

Footsteps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Carys Millican

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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

Footsteps Nursery is run by a management committee. It opened in August 2004 and 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. A maximum of 56 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm. It is open all year apart from bank holidays, the days between Christmas and New Year and for two training days each year. All children share access to a number of secured enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 145 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. The setting receives early education funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery provides wrap around care for the school nursery based at the adjacent school. Most children attend from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 21 members of staff. Of these, 19 staff who work directly with the children hold appropriate early years qualifications. The manager and two early years staff hold Early Years Professional Status and two hold Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are provided with an exemplary and invaluable start in their learning and development, through the positive and enthusiastic approach from a team of dedicated, highly qualified practitioners who effectively implement the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are provided with a rich, varied and imaginative programme of innovative activities and play opportunities which meet their individual needs and interests, within this exceptionally well-organised, superbly resourced, stimulating and inclusive environment. Exceptional partnerships with other agencies and the successful engagement with parents totally enhance the children's time spent at the nursery, fully supporting their progress, learning and development. The management's clear vision for embedding ambition and driving improvement, and the highly supportive self-evaluation process ensure the ongoing development and continuous improvement of this innovative setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- consider ways to enable the younger children to access more freely the outdoor play areas.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are kept safe and secure through the stringent health and safety procedures implemented at the nursery. Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are effectively implemented by highly trained designated persons who have an excellent understanding of their role and responsibility should they have any welfare concerns about the children in their care. Rigorous recruitment procedures and comprehensive suitability checks ensure children are cared for by suitable persons; the staffs ongoing suitability is constantly addressed through regular appraisals and supervision meetings. Thorough risk assessments and consistent daily safety checks are completed in all areas used by children including designated outings, this ensures that hazards are minimised and children's safety is significantly enhanced. Children develop an exceptional understanding of how to keep themselves safe through simple explanations from staff during play opportunities, direct instruction and regular safety practices. Specific activities, such as visits from the police and fire service, further reinforce children's understanding and knowledge of keeping safe.

The manager is a highly motivated, dedicated and committed practitioner, who has a expert knowledge of early years practice, policies and development theories. She is a well qualified practitioner with invaluable experience, she demonstrates a genuine enthusiasm for her work and has a very clear vision for the future development of the nursery. Staff share this enthusiasm and are fully involved in working together to constantly review and develop the setting's practice and improve outcomes for children. The manager is highly skilled in prioritising actions and implementing improvements. This means that changes are introduced sensitively and their impact is monitored. Staff development days and regular meetings enable the cascading of knowledge obtained from numerous core and specialised subject training events attended by staff members. The superb in-house training sessions enable all staff to keep up with any changes and practice developments and thereby provide outstanding care and learning for all children. Staff work exceptionally well as a team. They are exceptionally well supported to extend their own learning, development and interests. This helps promote a highly positive atmosphere, where staff and children feel secure, valued and happy. Staff are confident about the strengths of the setting and the areas for improvement. Actions taken to improve are well targeted. Systems are in place to obtain suggestions and feedback from parents, who are regularly consulted. This information not only informs the nursery's action plan but also the self-evaluation process. The children are provided with superb resources and equipment, these are effectively used to support the promotion of children's learning and development. For example, low-level baskets contain heuristic play materials for children to investigate and explore freely. The layout of each room is conducive to learning. Space is effectively utilised to enable children to initiate their own learning and freedom of movement.

Staff fully engage with parents and have exceptional relationships with other professionals. Parents feel valued; they express a high regard for the dedication, support and friendliness of the staff working with their children. Parents provide invaluable information to key worker staff about children's initial starting points, likes and dislikes, and interests, regularly making comments about their children's progress in record books. Excellent communication with parents means that staff are able to work well in partnership with them. Parents receive daily reports at the end of each session and home school diaries are used to share information between other settings children attend. Staff provide parents with a wealth of information on notice boards, newsletters and informal discussions about activities their children participate in during the day. The setting provides workshops and information sharing sessions for parents, for example, 'Learning through play'. A major strength of the nursery is its invaluable work with multiple agency workers and support for parents with 'looked after children' and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Children thrive in this pioneering nursery setting. They are extremely happy, confident and independent individuals, who truly benefit from the care, activities and play opportunities effectively provided. The highly qualified practitioners have an expert understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn best and this is effectively promoted in all rooms. Babies form strong attachments to their key worker, who is fully aware of their individual needs and interests to support them to achieve high outcomes. Baby signing is promoted so children with limited speech can communicate with others. Children develop a sense of belonging. Their work is creatively displayed and children's interests are effectively supported throughout the setting. Children play an active part in the everyday routines and nursery practices, for example, helping to clean worktops and tidy away toys. Positive images, resources and activities fully support children's understanding of the differences and diversity in the world around them. Children make exceptional progress towards the early learning goals. Staff monitor children's play and planning is flexible to allow for children's self-chosen pursuits and changing interests. Staff quickly respond to the children's ideas and interests which is then skilfully promoted into the enhanced play areas. Staff complete detailed observations as children play, which help identify the next steps in their learning for future planning. They monitor and review the environment and routines, to ensure all children are included and their individual needs are continually met.

The children are exceptionally well behaved. Staff follow consistent behaviour management strategies so children know what is expected of them. Children show a great sense of achievement, as the staff constantly praise them. They are competent in number, shape and colour recognition which is skilfully extended throughout activities. Children enjoy looking at books and competently use tools safely. Children build with construction materials both indoors and out. Their learning is successfully promoted by staff, effectively challenging children as they play and using open ended questioning. This encourages active learning and

promotes language and communication skills.

Children enjoy numerous physical activities. They take part in 'Tatty Bumpkin' yoga sessions indoors, and free-flow play is promoted for older children creating an indoor-outdoor classroom effect. However, babies have less opportunities to access fresh air and outdoor play than older children. Children explore and investigate their environment. They look at melting ice in containers and make dens. Children develop a sense of security. They are confident in the company of adults and they are self-assured. Children settle very easily on arrival and into the routine of attending nursery. Healthy living and enjoying a healthy lifestyle is a major strength of the nursery. Children learn the importance of exercise, hygiene practices and healthy eating. Nutritious and freshly prepared home cooked meals are provided over a three week menu plan. Children help prepare the tables and hand out utensils. They benefit from the social occasion created as they sit together with staff who fully encourage their independence and self-help skills. For example, washing and drying hands, or pouring their own water or milk at meal times. Children are learning about sustainability and looking after their environment. They grow their own vegetables, compost waste products and learn the importance of recycling waste.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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