

First Steps Day Nursery

44 Compton Road, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QT

Inspection date

11/02/2013

Previous inspection date

27/05/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Staff are highly effective in providing a wide range of learning opportunities, which fully engage children's interests.
- Staff use a very good variety of communication methods to provide continuity of care, and to ensure parents keep informed of their child's progress.
- The management work closely with outside agencies to meet children's individual needs.
- Staff are good role models. Relationships are strong at all levels and children behave very well.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There are fewer opportunities for children to learn about words, shapes and numerals in the outdoor environment.
- Staff do not always enable children to be independent at snack time.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager of the provision in the toddler room and pre-school room.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and three other practitioners.
The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan. The inspector looked at policy and procedure documentation.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records.

Inspector

Sandra Croker

Full Report

Information about the setting

First Steps Day Nursery is privately owned. It registered in 1993. The nursery operates from a large detached house and a purpose-built building in the grounds. Children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. It is in Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Children attend from 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 100 children aged from birth to five years on roll. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

First Steps Day Nursery is open each weekday from Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. It closes on bank holidays. There are 17 staff employed to work with the children, all of whom hold qualifications at levels 2, 3, 4 and above. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance opportunities for children to learn about words, shapes and numerals by displaying them in a purposeful context in the outdoor area
- provide further opportunities for children to be independent, for example by helping to prepare and serve food and pouring their own drinks at snack time.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children thoroughly enjoy participating in a wide variety of fun and challenging activities that stimulate their natural curiosity and interests. Children are animated and enthusiastic as they make choices in their play. Toys and resources are extremely well prepared and attractively set out. For example, children ask to play with a favourite toy train. Staff motivate children by placing pools of paint on paper, under a cover of 'bubble' wrap. They enjoy pushing different sized toy train engines across the surface to leave marks. There are excellent opportunities to practise early writing skills at the nursery. Children hunt for toy dinosaurs hidden amongst dry cereal at the foot of a model volcano, oozing shaving foam. This activity encourages children to be curious, explore and experience different materials in their play. Planned activities meet the needs of individual children, because they are based on their abilities and interests. Staff closely observe each child's play and use spontaneous and planned observations to carefully plan for the next steps in their learning. The staff complete additional progress checks that are required when children

reach the age of two. Close links with outside specialists ensure that any child identified with special educational needs quickly receives any required additional support. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. Children make their own decisions and organise themselves well. There is a good balance between activities chosen by children and those led by adults.

Very attentive staff meet the need of young children effectively. Babies happily investigate toys and staff offer reassurance and cuddles as needed. Toddlers have good opportunities to learn using their senses as they explore. They eagerly prod modelling dough and feel the water. They have good opportunities to explore early technology and generate sound and light by lifting a flap or pushing a button.

The quality of teaching is good. Staff support children's communication and language by reinforcing words and asking questions. Children eagerly talk about shapes in pictures and count them using number names correctly in sequence. Children enjoy mixing ingredients to make cakes. They count the cake cases and staff help them to decide if they will have enough for everyone. Children learn about size, direction, and speed as they explore pouring water, into a water wheel developing their mathematics understanding. Older children enthusiastically join in with group discussions. They use signing and gesture extremely well to communicate. They talk about the days of the week, seasons and weather; this extends their learning, and develops their understanding of the wider world. Children pull out picture prompts from bags chatting excitedly about the song linked to the symbol or picture. This effectively develops their communication skills as they repeat words and phrases. Staff have high expectations of the children; they are enthusiastic, carefully observing and skilfully adapting activities to follow children's lead. For example, children enjoy dripping and dabbing glue on paper. Some rub materials on glue sticks before positioning them on their page. Staff celebrate every child's approach, ensuring a good variety of resources meet children's individual needs. Older children dress up excitedly in Chinese costume, preparing food in the role-play kitchen. Staff promote their interest further as they experiment with chopsticks at lunchtime. Parents contribute to initial assessments of their children, so staff meet children's needs well. Regular, daily verbal feedback, written diaries and 'wow' moments help parents share information about their child's progress at home. The key person plans for children's next steps, ensuring all children make consistently good progress.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children happily explore their surroundings and display very strong levels of confidence, forming secure attachments with all staff. Staff ensure a smooth settling-in period through the gradual admission programme when parents share information about their child. Staff build warm trusting relationships with children through an effective key person system, which helps children feel safe and secure. This supports children's emotional well-being and gives them the confidence to explore new experiences. Children transfer between rooms very well because visits are set up for them to become familiar with the routine and their key person. Younger children are developing good relationships with each other and older children have formed special friendships. A written report helps with this transfer so

all staff meet the welfare and development needs of each child. Staff give a high priority to the safety of children. The 'no shoes' policy in the baby and toddler rooms shows staff have a good understanding. Each playroom is very warm and welcoming. Play resources are abundant and exciting, and very easily identified. Outside children develop exploratory skills as they develop an area to find mini-beasts and grow plants. The outdoor and indoor space is very motivating. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to see words, shapes and numerals in the outdoor area to enhance their learning.

Children behave very well because staff are positive role models. They encourage children to take responsibility for themselves as they learn to listen, share, take turns and be kind to others. Praise from staff help children develop self-confidence and show high levels of energy and fascination for what they are doing. Children are proud of their accomplishments, and motivated by staff celebrating their learning. Children learn about each other's differences, through resources showing positive images of others. They learn about different cultural festivals; for example, every room had interactive displays linked to the Chinese New Year.

Children select and choose their own activities and enjoy the responsibility of carrying out small tasks, such as tidying up toys. They develop self-care skills, for example, putting on their own coats before going outside, attending to toileting needs and making healthy choices at lunch and snack times. However, staff do not always encourage children's independence at snack time, for example, by enabling them to prepare and serve it themselves. Staff support children very well, so that they understand the importance of basic personal hygiene. All children wash their hands before they eat and after using the toilet. Children manage their own personal needs competently in relation to their age. During mealtimes, staff give children opportunity to talk about what they like to eat, while reinforcing messages about healthier choices. Mealtimes promote social experiences well, as children learn to relax and develop their conversation skills. Parents report their children come home tired because they exercise energetically outside. Children have regular opportunities to access the very well thought out garden. Children learn about safety well as they take considered risks. They enthusiastically play with balls, balance on crates, ride wheeled toys and chase each other during games like hide and seek.

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

The provider has a very good understanding of her responsibility to make sure the safeguarding and welfare requirements are covered. There are robust systems in place for recruitment, vetting and induction of staff. All staff are fully aware of how to respond to any concern about a child. The safeguarding policy includes all necessary information and is line with guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff implement all required policies and procedures well. Management implement clear policies, which they share with practitioners, visitors and parents, using an excellent range of leaflets. These are on display in each entrance of the nursery. Consequently, the nursery runs smoothly and everyone is clear about procedures. Management diligently consider all aspects of the nursery premises and routines to maintain a safe and secure environment. Prompt action

eliminates any hazard so children can explore their surroundings safely.

The nursery has a very close working relationship with the local authority, other professionals and local schools. Staff's effective partnership working with parents and other professionals supports individual children very well. The manager is highly committed to establishing effective relationships with parents and seeks their feedback and ideas. Informal discussions and formal questionnaires are used to seek their views. For example, parents helped to decide which new technological resources to purchase. The provider's robust evaluation process takes into account the views of parents, children and staff. This enables her to make continuous improvements to the nursery. There are strong links between identified priorities and plans for improvement. Arrangements are effective in ensuring parents play a full and active role in their child's care and learning. Parents record observations on sticky labels, place these on an information board, to incorporate into learning journals.

Management give staff individual guidance and support in regular one-to-one meetings when they discuss children's progress and staff's professional development. The manager has established highly effective systems to monitor staff performance and provides on-going supervision and support. As a result, the staff celebrate what they do well and their individual interests and expertise are used to improve children's experiences. Staff undertake regular and varied training, attending both external and in-house early years courses to ensure they are well-informed practitioners. Through inspiring training, staff have been able to provide children with innovative ways of communicating that draws on all the senses. The provider has a very good understanding of her responsibility to make sure the learning and development requirements are covered. Management monitor the delivery of the educational programme through analysing each child's learning records. In regular meetings, staff discuss plans to support children's learning and development. Children's learning journals demonstrate that staff observe and assess children well, and clearly identify their next steps in their developmental pathway.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
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Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	142796
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	902814
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	46
Number of children on roll	100
Name of provider	First Steps Childcare Limited
Date of previous inspection	27/05/2009

Telephone number

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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