

# First Step

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY341003
<b>Inspection date</b>	13/10/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	David Thomas Hatchett

<b>Setting address</b>	Tangmere Crescent, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 5PP
------------------------	--

<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 556355
<b>Email</b>	duncan.grant@firststep.org.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

First Step is run by First Step Opportunity Group, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, run by a board of trustees. It has been registered since 1988 and operates from its own single storey premises between the hours of 9am and 3.30pm. First Step is on the site of RJ Mitchell Primary School in a residential area of South Hornchurch in the London Borough of Havering, but is separate from it, having its own entrance. The pre-school has use of two playrooms as well as a multi-sensory room, a music therapy room and a quiet room. There are good facilities for staff and parents. All the children attending have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting also has experience of supporting children with English as additional language. Playgroup sessions take place in term times only. Special sessions to support children with attention, communication and co-operation difficulties, or on the autistic spectrum, are held in the afternoons. Seventeen staff work directly with the children. Most have childcare and education qualifications to a minimum of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 and 12 staff have trained to NVQ at level 3. A number have substantially higher and specialist qualifications. The setting has specialist input from a wide range of support services, including under-5 inclusion service, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, paediatrician support, music therapy, visual and hearing impairment, and educational psychology. Staff work closely with the area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and learning support services. At any one time the pre-school can provide for a maximum of 24 children in the early years age group, of whom no more than 10 may be under two years of age. At the time of the inspection there were 68 children on roll, three of whom receive funding for early years education and were of early years age. First Step is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

This outstanding setting continues to provide an excellent standard of care and education for children. Central to the setting's work, is a complete commitment to inclusive practice which ensures that the diverse and complex needs of children are met in an exceptionally secure and happy environment. Staff are extremely knowledgeable about children's wide-ranging needs and promote excellent outcomes because of their high quality provision. Parents and carers are exceptionally well engaged in almost all aspects of the setting's work. Outstanding leadership and management have ensured that the setting's effectiveness remains exemplary and, coupled with high quality and reflective self-evaluation, means that there is excellent capacity for further improvement.

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

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

- engage parents even more fully in supporting their children's learning by providing opportunities for them to evaluate and contribute to the setting's policies, procedures and curriculum documentation.

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

The setting has maintained its effectiveness from the last inspection because of outstanding leadership and management. The service co-ordinator and other managers provide exceptional, well-informed leadership. They are unrelenting in their pursuit of excellence and in promoting children's learning and well-being, despite the significant challenges and barriers that many children face. Safeguarding arrangements are extremely secure, and all the required checks on staff are in place. Safeguarding forms part of the comprehensive staff induction procedures, and ongoing child protection training is in place for all staff, who are extremely vigilant at all times. Given the children's very diverse needs, exceptional attention is given to making sure children are safe and very well cared for. As a result, parents and carers say their children are very safe in the setting.

Resources are deployed exceptionally well to achieve best value, and the setting works very hard on fundraising activities to further boost its income. This has recently resulted in additional sessions being held, in response to parents' and carers' feedback. The setting is exceptionally well resourced and children benefit from specialist input which promotes their learning and well-being. For example, children are able to make use of a music therapy and multi-sensory room. The setting has an exceptional commitment to equality and diversity. Children from a range of backgrounds and disabilities get on with each other very well. Resources and artefacts reflect the diversity represented within the setting.

Self-evaluation is analytical, reflective and informed by reliable evidence. All staff are involved in evaluating provision and determining how best to sustain and improve the setting's work.

The setting has established excellent partnerships with a range of key agencies to ensure that the children's complex needs are always met, where appropriate by specialist professionals such as the educational psychology service, the community paediatrician and speech and language therapists. The partnership with parents and carers is also outstanding. The setting provides a parents' and carers' room, two noticeboards and a range of specialist literature to support parents and carers. It also runs classes on relevant topics such as signing to support language understanding (Makaton), and information about benefits and ways of supporting

children with complex needs. All staff go the extra mile to ensure that parents and carers feel supported while their children are in the setting's care. Excellent induction arrangements for parents and children ensure that the process is as settled as possible. As a result, parents and carers speak exceptionally highly of how the setting cares for their children and how happy they are. As one parent stated, 'I'm always grateful that there is someone around to help all the time. Nothing is too small or unimportant'. Parents and carers have access to the setting's policies and procedures in the parents' and carers' room, but they do not have opportunities to contribute to these or evaluate their effectiveness.

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

As a result of excellent provision and input by well-trained and qualified staff, children make outstanding progress in their learning and well-being relative to their starting points. Each child has an individual education plan (IEP) which specifies their short term, focused targets over the year. The setting has also improved the systems for tracking children's progress since the last inspection. Records and IEPs show that the majority of children make excellent progress in all areas while at the setting, and provision is tailored exceptionally well to their individual needs. This is because staff have an excellent awareness and understanding of children's specific needs and disabilities, and, as a result, plan and deliver activities that are appropriate and ensure the highest rate of progress. This impact is evident in both of the playrooms. Staff plan and deliver activities that are both exceptionally appropriate to the children's needs and current learning, and sensitive to their disabilities, so that all children develop confidence, self-esteem and feel motivated. For example, excellent use was made of the multi-sensory room to assist a child with visual impairment to develop an understanding and awareness of light, direction and movement.

Staff promote high achievement for all children, irrespective of their difficulties, and as such ensure equality of opportunity for all. They plan stimulating and well-pitched activities in all areas of learning and, as a result, children enjoy their learning exceptionally well. For example, an excellent outdoor activity involved staff blowing bubbles as a practical way for the young children to experience aspects of science. Activities cover the full range of areas, and are effective because of the excellent quality of ongoing observations and assessments by staff. The setting keeps meticulous records of children's progress against the areas of learning and uses this to inform future planning so that learning is developmental. The setting promotes healthy eating and safety thoroughly, and there are regular opportunities throughout the day, for example 'snack times', where staff discuss the importance of a healthy diet and exercise with children. Children make regular use of the outdoor areas within the setting, and take part in a number of physical activities which promote good health and take into account their physical needs. Reflecting the excellent provision, the setting ensures that children move on to the next stage of their learning exceptionally well prepared and ready, given their low starting points and often complex needs. This includes excellent transition

procedures, irrespective of whether children go on from the setting to mainstream education or other specialist provision.

## 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	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

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