

Steps Ahead Day Nursery and Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 145881 |
| Inspection date | 25 October 2007 |
| Inspector | Paul Martin Kitchen |
| Setting Address | Bradley Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 0RG |
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| Registered person | Janine Elizabeth Collishaw |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Full day care |

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Steps Ahead Day Nursery and Nursery School is a privately owned full day nursery which opened in August 2000. It operates from a single storey building behind the District Council buildings off a main road in Trowbridge. A maximum of 104 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday throughout the year except for one week at Christmas and Bank Holidays. All children share access to enclosed rear gardens providing both paved and grassed play space.

There are currently 153 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 48 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with a learning disability and/or difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs one manager and 31 staff. Of these, 19 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is supported by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children begin to develop a good understanding of healthy practices. This includes the importance of personal hygiene such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. There are effective procedures in place to protect children's health, for example the staff wear disposable gloves when changing nappies and for the application of creams supplied by parents. Babies sleep in their own bedding which ensures they are safeguarded from infections.

Children enjoy a healthy diet as they choose from a variety of fruits at snack time. Children enjoy a main cooked meal at lunch time consisting, for example, of baked beans and fruit salad. In addition they enjoy water or milk to drink. The menu takes into consideration children's individual dietary requirements such as allergy and religion. Meal times have a homely feel with staff sitting with the children in small groups encouraging conversation. Older children can access fresh drinking water at all times to refresh themselves. Staff fill water bottles and feed younger children and babies. Babies' nutritional and individual needs are met by staff preparing and supplying bottles brought from home or made to parents' requirements. Written records of babies' food intake are supplied to parents to keep them informed that individual needs are being met. Accidents and medication administration are correctly dealt with.

Children enjoy a well planned range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They have regular access to fresh air, as good use is made of the outside play space. Children run, jump, balance, swing and race around with skill on three wheeled bikes. Indoor activities take place where the children enthusiastically use scissors, spades and tools at the workbench. They fit puzzle pieces together and create games with dinosaurs, generally developing their small muscle skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and well maintained environment. Rooms are child-friendly with examples of children's art work decorating the walls. All areas are ventilated and heated to the required level, for example the baby sleep rooms are heated to the recommended temperature.

Children choose from a wide range of good quality toys and resources that are organised to enable self-selection in a clean, safe environment. All are well maintained and checked regularly for safety and hygiene.

Safety and security systems, such as the buzzer entry for all parents and visitors, contribute to children's safety and well-being. A visitors' record ensures staff are aware of all adults on the premises at any one time. The garden and outdoor play areas are safe and secure with gates and locks at a suitable height.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of child protection and procedures. There is a programme in place to ensure staff attend appropriate training. They know who to contact if they have concerns about a child in their care and good recording systems are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies and toddlers are happy and settled within the environment. They readily approach staff who are affectionate and responsive to their needs, for example giving cuddles. Children enjoy a range of activities which are very suitable for their development such as dressing up, sand play, painting and drawing. Young children are challenged in their learning by introducing them to colours, numbers and letters at the earliest opportunity. Children extend their imagination in building their own race track and playing with toy cars, creating a game. Staff are trained in the Birth to three matters and plan and provide activities linked to this structure. Staff record clearly how younger children are developing through the 'Starting Blocks' system and feed this information back to parents. Children have opportunities throughout the day to meet with siblings and other children from other rooms which ensures family bonding is maintained. Children are happy at nursery, they play well together, learn to share and have respect for each others' feelings.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have attended training in the Foundation Stage for children's learning and competently put this into practice. They show good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and provide a wide range of activities and experiences to cover all areas of children's learning. Suitable assessment records for each child clearly show children's approach to learning and their achievements, including the next steps for each child's learning. Children make steady progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The rooms are well organised and resources are attractively set out to stimulate children's interests in learning. Staff use open questions to effectively promote children's thinking and resources are generally well used.

Children separate from their main carer with ease and all children show high levels of involvement. Older children dress and undress themselves and younger children attempt to do this independently. Children do not lay up tables with cups and plates at lunch and snack time, although they are beginning to pour their own drinks. This therefore has an adverse affect on their independence development. Older children are keen to share experiences with staff such as the arrival of a new baby. They listen and talk in small groups or at circle time. Older children have the confidence to speak in a small group and younger children volunteer to offer their choice of a song. Older children recognise their written name at snack time or choose it from a box. Younger children attempt to do so with help from staff. Older children count to ten and recognise numbers when asked by staff. They confidently operate the typewriter and show knowledge of similarities in shape and size. Children show curiosity and interest when exploring their environment. They correctly describe the weather and season when asked in a small group. Older children use computer programmes and younger children practise using the keyboard and mouse control. Children show interest in creative activities. They mix paint successfully and older children can name primary colours. Children competently explore sound with musical instruments, shaking and tapping and listening to the effect this has on others.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals as they are listened to with care and attention. Staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children. They

work closely with parents, recording individual needs such as religious and dietary needs. A wide range of images are available which reflect diversity.

Children with a learning disability and/or difficulties are provided with an individual care and learning plan designed by staff working with parents. All children have equal access to all the toys and equipment throughout the nursery.

Children behave well. They are given continuous praise and encouragement, learn to share and take turns and begin to accept the needs of others. They begin to understand right from wrong through consistent boundary setting and age appropriate methods used by staff to manage behaviour, including explanation and distraction.

Parents are provided with a good range of information, which keeps them informed about the provision. This includes newsletters and information in waiting areas of the nursery. Parents are met each day by staff who share with them information about their child's activities and interests. A complaints policy and procedure guides parents through the process of voicing their concerns. However, this is not up to date as there is no reference, for example, to the access to the complaints record. The consequences of this are that parents do not know how to access the complaints history and cannot make an informed choice about the nursery.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Partnership with parents is good. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and achievements. They are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning such as reading at home or following up a seasonal theme. Parents have ample opportunity to come to the nursery to meet their key worker, as they are invited to open days and coffee mornings to discuss their child. This is followed up with clear information in written form charting the progress their child has made.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised environment. Staff know their roles and responsibilities and effectively implement routines to give children a broad range of experiences. Children benefit from well deployed staff, who consistently interact with them and give effective support and encouragement. This helps them feel secure and confident. Children are kept safe and healthy as staff attend training and update training including first aid. The record of staff suitability is correct and all staff are suitable. Any staff or visitors not cleared do not have unsupervised contact with the children. Records and documents are stored securely and kept confidential.

The leadership and management is good. Staff have attended Foundation Stage training and are involved in planning the curriculum to help children develop in all areas. There is a formal evaluation of staff performance and appraisals are used to monitor staff development. Staff work well with the local authority and advisory teacher support. All staff work effectively as a team. They give each other regular feedback to constantly improve and review the service. The nursery has recently won a national quality assurance award. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to ensure observations are used to plan the next stage of children's learning and provide a range of activities and resources suitable for

children aged five to eight. The next steps are clearly recorded in every child's file so that key workers and staff can focus on this area. There is now a good range of activities and resources for children aged five to eight. This helps children learn and play effectively. The nursery were asked to ensure all incidents are shared with parents. An incident record is maintained by all staff and shared with parents at the end of each day. This ensures all parents are fully aware of any changes with their child. The nursery were asked to improve the planning of activities so there are good links between the plans made by the staff, including how to adapt activities for children who learn at a different speed. Staff now work together to ensure they are consistent in their planning. There are clear plans including individual statements for each child showing how they are learning. This ensures all children's records show how activities are planned for each child's development. The nursery were asked to improve the presentation of books, make reading areas more attractive and ensure the books included positive images of other cultures, disability and gender. Each pre-school room now has an attractive book area with a good stock of books that reflect diversity. This ensures children are encouraged to enjoy and take pleasure from books and reading. Lastly, the nursery were asked to review the information sharing with parents so that parents understand the Foundation Stage and early learning goals so that they can extend children's learning at home. Parents now have a wealth of information about the Foundation Stage and early learning goals and thus are able to extend children's learning at home. This outcome ensures parents fully understand their child's learning and can support and encourage learning within a different environment.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- update the complaints policy and procedure so that it complies with the revision to the National Standards 2005.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop children's independence at snack and meal times.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk