

1st Steps

42 - 44 Irlam Road, BOOTLE, Merseyside, L20 4AL

Inspection date	02/08/2013
Previous inspection date	12/10/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- The nursery provides an inspiring, welcoming and stimulating environment. The enthusiastic and caring staff team ensure that excellent relationships with key persons are well established. This means that children are exceptionally well supported and demonstrate a strong sense of security and increasing independence.
- Highly effective, exemplary strategies are in place to help children develop early language and communication skills and to support their physical, personal, social and emotional development. As a result, all children make extremely good progress from their starting points.
- The inspirational ethos of the nursery is evident in all areas. As a result, children attending have a strong awareness of their own self-worth and belonging.
- Robust management systems are in place based on focused, in-depth evaluation of staff practice. A well-targeted programme of professional development means that staff constantly seek to improve their already excellent understanding of how children learn and how to meet their individual needs.
- Children's behaviour is exceptional because staff are exemplary role models. This ensures that children are well motivated, eager to join in all activities and clearly demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning.
- Strong partnerships with parents and other professionals means that children's individual needs are exceptionally well met.

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 checked all relevant documentation and scrutinised requested policies and procedures including risk assessment and safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of children's records, learning journals, observation, assessment and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of staffs' suitability to work with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and the development and action plans in place to secure improvement.
- The inspector spoke with the managers, individual staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection and carried out joint observations with the manager.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from written comments.

Inspector

Dorothy Williams

Full Report

Information about the setting

1st Steps was registered in 2003 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a large detached building in the Bootle area of Merseyside. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a variety of rooms over two floors within the building and there is a large area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 22 members of childcare staff. Of these, 20 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above including one with Qualified Teacher Status.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 103 children attending who are in the early years age range. 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 educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery is supported by 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:

- maintain the current exemplary practice so that children continue to experience the high quality of teaching, learning and care that challenges and inspires them to make excellent progress towards their next stage of education.

Inspection judgements

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

The nursery is planned entirely around the needs of the children and families who attend. It is inspiring, flexible and creative. The rooms are calm and inviting with an exceptional range of interesting, attractive and accessible resources and activities.

Children are exceptionally well supported in their learning and development because the staff collect useful information about each child before they begin nursery. Staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They take time to assess their key children's needs, explore their interests and plan appropriate activities for their development. Staff work very closely with parents and other professionals and regularly share what they know about children's learning in nursery and at home. Parents readily contribute to their child's learning journal records and support

their interests, for instance, by bringing in family photographs or commenting on development. Parents are further involved in supporting children's learning in the nursery by talking to them about family celebrations and giving cookery sessions to the older children.

Children readily extend their interests through a variety of well-planned activities. Babies enjoy messy play with a variety of textures, such as shredded paper or cornflour mixed with water. Toddlers make early number displays using reclaimed materials and older children are inspired in their learning by a visit to the local bee keeper. Children talk about texture, they squeal in delight as they find a favourite toy in the shredded paper. They discuss sand, glue and paint. Staff expertly enhance children's interest by adding trains to the sand or using car wheels to print with paint. When making number resource boxes with the children staff ask open questions, such as how many cars do you think will fit in the box? Can you guess what is in here? In this way, children learn to think critically and solve problems.

Staff give high priority to children's early language development. Some of the 'Every Child a Talker' strategies are used in the setting and the nursery use some aspects of 'Every Child a Talker' to support language and communication in the setting. 'Top Tips for Talking' are evident in all rooms. Staff skilfully introduce new vocabulary, sing songs and rhymes and use a variety of resources, such as 'Song and rhymes bags and boards' to initiate familiar songs. Children choose a picture, identify the song or rhyme and the whole group sing together with actions and music. As a result, all children, including those who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and or disabilities, are making exceptional progress in their language and communication skills. Talking 'hot spots' are identified in every room, these areas are well-resourced with jigsaws, books, natural materials and treasure baskets and are used to good effect to inspire children's desire to communicate. Children play with cars and talk to each other about the size of their cars and the colour. They challenge each other to push the car down a ramp. Staff quietly add different size or colour cars and watch as children discuss what to do next. Staff expertly support children's investigation as to which ones will fit on the ramp. Quiet areas, enhanced with a range of books, photographs and cushions, are provided in each room. Children readily choose picture or story books to share with their key person. As a result, of these experiences children are able to make choices, work together and become independent learners.

Computer and technology resources are evident in all areas. Older children use a white-board and computer to access a variety of sorting, matching and early word activities. They research areas of interest and complete puzzles. Younger children match colours and shapes and investigate cause and effect activities as they press buttons and make sounds.

Babies have many opportunities to develop early skills, such as pointing and reaching when choosing their activities. They roll, crawl and explore a variety of natural materials, such as wooden and metal spoons, and various resources with rough and smooth textures. They have access to a well-resourced and innovative sensory room to explore light, sound and textures. This multi-sensory approach to learning ensures that children develop interests based on exploration and imagination.

Children have exemplary learning journals, which record their individual progress and development. These are regularly monitored by the management team to ensure accuracy of recording. Staff make excellent observations of children as they play and learn. They note the characteristics of learning and follow children's interests in detail. Accurate planning, assessment and tracking system enables staff to ensure that all children are making very good progress in their learning and development. Activities are differentiated to suit the needs of all children within the age range. Visual timetables, dual language words and symbols enable all children to communicate their needs and access all areas of the nursery. As a result, children thoroughly enjoy their time at nursery. They develop high self-esteem and make excellent progress within the highly stimulating environment. Consequently, all children are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of learning, such as moving onto school, given their starting points and capabilities.

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

The ethos of the nursery is to inspire, respect challenge and love children. At 1st Steps every step matters, no matter how small that step may be. This ethos and the voice of the child is evident throughout the nursery in photographs, speech bubbles and through display. On registration, parents complete an 'All about me' booklet with the key person. This gives a very clear picture of their child's early development and of their family. Staff record the information and use it to assess the child's starting point, to support settling in and inform early learning. This includes information about children's sleep routines and feeding for babies and young children and medication for those with health needs, professionals involved with the child or family and any supporting documentation. During the settling in period, the key person spends a good deal of time observing and getting to know each child. This means that children develop strong emotional bonds with their key person and are highly motivated and keen to learn.

Children learn about healthy nutritious foods through the 'Appetite for Life' programme. Well-positioned displays enable children to recognise healthy food and drink and make good choices. Menus are seasonal and are rotated on a quarterly basis. They are shared with parents. All meals are prepared daily on the premises in a well-equipped kitchen. Children with allergies are catered for because their food is prepared separately and kept covered and labelled until served. Children's independence is encouraged because older children serve themselves from large dishes containing quiche and salad. Younger children are given the option to serve their own vegetables as appropriate. Weaning food and baby milk is provided for babies. Snacks are provided throughout the day. Older children make their own snack as they wish and register they have been to the snack area with photograph or name cards. Snacks include fresh fruit, raw vegetable sticks and sandwiches, milk and water. Fresh cool water is available throughout the day using children's own labelled cups or bottles. Children readily talk about healthy eating as they return from the allotment bringing courgettes and beetroot. They decide to make courgette bake and beetroot cake. They say it is very 'yummy' and 'good for you to make you strong'. In this way, children's nutritional needs are very well met. Independence is further developed as children choose what they would like to eat and where they would like to play.

Children recognise and manage their own personal hygiene needs extremely well throughout the day. Older children use the bathroom independently, they wash their hands at key times, use tissues to blow their noses and dispose of them in the bins provided. They are highly independent as they put on sun cream and hats to go outside. Younger children are very well supported in their toileting, and nappy changing routines are highly effective in ensuring children's dignity is maintained. Babies sleep comfortably in cots with their own blankets and comforters, while older children seek quiet comfortable places for rest and relaxation. When babies are sleeping, a close check is kept on them and a chart completed. Sleep routines are flexible to each child's needs. All areas of the nursery are cleaned to a high standard.

Children's physical development is very well supported through indoor and outdoor play. Outdoor clothing and overshoes mean that children are able to access the outdoor area in all weather. The innovative and inspiring design of the messy playroom and garden area encourages children to extend their play. They use crates and tyres to build structures and explore the playhouse and garden centre role-play area. Children further investigate wet and dry sand in the sand pit and grow a variety of plants including pumpkins, potatoes, fennel and herbs in the sensory area. Children are able to consider the seasons while tending the apple and pear trees which produce abundant fruit to share. In this way, children learn to appreciate and respect their environment.

Children have an excellent understanding of how to manage risks and challenges relative to their age. Early walkers hold on to the rail as they explore the baby gym. Older children are reminded to be careful when pouring water from a jug, or to hold their knives correctly when eating. Before going to visit the bee keeper children are reminded to keep close and listen so they understand about bee stings and are well prepared for the visit. Children negotiate the stairs exceptionally well and are carefully supervised at all times. Robust risk assessment and staff deployment ensure all activities are safe. In this way, children feel very safe and are well supported by their key persons. They form very strong attachments and are encouraged to share their feelings and thoughts with staff and each other. Staff are exceptionally good role models and provide excellent support to help children learn to manage their own behaviour and take account of the feelings of others. Children ask each other 'how are you feeling today?' They use smiley or sad faces to express their mood and show care for others who are not feeling well. This means that children's emotional and physical needs are exceptionally well met and their well-being is paramount within the nursery.

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

The managers and their staff have an excellent overview of the setting. They are well supported by the local authority consultant. Their leadership is inspiring and sometimes innovative. They have an excellent, effective relationship with parents and are very well respected within the community.

All required policies and procedures are extremely well written and embedded in practice. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and are clear about the process to report any concerns and when Ofsted should be notified. Very robust safeguarding procedures ensure that children are kept safe and secure at all times. The inspection took place following notification of an accident to a child using the climbing frame. The inspection found that managers dealt with the incident exceptionally well and correctly followed all required policies and procedures, including informing parents and the relevant authorities. Staff responded to the incident in a timely and appropriate manner to ensure the child received appropriate first aid attention. In light of the incident, risk assessments have been thoroughly revised and additional arrangements have been put in place to further ensure children's future safety. Risk assessments are clearly evident in each room and include details of staff deployment. Risk assessments for outings and visits are undertaken before and during each outing and any issues are noted. Most staff hold current first aid certificates to ensure they have up to date knowledge and skills to enable them to respond appropriately to any accidents or medical emergencies.

Robust recruitment procedures and a rigid induction for all staff further ensures the safety of children. An extensive induction programme includes management, peer observations and self-reflection. Staff training and development profiles ensure that all staff reach the high standard of expertise and care expected at the nursery. Staff morale is exceptionally high as they feel valued within the nursery and are well supported by the managers. Staff are very well deployed throughout the nursery. A staff deployment list is checked at key times during the day to ensure ratios are kept. The key person system is extremely well embedded. Children form very positive relationships and families feel that the key person is a trusted professional and a friend. Staff feel that they effectively support children to reach their potential and beyond. The ethos of inspiring love, respect and challenge is embedded in this system and as a result, the child is constantly at the centre of the learning and development cycle.

Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Observation, assessment and planning is effectively monitored so that key persons know their children in depth and can readily discuss their age and stage of development. Assessment includes children's level of involvement, attitudes and characteristics of learning. Planning is robust, observations are very well written, linked to children's age and stage of development and used effectively to identify their next steps. This exemplary practice quickly identifies areas of need and highlights children's interests and used to personalise planning and extend children's quality of learning. Tracking documents and the 'progress check at age two' are used with great effect to accurately identify needs, show progress and ensure activities are planned to enhance learning. The management team effectively monitors and moderates all planning and assessment. Copious data is collected on each child and is used very effectively to track all areas of learning and identify particular groups of children, such as summer born boys, those attending more than one setting or those with particular needs. Data is compared with that of a variety of other settings during Private, Voluntary and Independent(PVI) network meetings, giving the nursery a comparison of achievement. The manager uses the data to further enhance provision and ensure continuity and consistency of care for all children. Self-evaluation is very effective and is ongoing as staff continually reflect on their practice. Data is collected and managers reflect and review the

effectiveness of the whole nursery. As a result, they know they are making a difference to the lives of children and families in the community.

Partnerships with parents and other professionals are a key strength of the nursery. Extremely close links with the local authority and local schools enables the managers to work closely with outside agencies. Key professionals work closely together as a team to ensure all requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are well met and children and their families are respected and have a consistently high quality of provision which is continued to their next stage of children's education. The very inspiring foyer area and quality displays ensure that parents are given a great deal of information on a regular basis. This adds to daily record sheets, handover time, progress check for two-year-olds and end of term report.

Parents attend a variety of events, such as, stay and play and parents' evenings, and readily support fundraising. They feel they are very well informed about their children's progress and are supported to extend learning at home. Parents are effusive in their praise of the nursery. They make comments, such as; 'Parents' evenings are great we get loads of good stuff and advice - I know about key skills and how I should help at home because the staff are so understanding and know so much' and 'The staff here make everything so real and fun. She has been here since she was a baby and now she is ready for school. I wouldn't send my kids anywhere else. The staff are like my family. I would recommend this nursery to anyone, and I have. My child loves to be messy. If she comes home clean I ask why' Consequently, they feel their children have an excellent start to their early education and development.

This high quality effective nursery puts children at the very heart of everything they do every step is valued and celebrated. As a result, children are very well cared for and are highly motivated to learn. The nursery has a strong capacity to improve even further and the managers and staff are rightly proud of their achievements.

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
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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.
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	EY263881
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	925953
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	105
Number of children on roll	103
Name of provider	Little B's Limited
Date of previous inspection	12/10/2009
Telephone number	0151 944 1345

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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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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
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