

First Steps Montessori Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

109821

Inspection date

26/06/2012

Inspector

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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

First Steps Montessori Nursery registered in 1996. It is a privately owned and managed nursery offering sessional care to children from two years old to the end of the early years age group. The nursery operates from the village hall in Hawkley, in Hampshire. Children from the local area attend. They have access to a large hall, additional room, toilet and kitchen facilities. Children have a small enclosed outside play area, they also regularly use the adjacent community playing fields. The nursery has sole use of the premises during the hours of operation.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 22 children attending in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded educational places and supports children with special educational needs and /or disabilities. There is also support for children learning English as an additional language.

There are five staff working with the children on a regular basis, all staff hold appropriate early years childcare and education qualifications. The nursery opens during term time from Monday to Friday. Sessions are from 9am to 1pm daily and from 1pm to 3pm on two afternoons each week. The nursery uses Montessori teaching methods alongside traditional teaching methods.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The nursery has highly effective and sustainable systems to drive improvements across all areas of the provision. This includes fully embedded procedures to follow the recommendations from the last inspection. Leadership is excellent and staff are thoroughly motivated. They show exceptionally dedicated teamwork and significant skills in evaluating the provision. Staff are consistently reflective and especially focused on meeting the individual needs of children attending. There are very comprehensive and purposeful partnerships in place with parents and wider agencies. There is currently less emphasis on the links with other providers to share children's care and education.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- developing effective communication between other settings children may attend to ensure continuity in their learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery follows highly detailed and comprehensive systems to maintain children's safety. All staff are fully trained in safeguarding, they are very experienced and knowledgeable in their understanding of following procedures. They show strong skills of maintaining confidentiality and focusing on the needs of individual children. Staff regularly update their safeguarding training and share in the responsibility of reviewing procedures. There are clear and robust systems for checking staff. Annual appraisal systems are fully completed and these include any ongoing training needs. The provider and staff show a strong commitment to regular communication and records show how they effectively implement any changes following staff meetings. The records of risk assessment are comprehensive and allow staff to add any identified hazards. Staff are vigilant in monitoring children at all times. The premises have up-to-date fire equipment and the nursery fire log provides details of each regularly practised routine. Staff meticulously follow all regulations to maintain children's welfare and precise documentation is in place.

The professional and dedicated leadership of the nursery has enabled and encouraged staff to work enthusiastically together. The development plan shows how staff evaluate in order to drive a wide range of improvements. Staff have used their extensive knowledge of children's levels of development and they have reflected on children's needs when planning for future improvements. For example, all staff now use extensive levels of communication with children, aware that this fully promotes literacy. Children's eagerness to play outside has inspired staff to improve the outdoor provision by increasing the variety of activities available.

Children have an environment that is fully conducive to learning. They make individual play choices from a wide variety of well-positioned equipment including inventive play resources. Staff show that they are highly successful in promoting children's individual progress. They use children's starting points and dedicatedly work on any gaps in children's development. Children learn about each other's differences and the wider world because staff creatively thread topics throughout different areas of play and this includes and inspires rich conversation with children.

Parents show exceptional support for the nursery. They have high levels of interest in seeing and contributing to their children's records of learning. They regularly complete summaries and agree on children's next steps in development. Parents have previously completed questionnaires and this has resulted in the nursery offering flexible session times. Parents have also influenced the extended hours for covering lunchtime. The provider and staff show dedicated liaison with parents and consistent forward thinking to meet children's care and learning needs. They instantly accelerate the links with wider agencies when required, to nurture and focus on children's individual needs. Staff understand the need to share information with other providers and this clearly takes place to ease children's transfer to school but less so with regard to other settings children may attend.

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

Children are thriving and show excellent levels of confidence and inspiration. They make significant gains in their learning because they have opportunities for thinking. They show high levels of motivation in extending their play as a result. Children eagerly join in the welcome time; they relish the opportunity to talk about what they enjoyed most during the outing on the previous day. They use descriptive words and gestures when they explain how they used 'sticky feet' to help them walk up the slide. Children remember the animals they saw, they name these and show delight at recollecting their experiences. Children are increasingly independent as they develop, learning to self register and to take responsibility for their own needs. They can decide when to have the healthy snacks and drinks provided and capably learn to pour their milk and select fruit. Children use the Montessori equipment to learn practical life skills of pouring and spooning. This extensively increases their skills of capability and raises their self-esteem.

Children show a strong sense of security and feel very safe in the setting. They quickly develop trust in the staff and learn about boundaries. They are encouraged to experiment using tools and show high levels of competence in managing scissors; sometimes using these outside to trim the hedge. Children learn to manoeuvre themselves on the different levels outside. They clamber in the low trees and negotiate their movements. This increases their understanding of safety and strengthens their physical ability.

Older children have an exceptional understanding of following good personal hygiene routines. They recognise when they have dirty hands after playing in the mud and water outside. They independently wash and use the low mirror and the tissues, which encourages them to be responsible for managing their own hygiene. Children have ample opportunities for physical exercise, they use open playing fields regularly for running and chasing and learn to expertly kick large balls and practise catching smaller balls. Children show delight in using wider spaces and having opportunities for freedom of movement.

Children show very positive behaviour and relish their involvement with each other and their growing skills of working together. They learn to use the outside tap and collect water to paint on different surfaces. They collect water, stones and compost in a large bucket, stirring the mixture and using their imagination to describe the muddy water. Children draw with quiet enthusiasm and they describe their pictures imaginatively to staff. They have opportunities to continue mark making outside using the blackboard and chalks. Children show high levels of imaginative role-play and create dens from the small football goals indoors; they use initiative and find clothes pegs to join the goals together.

Children are substantially developing skills for the future. They negotiate extensively through conversation. They are animated and eager to learn and understand new words. Children are learning to count reliably and they have frequent opportunities to practise skills in numeracy. They show high levels of

interest and curiosity in listening to stories, they respond with equal enthusiasm to using new technology.

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	2
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
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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

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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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