

First Steps Day Nursery and Out of School Facility

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY288187
Inspection date	12/11/2009
Inspector	Karen Ling
Setting address	Newtown Community Primary School, Newtown Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 7LW
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

First Steps Day Nursery and Out of School Facility is run by a management committee limited by guarantee. It opened in 2003 and operates for five days a week throughout the year from four rooms in purpose built accommodation, situated within the grounds and premises of Newtown Community School in Carlisle. Children have access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 68 children aged under eight years old may attend the setting at any one time. The setting currently takes children from birth to five years old. There are currently 86 children on roll. All are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The setting receives funding for nursery education. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery employs 13 staff. All are appropriately qualified and of these, 12 hold a level 3 early years qualification. One staff member is qualified to level 2 and is working towards level 3. The manager has recently started a Foundation Degree in Early Years. The setting is a designated nursery for Carlisle West Children's Centre. It receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and settled and enjoy a superb choice of activity during their time at the nursery. Managers have addressed recommendations from the previous inspection and have developed the provision to a high standard. They are continually pursuing ways to improve the provision for children. Staff work very well as a team to cater for the individual needs of each child and to enable them to make good progress in their learning and development. Relationships and partnerships with parents are outstanding.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve cleaning routines and particularly for baby toys and equipment to ensure they are cleaned more frequently
- develop and embed monitoring and analysis of outcomes for different groups of children to inform priorities for improvement
- develop planning to provide a better balance of adult-led and child-initiated activity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Robust documentation is in place to safeguard children. Clear procedures are followed to check the suitability of adults to work with children. Induction monitoring for new staff and annual appraisals are in place. Staff are diligent and professional development is ongoing. They complete and update core training, such as safeguarding, paediatric first aid and food hygiene and have a secure knowledge of how to deal with concerns about children's health and safety. Detailed risk assessments are completed along with other daily room checks. A clear site security system is in operation to monitor access to and from the building. The clear routines and good organisation of the setting helps children to settle, feel safe and enjoy themselves.

Leaders and managers have developed exceptionally strong partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies. This has a positive impact on welfare, learning and development for all children. Those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support and intervention because of the close team work between staff, parents and other agencies. Staff use effective strategies to include children with English as an additional language and help them settle. The manager is enthusiastic and proactive in her approach and has developed a good team ethos in the short time she has been in post. They are keen to participate in initiatives, such as the 'Every child a talker' programme, which is having a positive impact on practice and outcomes. Resources are generally used to best effect and planning for indoor and outdoor play have been developed. For example, secured funding has enabled the improvement of the outdoor area, which children really enjoy.

Managers take on board the views of all service users to inform action plans for future development. They accurately evaluate strengths and have a clear vision of what needs to be done to build on current success. Detailed analysis of children's achievements is at an early stage and has yet to be embedded and used to inform practice.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children and babies are very well cared for and make good progress in their learning and development. Babies receive a lot of attention and stimulation through a range of interesting man-made and natural objects and well planned activities. They explore their environment using toys and equipment to crawl, pull themselves up and investigate. For example, the carefully placed mirrors fascinate babies as they observe their reflection. Babies develop warm and secure relationships with key people who chat and sing with them and support early language development. Staff record individual welfare routines and development in detail. They follow good hygiene routines overall, although not frequently enough in some aspects.

Children enjoy a range of healthy and nutritious snacks. They learn about the importance of washing their hands and show developing independence as they manage their food, put on their coats and help to tidy up. Each room is thoughtfully planned to provide designated play areas which link to areas of learning. These are freely accessed by children who show growing confidence as they move around the setting. Good use is made of the outdoor area to support learning. The garden area with its mini-beasts, appeals to children's natural curiosity as they investigate with magnifying glasses. The children are fascinated by the changing colours of shiny mobiles when caught by the wind. The area also provides space for children to ride wheeled toys and they show developing spatial awareness as they negotiate obstacles. Continuous access to role play equipment, creative and mark making materials maintains children's interest and they benefit from extensive spells of time in the fresh air.

Staff supervise children well at all times and are vigilant. When they choose to play indoors, staff are swift to follow their interests. For example, a story or singing activity is promptly organised for small groups of children. At such times, they show developing ability to sit, listen and concentrate for short periods of time. Staff make the most of opportunities to talk about important issues, such as how to stay safe and not talk to strangers. The sensory room excites children and they look forward to their turn. They have opportunities to investigate a range of electronic light objects and find out how they work. For example, they learn how to wind up a torch and make it work. Staff skilfully help children to explore changing light effects, such as what happens to circle sizes when they move the torch closer or further away from the wall. This resource is of a particular benefit to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Thoughtful planning ensures that children have time to explore, investigate, develop new skills and build on existing ones. Staff are conscientious in the observation and assessment of children's achievements and use information to inform next steps. Staff consistently offer skilful support, the majority of activities being child-led. However, because staff are following children's lead, at times children do not receive sufficient challenges from adults to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. None the less, overall children receive a very good foundation and are well prepared for future learning.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met