

First Steps

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Lynne Naylor

Setting address

Fulwood Lodge, Longsands Lane, Fulwood, Preston,
Lancashire, PR2 9PS

Telephone number

01772 792 644

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.

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 is privately owned and registered in 2005. It operates from a detached house in Fulwood, Lancashire, with babies and younger children cared for on the ground floor and older children on the first floor. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks a year. It is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 60 children at any one time. There are currently 68 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The manager has Early Years Professional Status and leads a team of 10 childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one at level 2. One staff member has Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

An enthusiastic staff team communicate ambition and drive and demonstrate a good capacity for continuous improvement. Self-evaluation meaningfully involves staff, children and parents and provides an accurate diagnosis of most aspects of the nursery. Children are cared for in rooms organised to be inclusive and accessible. Some aspects of risk assessment are good and the cleaning schedules are generally effective. Staff members have positive relationships with parents, and partnerships between the nursery and other agencies are increasingly productive. As a result, children's unique needs are effectively met and they make good progress in their learning and development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- improve the risk assessment so that it identifies aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis; maintain a record of these particular aspects and when and by whom they have been checked. (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).

12/06/2012

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

- improve the use of what parents know about their children's learning and development to identify learning opportunities and agree their next steps
- review the cleaning schedules to ensure the premises and equipment are kept clean.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Many aspects of the safeguarding and welfare of children are strongly promoted through very carefully managed and robust procedures. Staff maintain a clear understanding of how to recognise when children may be at risk of harm and have an up-to-date knowledge of how to liaise with appropriate agencies. However, the systems to clean and risk assess the building are inconsistent. It is mainly senior staff members who complete the records of risk assessment and not all aspects of the environment that need to be checked regularly are clearly recorded. This is a breach of a specific legal requirement. The written procedures for identifying, reporting and dealing with hazards and faulty equipment are not fully effective. Staff protect, support and encourage children to develop safe levels of independence. Staff's suitability to work with children is thoroughly checked through extensive recruitment, vetting and induction procedures. Records of attendance, evacuation practice, accidents and medicine administrations are well maintained and help keep children safe.

Management and staff are committed to continually improving outcomes for all children. They share any knowledge gained from workshops and courses through established systems. This ensures coherence and continuity of learning for children. A number of excellent systems to drive and secure improvement are progressively being implemented. For example, peer observations have been introduced as an additional way to examine practice. These offer the opportunity for focused reflection on teaching and provide a learning opportunity for the observer. A formal system of self-evaluation uses robust criteria and takes increasingly good account of the views of staff and parents. Children are also highly involved; for example, they have recently been consulted about the snack menu and part of the garden development. Consequently, the plans for future improvement are well targeted. Children achieve well in a highly stimulating and welcoming environment, which fully reflects their backgrounds and is beginning to reflect the wider community. The high-quality interactions of staff are instrumental in supporting children's achievements. The good quality equipment and resources, indoors and outdoors, are purposefully organised to support planned goals in children's learning and development. The outdoor area provides boundless opportunities for children to explore all areas of learning and is being further enhanced.

Many aspects of working with parents are very positive. A recent survey conducted by the nursery rates all aspects of the provision highly. Staff actively promote inclusive practice and respect for equality and diversity. Currently, there are no children on roll with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and liaisons with other providers have not yet been established. However, the management team

are clear about the importance of working in partnership with other settings to support children's continuity of care. Children's transition to school is a positive process as there are established links with the schools that they attend. Strong commitment to working with professionals from a wide range of agencies ensures every child receives high levels of support at an early stage.

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

The individual health, physical and dietary needs of babies and children are exceptionally well met. They eat nutritious meals, cooked on the premises, which include plenty of fruit and vegetables. Children discuss the health benefits of foods as they taste items, such as fruits, before they are included in the menu. Children understand the importance of hydrating their bodies and confidently help themselves to drinks of water. Children develop very well physically and gain a secure understanding of the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Babies and children demonstrate a clear sense of security and belonging. They behave very well and confidently talk to each other, staff and visitors. Parents who are fire officers, police officers and doctors talk to children about their professional roles. Children enjoy these visits and acquire an understanding of the people who keep them safe and healthy. Children have opportunities to use tools safely during play activities and to take managed risks, such as climbing low-level trees. They learn to value their community and the earth's resources as they recycle paper and re-use cardboard and plastic containers in their model making.

Children secure a wide range of social and learning skills that equip them well for the future. They are active, inquisitive, independent thinkers and learners because of their excellent opportunities to explore and investigate. For example, babies and toddlers handle a range of materials, such as wood, ribbon, foam, jelly and sand. Children freely express themselves using a readily available range of media and their creativity is clearly evident in the displays of their work. Older children use a range of technology, for example, they look closely at bugs through a magnifying glass, operate programmable toys and use cameras. They follow simple instructions on computer games and control the mouse well.

Children learn to value themselves and respect difference in others so they can grow up and make a positive contribution to society. They share special days, such as their birthdays, and are beginning to learn about each other's cultures and festivals. Children's literacy skills are developing very well. They make fiction and non-fiction books for their book area, which gives them an understanding of the different purposes of books. For example, they use photographs of themselves to re-tell a familiar bear hunt story and photographs from the internet to explain where honey comes from. Children use a wide variety of tools with increasing control as they develop early writing skills. For instance, outside in the water area, toddlers keenly use yard brushes and foam rollers to make marks on the ground.

Parents provide clear information about their child's capabilities before they start at

the nursery, and staff note their observations as part of the induction process. This provides a clear picture of children's starting points. Ongoing assessment and monitoring of children's development and progression results in targeted and focused planning for all children. Therefore, they make good progress in their learning and development. Formal systems to encourage parents to exchange information about their child's learning at home are implemented but not yet effective. Some verbal information provided by parents is beginning to show in the planning of children's next steps, particularly in the baby room.

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