



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY216277

DfES Number: 540837

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 01/10/2004
Inspector Name Julie Youngman (TCCI)

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name First Steps Day Nursery
Setting Address 31 Church Street
Great Wilbraham
Cambridge
Cambridgeshire
CB1 5JQ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Valerie Wells

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

First Steps Day Nursery opened in October 2001. It is privately owned. The provision operates from converted detached domestic premises consisting of 2 floors and 5 rooms. It is situated on the main road through the village of Great Wilbraham in Cambridgeshire. The nursery serves the local area.

First Steps is registered to care for 28 children from 3 months until 8 years. There are currently 48 children from 7 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 18 funded three-and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is able to accept children with special needs and it supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens all year round. Sessions are from 7:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m..

Twelve staff work with the children. All have or are working towards early years qualifications and all staff have first aid, child protection and food hygiene certificates.

Staff undertake additional training on a regular basis. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

First Steps Nursery School provides good quality nursery education overall which enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. Very good relationships help the children to become confident learners.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Most staff have a good knowledge of children's developmental needs and demonstrate a very good knowledge of the six areas of learning, promoting children's all round development through excellent conversations, interactions and challenging questions. Practical, daily activities in large and small groups provide good opportunities for the children to develop skills in language, mathematics, imaginative and creative work. Topics provide opportunities to extend their general knowledge and ability to find out how things change, as in cooking. The lack of structured planning related to the stepping stones, means that staff cannot ensure that all aspects of learning have been covered over time. The assessment system is manageable and is shared well with parents. Daily informal observations and shared information between staff working with the children help to promote children's overall development. Educational development is not recorded consistently or supported by retained examples of work, hindering assessment of progress.

Leadership and management of the setting is generally good. Staff liaise well with each other and the owner. Regular staff meetings and annual self-appraisal provide good opportunities for the monitoring of the effectiveness of on-going staff training.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Information is provided for parents in notices and in the prospectus for new parents. Daily conversations with staff, shared records and assessment folders help to keep them well informed about their children's all round development.

What is being done well?

- Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development through calm atmosphere, sympathetic handling of all children and opportunities to work in small or large groups, freely choosing additional resources.
- Interactions and excellent conversations between some staff and children promote their thinking, helping them to ask challenging questions and develop their language skills, especially in imaginative games.
- Staff promote the involvement of mathematics in most activities; children learn to count, name shapes and make comparisons across the range of planned daily activities.
- Topics are planned well to help children investigate natural materials, talk about their lives, extend their general knowledge, use everyday technology, celebrate festivals and learn about other countries.

- The daily practical activities for art and craft in 2 & 3D and use of natural materials enable children to explore all of their senses. Good staff involvement in children's imaginative games promotes language.
- The setting provides flexible attendance and long sessions for working parents with good liaison. between staff and parents to promote children's all round development

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to become independent writers, to record activities in different ways or write numbers independently
- opportunities for children to explore ideas of addition and subtraction in practical activities such as snack time
- opportunities for children to work independently in craft activities, to explore materials and tools, developing their own ideas imaginatively
- information for parents so that the prospectus provides them with detailed information about the educational programme; details of the planning for the stepping stones for Early Learning Goals is shared and displayed and examples of children's work is kept to show progress over time.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is the first Section 122 inspection

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn to share, take turns and show consideration for other people in the consistently calm atmosphere maintained. Festivals and topics help the children to learn about other cultures. Relationships are very good promoting children's keenness for learning. Some challenging children are handled very sympathetically and all the children respond very well to the good expectations for good behaviour.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are engaged by some staff in excellent conversations and interactions. They are encouraged to talk about their own experiences and to ask or answer challenging questions. Early literacy is not given appropriate emphasis and opportunities are not provided for children to write or record independently. Books are valued and staff teach the children very well how text works from left to right or top to bottom. Stories are read to children on request and they enjoy good story groups.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Many daily, practical activities are used well to introduce mathematical terms and ideas. Children learn to count, name shapes and make comparisons. Opportunities for children to record numbers in their own ways and to learn about addition and subtraction in practical activities are not used. Matching games and number story books promote well the children's mathematical understanding and ability to recognise numbers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Many good activities helping children to explore natural materials, learn about their environment and other countries are planned through topics. Cooking is a good example of how staff use practical activities to include most aspects of the educational programme. Talking about holidays around the world helps children remember past events and learn about other people's countries and foods. Walks around the village and visits to the school help them observe their environment well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Some physical activities are limited at present by building work. Staff provide good activities to develop children's physical skills on large and small apparatus over time both in the setting and on the nearby public recreation ground. Children enjoy using tools for mark making with dough and develop hand eye co-ordination well with scissors, pencils and crayons.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Many good activities planned to cover all aspects of art and craft in both 2 and 3 dimensions over time. Children are not encouraged to work independently with resources, to express their own ideas in craft work or explore materials and tools. Playing 'rockets' in the log climber, using money in the shop and dressing up promote children's imaginative and creative skills very well.	
Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- provide opportunities for children to become independent writers, to record activities in different ways or write numbers independently
- provide opportunities for children to explore ideas of addition and subtraction in practical activities such as snack time
- provide opportunities for children to work independently in craft activities, to explore materials and tools, developing their own ideas imaginatively
- update the prospectus to provide parents with detailed information about the educational programme, share details of stepping stones for Early Learning Goals`in planning displays and keep examples of children's work to show progress over time

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.