

Footsteps Nursery

Minto Centre, Nilsson Drive, WORKINGTON, Cumbria, CA14 5BD

Inspection date

16/04/2014

Previous inspection date

03/02/2010

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

- Leadership and management is inspirational. The managers' enthusiasm and passion for their work is reinforced by dedicated, highly qualified and knowledgeable staff who work extremely well together as a team.
- Children have a fantastic time at this setting, enthusiastically engaging in many innovative activities and play opportunities which are planned around their individual needs and interests. By doing so, staff provide them with an excellent foundation on which to build their future learning.
- Staff are extremely caring and sensitive to all children's needs. Children's health, safety and well-being are given the utmost priority and as a result, children are nurtured and exceptionally well cared for.
- Excellent partnerships with parents, other professionals and multi-agency workers enable extremely effective sharing of information which is used to provide outstanding support for all children and their families.
- The excellent use of tracking systems means that managers and staff have an accurate understanding of children's development and use this to plan highly stimulating experiences. As a result, children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points due to the meticulous planning implemented to identify any gaps in their learning especially before their move onto school.

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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children playing in the four designated age related play rooms and their attached outdoor play areas.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, the staff and the children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting and conducted a joint observation with the senior manager.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents of the early years children attending the setting who were spoken to on the day of the inspection and from information included in the setting's own parent, carers and multi-agency professionals survey.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, the planning documentation and the systems for the monitoring of children's progress.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the policies and procedures for the setting, and the documented self-evaluation systems that support the service.

Inspector

Carys Millican

Full report

Information about the setting

Footsteps Day Nursery opened in 2004 and is managed by Westfield Housing Association. It operates from a purpose-built building within the Minto Centre, adjacent to Westfield Primary School. It is situated on the Westfield housing estate on the outskirts of Workington, Cumbria. The nursery serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. The nursery opens five days a week from 7.30am until 6pm, apart from bank holidays, the days between Christmas and New Year and for two training days each year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children are cared for in four designated play areas with associated facilities. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 176 children in the early years age range on roll. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children for whom English is an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are currently 33 staff employed at the nursery. Of these 29 staff work directly with the children, who all hold an appropriate early years qualifications, including the manager and two staff with Early Years Professional Status. Three of the staff hold Qualified Teacher Status and one holds a BA (Honours) in Childcare. Three hold Foundation Degrees in Early Years and 19 have qualifications at level 3. Two admin staff and two cooks are also employed. The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and National Day Nurseries Association. They also work closely with the local authority. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to enhance and further develop the already excellent provision for children's outdoor learning by considering ways to protect children from direct sunlight in the under two's play area, for example, by introducing a covered canopy into this area.

Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Staff have an exceptional knowledge of children's individual needs and how children learn. As a result, staff clearly identify the extensive progress that children make in relation to their developmental starting points. Staff follow the same format throughout the whole nursery by completing careful observations as

children play. They complete detailed and accurate assessments which clearly identify the next steps for children's learning. Staff adapt activities and their approach effectively so that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are fully engaged and included in all that they do. Children's additional learning and development needs are identified and supported by a highly qualified motivated inclusion team who work in a majority of one to one situations throughout the nursery. Together the staff team work in partnership with the child, parents and multi-agency professionals to ensure a cohesive approach is applied to provide a nurturing environment with specialist resources for individual children. Staff are extremely receptive and responsive to the choices children make during their play. They listen to the children and engage them in respectful interactions and respond to what they hear and see. Staff complete, 'Look, Listen and Note' observations which inform the planning of children's interests and further activities to promote children's learning. They listen to the voice of the child, take on board children's views and ideas. Staff ask open-ended questions skilfully to encourage and extend children's thinking skills and language and communication following the 'Every Child a Talker' programme. Consequently, children are exceptionally well supported and inspired in their play and learning, which enables them to develop the skills they need for their future moves and for starting school.

Children throughout the nursery show a strong exploratory approach as they freely choose to play indoors and outside where they are well supervised by a high ratio of staff. The baby room, called the 'Sitters, Crawlers and Standers' area, has further improved since the last inspection with the provision of a designated free flow covered play area for them to access in all weathers. Children access this covered area directly from their room. They play in a safe enclosed artificial grassed area where they get plenty of opportunities for exploring and investigating, physical play and exercise, and fresh air. The babies are provided with a nursery gym where they can practice their walking skills by walking up and down steps and confidently use the slide. Young children enthusiastically crawl from the indoors to the outside and help themselves to the numerous chimes and sensory panels attached to the fences. Staff encourage movement and muscle strength by providing lots of unrestricted floor play, including daily tummy time. They get down on the floor with the children and talk, sing, smile and interact with them using simple home-made toys and everyday objects. Staff make sure that young babies do not spend too much time in supportive seating and if they are sitting they use 'just in case cushions' rather than propping them up. Children receive lots of close contact with their key person. Therefore, they feel comfortable and reassured in their environment, and develop strong bonds. Toys are placed in front of them just slightly out of reach, as a result, babies stretch to reach them and by doing so begin to move their bodies. Staff introduce plastic bottles filled with sand and rice which children investigate and shake, and roll balls to them, or play skittles. They line up different sized balls in a row and while doing this staff tell the children what they are doing and introduce the proper words for the objects, colours and the actions. For example, 'Look at all the different sized balls', 'roll the red ball back to me' and 'well done, let us clap hands together'. As a result, children's personal, social and emotional, communication and language and physical needs are exceptionally well promoted from an early age. The 'Movers, Shakers and Explorers' section has been opened up to enable free flow access to outdoors also, although there is no protection from the full sun in the paved or garden area and is something they wish to further improve on. Children in the 'Talkers and Pretenders' group have a fantastic 'drama stage'

with toy microphones and dressing-up clothes, and they can follow a wooden static 'musical trail' of different musical sounds and instruments which expands their sensory, communication and language and expressive arts and design areas of learning and development.

Since the last inspection the nursery has in itself expanded in size and now has a spacious designated pre-school room for the 'Thinkers, Creators, and Explorers'. Staff in this room are exceptionally well qualified and have an excellent understanding of how children learn and track children's learning very clearly. For example, during the year, well before transition into school, the staff assess children's overall learning to highlight any areas not as well achieved as others. For example, they noticed a boy's attainment was lower in some areas, such as mathematics and literacy. As a result of this, the staff held a meeting and decided how they could best support children's learning more effectively in these areas. They resourced the continuous provision with additional supportive resources and concentrated on the areas requiring improvements in the planning. As a result, these areas improved before entering school. Children enjoy early phonic activities. The story of the week is linked to the Easter theme, the letter of the week is E, and songs and sounds, interests tables are linked to this sound and letter. Children enjoy listening to the Easter story read by staff. They join in with the story repeating the new words they have learned and staff continue to ask them open-ended questions to prompt children's learning further. Staff are skilful in their approach and make sure all children are included and experience time to talk in a group. Children in the 'Thinkers, Creators and Explorers' group are very confident. This is because they talk to staff, listen carefully to what staff say and follow directions with ease. Children's independence and self-care is exceptionally well promoted with these children preparing, serving, pouring drinks and clearing up and washing dishes as part of the normal daily routines. Children enjoy interesting group conversations at snack and mealtimes. During these routine activities the staff speak with the children to ask them what they have been doing that morning and what they have enjoyed. They ask children what they would like to do next and record their responses. Staff provide excellent support for children during all activities and promote their learning in an exceptionally thoughtful and positive and nurturing way. Children's personal, social and emotional well-being and behaviour is given careful consideration. Staff take children into quiet, calm areas of the sensory room in the 'Talkers and Pretenders' play area. This is where the two year old nurture group has been introduced to concentrate on activities that promote children's feelings of self-esteem and well-being. The environment and resources in this particular area help to develop a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere for children with an exceptional range of light and water machines, soft furnishing, light and mirror boxes and changing wall lighting with a focus on developing children's overall emotional well-being, confidence and behaviour. From this room children have access to a large undercover New Zealand sand pit and conservatory where the room is structured to provide a home from home environment where children act out real life experiences and model the excellent behaviour of staff.

Parental involvement is exceptional. The parents are represented on the management committee and have a positive input into the policy and decision making of the nursery. Staff place a strong emphasis on parents being involved in their children's learning. The nursery invite parents to information sessions, for example, healthy eating where they tasted sample lunchtime meals from the healthy eating menu and given recipes to prepare

at home. There are formal parents meetings to enable staff to meet with their child's key person to share termly progress checks with them and 'Celebration of achievement' documents. There are nursery open days and parent sessions where parents join in specialist 'art and craft' events and learn more about the Early Years Foundation Stage and what it means for the children. Parents are encouraged to contribute to children's planning through informal discussions, sharing observations, daily diaries, home nursery journals, home visits and family learning courses in conjunction with the local children's centre workers. Parents express a high regard for the exceptional care and teaching their children receive by all nursery staff. They state how fantastic a place it is and how their children enjoy attending. Parents and adult family members are invited into nursery to share their skills and family customs, for example, dads pop in and make mother's day cards with their children, and grandparents' day is celebrated by 'pot a primrose' with grandparents. Parents are invited to share observations of children's progress at home and to take part in a number of activities in the nursery. Staff work with the children's centre to provide parents with support where necessary. For example, they help parents develop strategies to manage their children's behaviour and improve parent/child relationships. The special educational needs coordinator in each room oversees the individual education plans for each child and meets with parents and other agencies who visit the nursery school regularly. Consequently, there is a unified approach to promoting all children's learning and development.

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

Children thrive in this warm, child-friendly nursery setting that is safe and secure and welcomes all children and their families equally. A highly effective key person system successfully supports children's welfare and emotional security which means that they feel valued and settle in quickly. The flexibly tailored settling-in sessions allow new children and their families to adjust at a pace that successfully reflects their individual needs. Children are excited to enter the setting and rush to play with staff and friendships are evident between children. Consequently, these strong emotional attachments provide a secure basis for children to develop in their confidence and become more active independent learners. Children are extremely happy and motivated in their play. Staff are observant of children's behaviour and know their key children well. Therefore, they support children to understand the consequences of their actions and quickly intervene when children use challenging behaviour. For example, when a child starts to interrupt during story time, the staff gently ask if he can sit down so that everyone can see the pictures. He listens and cooperates. Staff help the older children to learn the goals and boundaries of the nursery and become more tolerant of others especially when in a group activity. Staff use firm but positive distraction techniques and explain why certain behaviour is not acceptable and by doing so they build on children's self-esteem and self-confidence to repeat the more positive behaviour. This means that children learn to cooperate and are beginning to understand the need share, be patient and to take turns when using resources. Staff constantly praise children in everything that they do. This also successfully develops their self-confidence, feeling of security and emotional well-being.

Children form exceptionally good relationships with all the staff and are very happy to have their involvement in their play. The nurture group helps children to deal with their

feelings and helps them build on the self-esteem by staff recognising and observing their well-being and involvement during activities. Children are, therefore, beginning to develop an awareness of their own feelings, and those of others, as staff focus on this area of their development. The staff involve the parents and families in this initiative by asking them to bring in photographs of family members and special people in the children's lives. They create family books which children can look at with staff or on their own, and children can talk through their feelings while looking at the pictures. Children's health and well-being is additionally promoted through the Healthy Eating Programme promoted by designated staff who ensure that all snacks meet national nutritional guidelines. Children's dietary needs are recorded and discussed with parents at initial meetings prior to registration. As a result, all children's dietary needs are catered for and children eat a diverse variety of healthy meals cooked on site and, in some cases made by the children, and the nursery cooks. Staff support children's independence at mealtimes in relation to food preparation, social skills, and personal and dental hygiene. The nursery engages in national health lifestyle campaigns and cascade healthy eating practices with parents through the newsletter and menu cards. Parents are supported to attend courses at the local adult education centre on practical healthy eating and, as a result, parents make the meals at home that children enjoy in the nursery. Staff meticulously follow the nursery procedures to prevent the spread of infection and for maintaining children's health. Children of all ages are encouraged to develop robust self-help skills. They are taught the importance of washing their hands as babies when they have their nappies changed, to blow their nose using tissues and place the used tissue in the bin. Therefore, children routinely complete this before snack and mealtimes. When children have their snack they help prepare it, serve it, eat it, and clear away. Social occasions are promoted at mealtimes where staff and children have the opportunity to reflect on the morning or afternoon activities and opportunities for comparing, calculating and counting enhance children mathematical skills. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through the staff who model good behaviour that children repeat. They teach children how to use scissors carefully during craft activities and how to pedal their bike on the path to avoid bumping into other children. The routines of the nursery further support children's understanding of keeping safe, for example, fire safety, gaining entry into the building, closing doors behind them, so they remain safe from harm. Children meet the community police, the fire fighters, ambulance technicians and paramedics, who all talk to children about keeping themselves safe.

All staff work extremely well as a team to provide children with a welcoming, exciting and stimulating, clean and well-maintained learning environment. Children are provided with an outstanding range of indoor and outdoor equipment and resources to successfully capture their enthusiasm and motivation for learning. For example, they play different musical instruments to create different sounds, explore and investigate the natural habitat for worms and spiders, and enjoy the sensory aspect of the herb garden, and the scientific aspects of the water in water trays and sloping drain pipes. Children use clip boards, paper and pens in construction areas and sit in various parts of the gardens to read and look at books. Staff make excellent use of the undercover outdoor areas to provide a wide range of play experiences that inspire children to learn as much outdoor as indoors. Staff supervise children extremely well and provide one to one support and guidance for children when needed. A language-rich environment is promoted throughout the nursery. Staff plan a wide range of activities related to different cultural festivals, for example, Holi,

the festival of colour. As a result, staff promote and enhance children's understanding of the difference and diversity of the world. They make use of hand sign examples which are displayed for children with less speech than others and place dual language signs in the environment linked to the languages of all the children attending the nursery. Children access information in displays about other countries and where children live, look at books, and play with small world resources that promote positive visual images of difference, disability and culture, which build children's awareness and acceptance of their diverse society.

There is a clear transition and settling-in policy in place to ensure that the move from home to nursery is handled in a gentle supportive manner, where the staff nurture both the parent and the child. Staff complete initial visits in the home first to see the children in their normal environment. Parents are then actively encouraged to stay and settle their children into nursery for several sessions before attending for short periods on their own. The transition from day care to nursery entitlement is seamless. Parents are invited into nursery to attend information sharing evening and social events with their children, for example, a teddy bears' picnic and an Easter egg hunt. Children also move smoothly between the nursery school and local schools. Teachers are invited to visit the nursery and if required attend multi-agency meetings with parents. Staff complete summaries of children's progress and share them with parents, carers and teachers before children leave. As a result, a unified approach to report about children's progress for when children move on in their learning or to school is implemented. Teachers visit before children start school to observe them during play and talk to staff about children's individual needs. Staff gather information from each school to help children to become more familiar with their new premises and teaching staff which helps the children to discuss with staff any concerns they may have before starting.

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

The manager, senior staff and all childcare practitioners are very enthusiastic and passionate about their work. They are very keen to ensure the best for all children and understand the importance of their role in keeping children safe from harm and in helping children to become effective, independent and excited learners. All staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of their responsibility in meeting the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Exceptionally thorough monitoring and clear induction procedures ensure that all adults working in or associated with the nursery understand and follow all the policies and procedures. The inspirational manager and her senior staff team have a proactive enthusiasm for the nursery and instil high levels of dedication and commitment in the staff team. The management successfully nurtures and maintains an environment where staff feel highly valued as individuals. For example, the manager encourages staff to air their views and thoughts at meetings, bring in new ideas and continue to develop their professional skills. The manager and senior staff implement excellent monitoring and tracking systems to identify any gaps in children's attainment throughout their time spent at nursery and prior to starting school. This means that they have an excellent and accurate understanding of all children's development to seek additional help when required, and to adapt the environment, resources, teaching

methods to continue to plan highly stimulating experiences for children that will ensure that they continue to make excellent progress in relation to their starting points.

All staff employed in the nursery working with the children hold an early years qualification, from level 3 and above. The manager has considerable experience in early years and training to support the staff in advancing their knowledge, which significantly contributes to the outstanding quality of the provision. Appraisals and supervision meetings take place regularly to help continue to further drive improvement in the already outstanding quality of the setting. The manager observes all staff and feeds back on their strengths and areas for development. Through supervision, the training needs for staff are recorded to enable them to attend relevant and requested training as this becomes available. This further supports their professional development and enhances the provision for the children. Staff meetings and in-house training sessions are very frequent and management place a strong emphasis on effective communication between all those involved in the care of the children. As a result, new knowledge is effectively shared and staff feel valued and empowered knowing that their 'voices' are heard and listened to. Consequently, everyone works well together. There is an atmosphere of trust, honesty and involvement within the nursery and between other professionals linked with the nursery.

The manager, senior staff and staff practitioners have an excellent understanding of their responsibility in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements. Robust recruitment, induction and vetting procedures ensure that all adults working in the nursery with the children are suitable and fully understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection. Staff undertake online and local authority safeguarding courses up to level 3. They are provided with clear guidance about child protection procedures which is prominently displayed in staff reception area which means that all staff have easily accessible information to refer to should they have child protection concerns. Staff regularly discuss what they would do using different scenarios at staff meetings so that they keep themselves up to date in any changes. Highly effective self-evaluation takes place. The manager, parents and carers, full staff team and other professionals are actively involved in the process; therefore, the document shows a true account of practice and the excellent understanding of nursery strengths and areas for development. Parents', carers' and multi-agency workers' views are sought through questionnaires and surveys. Visits from the local early years advisor are also used to help enhance practice and further identify staff training opportunities or any areas requiring improvement. The nursery has forged effective links with the local children centre facilities and adult learning in the local community to meet the families of Westfield's needs, which contributes to the ongoing outcomes for children.

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
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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY273087
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	848580
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	82
Number of children on roll	176
Name of provider	Westfield Housing Association Limited
Date of previous inspection	03/02/2010
Telephone number	01900 872 011

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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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