

First Steps Nursery

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

Inspection date	21/10/2013
Previous inspection date	08/04/2013

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

- A well-established key person system and warm, affectionate staff support children in making secure attachments, particularly within the baby room. This helps children to explore the environment and take risks in their play.
- Planning and assessment are both very good and well-monitored. This enables the nursery to accurately identify the next steps in children's development and provide them with personalised learning opportunities.
- The quality of teaching is good, this supports all children in making good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Strong partnerships with parents and external agencies provide a strong link in children's learning and care between the home environment and the nursery.
- A well-resourced and stimulating environment both inside and outside support children's development across the seven areas of learning. This also allows children to be increasingly confident independent learners.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always use questioning to optimum effect to help children make links in their learning.

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 conducted a tour of the premises with the deputy manager.
- A joint observation with a member of the management team was undertaken.
- Discussions were held with the management team, staff, children and parents.
- Observations in each area of the nursery and the outdoor area were conducted.
- Documentation including safeguarding and inclusion policies and the 'progress check at age two' were reviewed.
- A meeting with the management team was held.

Inspector
Ben Hartley

Full Report

Information about the setting

First Steps Nursery was opened in 2002, and is 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 an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 34 members of childcare staff. Of these, 33 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two with Early Years Professional Status. There are currently 161 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 educational 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:

- extend the use of questioning in order to fully extend children's development and allow them to make additional links within their learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Children take part in a wide range of interesting activities, both inside and outside, that promotes their development across the seven areas of learning. Children are developing independent learning skills which will help them in the next stage of their development, including their readiness for school. For example, the engaging environment and skilled staff allow the children to explore learn independently. The children enjoy these opportunities and are demonstrating the characteristics of effective learning. For example, during a creative activity children sustain their interest for a prolonged period of time, trying different materials to suit their purpose. Staff generally use questioning well to extend children's learning, however, this is not always fully enhanced, and consequently, children's progress and learning is occasionally affected. For example, during a joint observation the member of staff asks some good open questions that allow children to demonstrate their learning and understanding. However, there was limited opportunity for children to make links within their learning by the member of staff asking some more deep

probing questions to fully extend their learning.

The resources throughout the nursery are well managed and wide ranging, with the children enjoying independent access to them. The staff also take into account the interests and next steps of the children and use it to devise activities to promote their development. For example, the nursery use action plans to identify areas that children are yet to achieve and prepare specific activities designed to close these gaps in their learning. The outdoor environment is also utilised well and is resourced to promote development across the areas of learning. For example, the children have access to sand, water and various activities to promote physical development, such as scooters and bikes. Assessments are very detailed and rigorous and provide sufficient evidence that children are making good progress. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. This is partially due to the specific planning that is put in place that helps to quickly identify and close gaps within children's learning. This planning and assessment is also closely monitored and supported by the management team, this ensures that children experience a wide range of activities across the seven areas of learning.

Communication within the nursery is good between staff and children, as well as when children communicate with their peers. This helps them to form effective relationships and also enhances children's language acquisition. The nursery also communicates well with parents, taking into account their views. For example, one child in the baby room is older than the rest of the children because the parent felt that it was best for the child's development. These relationships are also aided further by a well-established key person system that provides an additional link between the home and pre-school environment. For example, parents are involved in initial assessments that provide the nursery with additional information to make these links within learning and care practices. Parents comment very positively about the communication with the nursery, the quality of the care provided for the children and the staffing team.

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

Children form secure attachments with warm and caring staff as well as their peers, this increases their self-confidence and helps supports their personal, social and emotional development. This is also supported due to the continuity of dedicated staff within the nursery, which allows the children to become very familiar with them. This also gives the children the confidence to explore the environment and take risks, engaging enthusiastically in their learning. Staff also use strategies to extend children's communication skills. For example, the children are reading a story with animals and the member of staff enthusiastically supports the children in making the various noises. This modelling helps support children's learning as well as allowing them to be expressive within their communication.

Staff also provide a wide range of interesting activities that provide children with exciting learning experiences. Including a well-developed outdoor learning area that is utilised effectively to provide children with additional opportunities to learn as well as promote

their physical development. For example, the children use the scooters to move in a variety of ways, quickly, slowly and manoeuvring around various objects. The environment inside is also well utilised, imaginative and provides activities that promote development across the areas of learning. For example, the nursery makes good use of various messy activities to promote children's learning and allow them to explore different materials with several textures. Good supervision and deployment of skilled staff also enables a good flow for the children between inside and outside. This enables children to explore freely according to their interests and engages them in a wide variety of activities, and promotes their ability to become independent learners. The nursery also takes steps to promote healthy lifestyles and provide well-balanced nutritious meals and snacks. Children are encouraged to maintain good hygiene practices.

Care practices are well-established, embedded within practice and meet the needs of the children. This is supported by an effective key person system that allows them to work collaboratively with parents to provide a good level of care for children. For example, detailed daily diaries are shared with parents, this allows discussions that support collaborative work on changing and adapting routines and care practices. Children are always kept safe within the nursery as staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and a detailed knowledge of how to keep children safe without affecting their learning experiences. The nursery also effectively support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, the nursery gather information prior to children starting that allows them to create individual plans to support their specific needs. Furthermore, the nursery has developed effective behaviour management strategies. For example, individual plans are created in conjunction with parents in order to provide children with additional support to meet their needs.

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

There is a strong management team in the nursery that has a detailed understanding of the learning and development requirements. This supernumerary team works together effectively to support the children and staff within the setting. For example, they regularly communicate with the staff about the number of staff they need within their room and provide cover when required. There is also a good overview of the educational programme and regular reviews of the performance of staff allow the quality of teaching to be good. This robust system also ensures that children have a wide range of experiences that promote their learning, and allows all children to make good progress. Excellent, detailed assessments are undertaken. This allows the nursery to accurately identify children's stage of development and quickly close gaps in their learning through individualised learning programmes. Good partnerships with parents have been developed. Parents comment positively about the quality of the staff within the nursery and the links that are provided with the home environment.

Regular observations enable the management to identify any strengths and areas for development in terms of quality of teaching. There are also quality staff that work directly with the children. For example, an early years professional works directly with the children in a pre-school room. This allows the staff to observe good practice and use it to make

adjustments. All the staff within the nursery demonstrate a good level of care and affection for the children and a commitment to improving their practice. This highly reflective environment allows the nursery to make continuous improvements. For example, they have acted quickly on the recommendations in their previous inspection report to improve practice and provide additional support for children. The nursery has also worked collaboratively with the local authority to identify areas for development and is continuing to work towards improving aspects of the provision.

Safeguarding is given a high priority within the nursery. For example, an adequate number of staff have paediatric first-aid training, some also have additional training to help keep children safe and support them appropriately when they do have accidents. There are also strong procedures in place that are being regularly reviewed and updated to ensure safety within the nursery. For example, the registers have been updated recently to ensure that the staff within the nursery can more quickly identify the number of children in their care. There is also a thorough recruitment procedure in place to further safeguard children. The knowledge of the management team and the staff in relation to safeguarding, ensures that children are kept safe within the nursery.

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	EY101522
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	939640
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	226
Number of children on roll	161
Name of provider	First Steps Private Day Nursery (Lowton) Limited
Date of previous inspection	08/04/2013
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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