

First Steps Nursery

First Steps Nursery, Stonehouse Farm, Stonehouse Lane, Quinton, Birmingham, West Midlands, B32 3DX

Inspection date	30/04/2013
Previous inspection date	31/03/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Staff plan a wealth of exciting and challenging activities that meet the needs and interests of all children. Children are very enthusiastic in their learning, and staff take every opportunity to maximise this so that children make rapid progress.
- Parents and carers are fully involved in their children's learning because they are encouraged to support their learning in many ways, both at home and at the setting.
- Staff are highly motivated, and sharply focused self-evaluation and monitoring mean that children's achievements constantly improve over time.
- Children are always safe, both on and away from the premises, because all staff have a thorough understanding of the robust safeguarding policy. The manager carries out rigorous checks to ensure that this is implemented consistently.
- Children's behaviour is excellent because staff have high expectations and set clear boundaries. Staff teach children to be independent in their choices and in their personal care routines.
- Highly effective partnerships with other local Early Years Foundation Stage providers mean that staff share ideas and best practice, which continually improves all aspects of the provision and children's learning experiences.

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 the eight main playrooms and the outdoor play area, including a joint observation with the manager of the provision.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and the provider of the provision.
The inspector looked at and discussed children's assessment records, the self-evaluation process, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners working within the setting, and a range of other documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents, carers and children spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Catherine Sharkey

Full Report

Information about the setting

First Steps Nursery was registered under the current partnership in 2007 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is a privately owned nursery and is one of three nurseries owned by the partnership of First Steps Children's Nursery. It operates from eight rooms within a large, three storey, grade two listed building in Harborne, Birmingham and is managed by the provider and the manager. 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 24 members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications from levels 2 to 7. The provider has Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6pm all year round, with the exception of Bank Holidays. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 89 children on roll who are within the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and 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:

- continue to further develop ongoing training and professional development of staff in order to maintain the very high quality provision in the nursery, so that children continue to receive innovative learning experiences.

Inspection judgements

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

The nursery provides an extensive range of very exciting and stimulating activities and resources. Staff plan with children's interests and needs in mind, so that children are enthusiastic and have a wealth of toys and resources with which they develop their own learning styles. Staff observe children carefully and evaluate and reflect on the weekly activities. This means that children's progress is continually assessed and staff plan highly effectively for children's next steps in learning. Activities and resources are adapted to suit each child's individual needs so that they make rapid progress. Consistent and sharply focused assessments clearly identify any gaps in children's learning so that these are addressed quickly and the gaps closed to ensure all children make very good progress.

Parents and carers share detailed information about their children before they start at the

nursery. This provides a starting point which staff build on very effectively. Parents take part in workshops with their children so that they learn how best to support children's learning at home, which they are encouraged to do regularly. They share information about children's achievements so that staff obtain a complete picture of children's learning and development. This enables them to plan more effectively to meet their needs. Parents receive excellent information on the nursery activities and policies. They are sent newsletters via email so that they are well informed about nursery events with which they may join in to support children's learning further. They are encouraged to visit the nursery to talk to children about their jobs to enhance learning themes, such as 'people who help us'.

The nursery environment is extremely well planned and exciting for children, particularly the outdoor area. Different gardens provide enabling environments and stimuli for children's imaginations, such as the large climbing equipment, which is also a castle or anything children decide it can be. Children aged under two years have their own small garden where they develop their physical skills very well. Staff support them appropriately on the small see-saw and the sit-and-ride toys. They hold babies up to touch the leaves on the trees or to make sounds on the wind chimes. Older children climb on the tractor and explore bark, leaves and other natural objects. All children grow flowers and vegetables and look after the nursery fish, hens and newly hatched chicks, so that they learn about life cycles and the care of living things. Pre-school children learn about what plants need to grow and develop their language and vocabulary very effectively, as they grow sunflowers indoors. Staff teach them to identify the stem, leaves and petals, and to discuss and record their observations. Teaching is highly effective in all the rooms in the nursery because staff ask open-ended questions which challenge children to think about and extend their learning.

Babies enjoy exploring a wide range of textures, such as, jelly, corn flour and water, paint and sand. They explore many push-button toys which develop their physical skills and help them to make sense of their world. All children learn early reading, writing and mathematical skills through extremely well-planned activities which maximise all opportunities. For example, staff help toddlers to count how many handfuls of soil they fill plant pots with and how many flowers they use to decorate them. Pre-school children develop their technological and mathematical skills exceptionally well. They use the interactive whiteboard to order cars that come first, second and third in a race. This learning is extended as they move to higher levels in the game, with the skilful guidance of staff. They are all extremely well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals, such as a speech therapist and the local authority special educational needs coordinator. Staff develop effective ways to support children in their development through role play and activities tailored precisely to children's needs, which means they make very good progress at their own pace and level.

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

Staff teach children about making healthy food choices and take part in a healthy eating programme for which they receive a top rating. Children grow vegetables at nursery so that they learn where some food comes from. They are provided with nutritious meals cooked at the nursery. Children are learning about the effects of exercise on their bodies and the importance of self-care. They have their own wash bags and comb their hair, wash their hands and faces and clean their teeth after meals. Children's behaviour is excellent, as staff set clear boundaries and remind children to use good manners, which they do. Children willingly help to tidy up and are taught to be careful of each other when riding bikes outside so that they manage their behaviour very well. Staff teach children to manage risks safely in their many forest school activities and in their use of the large climbing equipment. Children are given confidence and good self-esteem, as they receive frequent praise for their achievements and for trying new foods or activities.

All children show they feel very happy and secure at the nursery, and babies sleep easily in cots or on large cushions. Children enjoy including staff in their play, ask questions about their activities and are very confident in exploring the indoor and outdoor space at the nursery. Staff encourage all children to be independent in their choice of activities and in daily routines. Older children take turns to set the tables for meals, take their plates to staff to be served and scrape their own plates afterwards. This prepares them particularly well for school.

Transitions within the nursery and to school are managed very sensitively. Staff invite teachers to visit children at the nursery, and information about their progress and needs is shared. Contact is maintained once children are at school, so that their needs continue to be met. Staff provide children with school uniforms to dress up in and act out role play scenarios with them so that they know what to expect when they go to school. Children are excited about going to 'big school' and have many discussions with staff about this. Children move happily to new rooms in the nursery with the support of their key person until they become used to the new staff and children. This means children's well-being is given high priority and they feel secure. Children are comforted by the caring staff if they are upset or hurt themselves. They are soon distracted with toys or are happy to sleep when they need to. Parents say they chose the nursery for its welcoming, family environment.

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

The nursery management and staff work extremely effectively together as a team and strive for continuous improvement in the provision. The manager carries out high quality professional supervision and coaches staff so that they continually improve their teaching and planning. This two-way process means that targets for improvement are quickly identified. As a result, all staff attend regular, focused training which furthers their already first-rate understanding and practice. Staff are highly motivated and the monitoring of the provision is extremely well documented so that the management team identify and address areas for improvement. The views of all staff, parents and children are included in the highly effective self-evaluation process through filling in questionnaires and making suggestions for improvements. The management team analyses all aspects of the

provision in meticulous detail which identifies any gaps, which are quickly addressed through an ongoing action plan.

Children are safeguarded extremely well, as the manager carries out highly effective procedures so that all staff have a very thorough knowledge of the robust safeguarding policy. This is implemented consistently throughout the nursery and staff supervise children vigilantly. The premises are secure and the use of closed circuit television and staff vigilance mean that no unauthorised person may enter the premises. All records are meticulously kept and fire drills are practised regularly with the children so that everyone knows how to act in the event of an emergency. Robust recruitment and induction procedures mean that all staff and students are suitable to work with children.

There are very strong partnerships with other local Early Years Foundation Stage providers. This means that staff share ideas and best practice in order to improve children's learning experiences. Information is shared with other settings children attend, so that their well-being is protected and their learning is extended and complemented very effectively. All children's individual needs are fully supported through partnership working with other professionals.

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

Unique reference number	EY349607
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	910586
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	89
Name of provider	Deborah Gould and Andrew Gould Partnership
Date of previous inspection	31/03/2011
Telephone number	0121 427 9056

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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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