their individual needs are generally met. As a result, children are extremely safe and secure and make good progress in their learning.

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

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

- provide a better balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities when planning purposeful play experiences across all areas of learning
- review access to the outdoor environment to link it to the indoor one, so that children can move freely between these areas.

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

The nursery is exceptionally well managed and organised which results in most aspects of the provision operating highly efficiently. This has a significant impact on children's care and development. All practitioners have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children and take an active part in safeguarding children. Recruitment and vetting procedures are extremely thorough to check that all adults who work with children are suitable to do so. There are robust procedures for reporting on child protection concerns and all staff are confident about their responsibilities and what action to take should they have a concern.

The owner and manager share a clear vision for the nursery's future. They are forward thinking and always put the needs and interests of the children and their families at the heart of planned developments. They are committed to ongoing research and development. For example, an external consultant visits the nursery on a quarterly basis to review progress, focusing on different areas, to ensure practice is continually under review and developed. Staff development is a key strength of the nursery. Individuals are encouraged to undertake further training and have the responsibility of sharing their newly gained knowledge and information at the team meetings, to support consistency across the nursery.

All staff put great value on successful partnership with parents. They foster highly effective links with each family to share information about the children's needs and preferences so that children benefit from consistency between home and nursery. Parents feel very welcomed and included. Staff gain much valuable knowledge about the children from the 'All about Me' learning journal records. These detail useful information about their children, including likes and dislikes, and special adults in the children's lives, prior to children attending. Parents speak glowingly and knowingly about the staff, the environment and their children's developmental progress. They comment 'I cannot praise the staff enough' and describe staff as 'exceptionally welcoming'. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. They contribute to the very effective system used to record children's development including helping to make future learning plans.

There are excellent systems in place to liaise with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children who attend more than one setting benefit from a collaborative approach to their care. The extremely high focus and commitment to promoting equality and diversity is significant in ensuring all children are valued and included. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and who learn English as an additional language are welcomed into the nursery and supported very effectively. Children benefit greatly from the vibrant environments, which are superbly organised overall and very well resourced, providing stimulation and challenge to every child.

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

Children thrive in the stimulating and interesting environment that is created for them by the dedicated and highly motivated staff team. Children arrive at the nursery full of enthusiasm and quickly settle to their play. For example, they negotiate amicably whilst using construction equipment to design aeroplanes, working together to connect the pieces. Children develop extremely positive behaviour patterns. They move with confidence around their rooms and the garden, choosing what they want to become engaged with. However, they cannot make decisions for themselves about when to play outdoors and some time is wasted as children wait for others before being allowed out. Children are confident in asking for help when they need it and clearly feel extremely comfortable and secure with the staff. They are accustomed to the organisation of the day.

The staff team has an excellent understanding of the early learning goals. They use the observations taken of the children to plan for further activities to enhance the children's development. They evaluate activities to identify what the children enjoy most so that whatever they plan will stimulate and interest the individual child. This means that each child has goals that are suitable to their stage of ability and that they are learning through play which captivates their interests.

Practitioners recognise children each as being unique and place them at the centre of all they do. Play reflects children's home lives, for example, such as through providing baby dolls, clothing and bottles to enable the children to play out their experiences.

Children feel exceptionally safe and secure as their individual development and welfare needs are planned for and met. All staff show great interest in what children have to say, which helps build self-confidence and language skills. A combination of systems is used very effectively to monitor children's progress, and to plan for the next stage in all areas of their learning and development. Children learn good skills for the future for the majority of their time, as they are involved in purposeful activities. However, sometimes there is too much emphasis on adult directed activity, resulting in missed opportunities to extend the children's learning. Children experience healthy lifestyles extremely well when at the nursery. They access the outdoor area each day and engage in a range of exciting physical activities, both inside and outside. At snack time and meal times they enjoy a range of healthy foods all freshly prepared by the nursery cook. Staff sit with the children and talk with them about the importance of cleaning teeth, and the need to wash hands before snack and meal time. Picture cards are displayed in the children's toilets to reinforce this extremely well established routine. Babies are supported in having their own routines acknowledged and responded to. For instance, having their feeding and sleeping at times to support continuity from home. The babies have activities planned for them which are suitable for their individual stages of development. They have warm relationships with the staff, who know them well, enjoying cuddles and positive interaction throughout the day.

## 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>	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

### 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>	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
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

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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	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	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