

First Steps Nursery

Robson Way, Lowton, Nr. Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 2RD

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| Inspection date | 08/04/2013 |
| Previous inspection date | 04/08/2009 |

| The quality and standards of the early years provision | This inspection: | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| | Previous inspection: | |
| 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

- Highly positive relationships with parents are developed through effective induction and frequent communication. Information is gathered and exchanged for the benefit of each child's care, learning and development.
- Leadership and management systems are effective in continually raising standards and meeting the needs of children, parents and staff.
- Teaching is rooted in a good knowledge and understanding of children's learning and development needs. Staff provide good levels of challenge which are appropriate for the children's age and stage of development to help them progress well.
- Children with additional needs and their families are supported well by an experienced staff team.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to improve displays to include more of children's own work, in order to recognise and enjoy children's successes with them, further promoting their confidence and self-esteem
- There is room to extend children's sense of belonging by displaying photographs of carers and children in their key group, so that when young children arrive, their parents can show them who will be there to take care of them.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all rooms within the nursery and during outdoor play. The inspector completed a joint observation with the assistant manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and assistant managers.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector had a tour of the setting with the assistant manager.
- The inspector sampled documentation, including children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of staff suitability and qualifications and children's learning journals.

Inspector

Joanne Ryan

Full Report

Information about the setting

The First Steps Nursery was registered in 2002 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in purpose-built premises in the Lowton area of Warrington, Cheshire. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 43 members of child care staff. Of these, 41 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including 2 with Early Years Professional Status. There are currently 188 children attending who are in the early years age group. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.15am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- provide more opportunities to display children's own work in order to recognise and value the contribution's that children make

- display photographs of key persons and children within the key groups in order to further support children's emotional well-being.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff plan and provide an interesting, varied curriculum that helps all children make good progress in their development. Staff carefully observe children's achievements and use this information to identify clear next steps for their learning. Skilful questioning encourages children to think and staff use of description helps children to develop their vocabulary. For example, staff and children discuss the texture of the sand and gloop. Babies develop their investigation and exploration skills as they play with a range of different textures, such as, wooden spoons and feather dusters. Children play outside every day and there are very good opportunities for free flow movement between the indoor and outdoor environment from all of the rooms. Staff make good use of opportunities to develop children's understanding of the natural world. For instance, children grow carrots, onions

and beetroot in the garden. They are developing their understanding of the life cycle and are keen to show the butterflies they have helped to transform from caterpillars.

Children's starting points are thoroughly assessed when they first start attending the setting. The key person works in partnership with parents to obtain this information. It is then used to inform the initial planning of activities, thus contributing to children feeling secure and welcome. Effective communication procedures mean that parents have opportunities to share updates about their children and regularly view their child's assessment files. This means that parents are well-informed of current activities and are therefore supported in extending their child's learning at home. Staff also work closely with parents to ensure children's home cultures are reflected in the nursery, for example, by exploring religious festivals. Children who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support, for example, through the use of pictures and signs and by staff using key phrases in their home language. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have individual learning plans in place, which include clear targets for progression. This helps staff ensure children make consistent progress in the areas where they need extra support.

Staff have a good understanding of how children learn while they play and can therefore support them in developing the skills to learn effectively. They model inquisitive behaviour and encourage children to think further and solve simple problems. For example, staff and children read instructions together when constructing a new castle, discussing where the different pieces will need to be placed. Children learn a wide range of skills and attitudes that ensure they are well-prepared for their next stage of learning. For example, they develop their early writing skills through chalking on the floor outdoors and making marks with water on the chalkboards. Children develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts as they count five cheeky monkeys while joining in with the action song.

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

Children are happy to attend the nursery and enjoy learning in the safe and caring environment. They benefit from an extremely effective key person system, so that each child and their family get to know a particular member of staff well. As a result, children form secure attachments in the nursery. This provides a strong foundation for babies developing independence and exploration and for all children developing skills for future learning. Relevant and meaningful information is discussed with the parent to provide children with the very best care and support from when they first start at the setting. Care is taken to ensure children are confident to be left by their parents or carers, who stay with the children until they are fully settled. However, children's sense of belonging could be further promoted by displaying photographs of the key person and other children within the key group. It is evident that babies have formed strong relationships with their key person as they enjoy cuddles and positive interactions.

The arrangements for supporting children as they move from room to room are carefully planned to meet each child's needs. As a result, they very quickly adapt to the changes of staff and daily routines. Children are well-prepared for school as staff invite teachers into the setting to observe children at play and share assessment information. Older children

are independent in taking care of their personal needs, such as using the toilets, washing their hands and getting dressed to go out to play. Staff minimise risks of spreading infections by regularly wiping younger children's noses and wearing protective gloves while changing nappies.

Children eat healthy foods and learn to appreciate the importance of a healthy diet while in the nursery. Meals are prepared on the premises using fresh ingredients and children eat fresh fruits and lots of vegetables. Meals are supplemented with nutritious snacks each morning and afternoon. Children have the opportunity to rest during the day and babies sleep in clean cots with fresh bedding. Children have free access to the outdoor environment where they can develop their large physical skills within the purpose-built pirate ship play area, therefore, contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

Children are developing a good understanding of keeping themselves and others safe. Regular evacuation drills and visits from 'people who help us' are effectively used to discuss and model safe practices with children. Children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure as they confidently utilise their inviting environment and the broad range of resources available to them. Staff are deployed effectively, supervising the children well which creates a safe environment for children to explore.

Children behave well and are forming good friendships. One child describes his favourite thing at nursery as 'playing with his friends'. Staff praise children for their achievements, saying how clever they are and children are given stickers for their efforts, which successfully promotes their confidence and self-esteem. Children's work is displayed so achievements can be shared with parent's. However, some displays focus on adult input and could be enhanced by including more children's work focusing on the process of the activity and less on the end product. Staff use their manners with children and encourage children to follow their examples, therefore, promoting a polite and caring environment.

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

Leadership and management are strong, as they have a good and clear vision of the quality of childcare and education that steers the work of the nursery. They focus their attention on leading an effective and improving team, where children feel safe, feel good about themselves and make continuous progress in their learning. Staff performance is monitored through regular appraisals and any training and development needs are promptly identified. Staff training has a positive impact on outcomes for children. For example, a member of staff recently attended 'baby moves' training and has developed the activities offered to babies, improving their experiences.

Effective arrangements are in place to safeguard children's welfare. Clear recruitment procedures ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and are suitable to work with children. Staff attend child protection training and have a good understanding of their responsibility to provide a safe environment for children. They know what steps to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare. Policies and procedures work well in practice due to a thorough induction process and staff working effectively together as a team.

Staff at the nursery are committed to providing a good quality service for children and their families. They have a clear understanding of the learning and development requirements and continually monitor and review their practice to identify areas for improvement. For instance, they have worked together to improve transition arrangements for children moving through the nursery rooms. As a result, children's emotional well-being is fostered. The nursery has also increased the natural resources available to children enhancing their exploration and sensory skills.

Educational programmes are monitored by the management team to review children's progress and planning to meet their individual needs. Consequently, children continue to make good progress from their starting points. Staff work closely with parents regarding all aspects of their children's care and there are regular opportunities to share information. They keep parents up to date through discussions, notice boards, and newsletters. Parents find staff at the nursery warm, friendly and approachable and feel their children are safe and well cared for. Parents can also access 'home bags' which contain resources they can use with their child at home to extend their learning further. Staff build effective links with other settings that children attend and work in partnership with other professionals where necessary. For instance, if children have special educational needs or a disability. This ensures that all children receive any additional support that they need and benefit from a consistent approach.

The Childcare Register

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

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

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|---|
| 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. |
| 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 action. 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

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| Unique reference number | EY101522 |
| Local authority | Wigan |
| Inspection number | 908145 |
| Type of provision | |
| Registration category | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Age range of children | 0 - 17 |
| Total number of places | 226 |
| Number of children on roll | 188 |
| Name of provider | First Steps Private Day Nursery (Lowton) Limited |
| Date of previous inspection | 04/08/2009 |
| Telephone number | 01942 678 803 |

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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