

# Steps Ahead Day Nursery and Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145881
<b>Inspection date</b>	17/10/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Douglas
<b>Setting address</b>	Steps Ahead Nursery, Wiltshire Drive, Bradley Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 0RR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 719110
<b>Email</b>	janine@stepsahead.co.uk
<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic

---

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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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

Steps Ahead Day Nursery and Nursery School is privately owned. It opened in 2000 and operates from a single storey building behind the District Council buildings, off a main road in Trowbridge. Children are cared for in nine separate rooms. All children share access to enclosed rear gardens providing both paved and grassed play space. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm throughout the year except for one week at Christmas and bank holidays.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 104 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are 156 children aged from three months to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The nursery supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or children who are learning English as an additional language.

There are 38 members of staff, of whom two hold a level 4 early years qualification and 19 hold a level 3. Eight staff hold a level 2 qualification and six are working towards a higher level qualification. One member of staff has achieved Early Years Professional Status. The nursery is funded to provide free early education to children aged three and four years.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff have a good awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and most systems are effectively implemented to meet children's individual needs. Children become independent learners through the good deployment of resources and the generally well-planned activities. Consequently, children make good progress overall in their learning and development. Good procedures help to keep children safe and support them in developing satisfactory hygiene routines. Staff identify and support children's additional needs through good partnerships with parents, the local schools and other agencies. Regular self-evaluation by the management team and staff identifies areas for development and ensures 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 system for providing a second key person for all children so that when the main key person is away there is a familiar and trusted

- person who knows the child well
- develop further all children's awareness of healthy practices with regard to hand washing.

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

Good procedures, supervision and security help to keep children safe both on and off the premises. Good risk assessments identify any potential hazards and the measures taken to minimise risks to children. For example, staff regularly check sleeping babies, as well as using a monitor. Managers have attended safe recruitment training and implement good procedures to make sure there are no reasons why those employed should not work with children. Staff are clear about their responsibilities through good induction procedures and child protection training. They have a good awareness of the procedures to follow in an emergency, such as a fire and in the event of a concern about a child. Sufficient staff have current first aid certificates, in order to protect children's health when minor accidents occur. Staff wear aprons and gloves to help prevent cross contamination when serving food or changing nappies. All required documentation is in place, available for inspection and confidentially maintained, to promote and protect children's welfare.

Staff evaluate all training, outings and activities to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Good systems of self-evaluation include gaining parents' feedback. This has resulted in children now settling in at the nursery according to their parents' wishes and their individual needs. The introduction of tracking observations monitors which areas the children use and their ideas are sought, in order to improve planning. Current actions for development include maximising the outdoor play areas to benefit the children and improve free-flow. Regular meetings between the managers, senior staff and staff give time to communicate concerns, ideas and training needs.

Staff label the boxes of appropriate resources with pictures and words to enable children to make individual choices. Rooms are generally well organised with low-level containers and shelves. Four different enclosed outside areas provide a range of learning experiences, for example, a soft surface area for babies, a planting and gardening area, and an adventure playground. A dedicated science and skills room provides an excellent range of resources for small group activities. A good range of resources and experiences promote children's awareness of diversity. Staff are able to carry out domestic routines, without having a negative impact on the children, due to good ratios. Each child has an allocated secondary key person to meet their individual needs in the absence of their main carer. However, the recent change to the deployment of children and absence of staff has meant that this system has not been as effective for all children.

Parents receive good information on the provision and their child's care and learning. Staff provide verbal feedback at the end of each day and written records are maintained for parents to see. A good range of written information, including all policies and procedures, is available in the entrance and outside each individual

room. Regular newsletters provide any additional information. Parents provide information on children's lives outside the nursery using 'At the weekend' forms. This provides staff with good information to further support children's welfare and development. Staff work closely with parents of children who are learning English as an additional language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure equal opportunities. Staff provide one-to-one care where necessary and close links with outside agencies further support children's individual learning needs. Close links with local schools help children's transition to other providers.

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

Staff make regular observations, using photographs and records of children's language development. Staff use this information effectively to track children's progress and identify priorities for future development. They use children's interests to plan good activities and experiences. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities motivate children to learn. In whole group activities, staff ensure that all children are included and able to take part. For example, all toddlers have opportunities to lift the flaps in a book and try to name the items underneath. Some staff use sign language and plans are in place to increase training, in order to extend its use and further promote inclusion. Staff provide good interaction, challenging and moving children's learning on. For example, staff help one group of children to link hoops together to make a train. Children make their own suggestions as to where they are going and what they might see. This extends their imagination and creativity through pretending to build sandcastles and have a picnic.

Older and more able children gain a good awareness of their own safety through taking part in Forest School activities. They learn to listen to instructions and use tools responsibly. Babies learning to walk feel secure under close supervision as they move around furniture. They squeal with delight at their achievements and confidently indicate when they need help. Staff respond to children's needs, which encourages them to develop confidence in exploring their surroundings. Children enjoy healthy snacks and meals cooked on the premises. All children wash their hands prior to eating their lunch and after using the toilet. However, some of the youngest children do not wash their hands before or after having their snack. This means that resources become sticky and children are not gaining a good awareness of healthy practices. All children have daily opportunities to use the outside area and enjoy physical exercise.

Most children develop a good awareness of behavioural expectations. Younger and less able children are appropriately distracted. They respond well to positive praise and clap their hands in response. Older and more able children use good manners and are thoughtful towards each other. Children regularly help raise funds for those in need and have good opportunities to develop a positive awareness of people's differences. Children are confident in the nursery and select resources to promote their own learning. For example, some children help

themselves to instruments and explore how they can use them. One child tries hitting and shaking a tambourine to make different sounds at the same time. Children of all ages enjoy a range of books and interactive toys and resources, which helps promote their skills for the future.

## 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	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
--	---

### 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

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](http://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