

First Steps Day Nursery and Out of School Facility

Newtown Community Primary School, Newtown Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 7LW

Inspection date	31/01/2014
Previous inspection date	12/11/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- The quality of teaching is highly effective and inspirational. Staff have an outstanding knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn. They are extremely skilled in using a wide range of different learning strategies to promote children's development. As a result, children make exceptional progress.
- Robust systems for observation, planning and assessment are in place. This ensures that a highly innovative range of challenging, age- and stage-appropriate activities are available for the children, to support their rapid development.
- Highly positive relationships and partnerships enhance all aspects of children's welfare and development. Information is continually gathered and exchanged for the benefit of each child's continual care, learning and development to ensure that all their individual needs are effectively and consistently well met.
- The nursery is extremely well resourced and staff provide exemplary learning opportunities to the children. Therefore, children are fully engaged in enjoyable and engrossing activities throughout the day, both inside and outdoors.
- The manager has ensured that staff have received comprehensive ongoing evaluative training to support fully their understanding of the setting's child protection policies and procedures, to ensure that they continue to effectively safeguard the children in their care.

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 voluntary and compulsory parts 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 areas of the premises.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, the staff and the children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and completed a joint observation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection and from questionnaires completed by parents.
- 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

First Steps Day Nursery and Out of School Facility opened in 2003 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is run by a management committee limited by guarantee, and operates from a purpose-built building in the grounds of Newtown Community School in Carlisle, Cumbria. The nursery serves the immediate locality and also the surrounding areas. Children are cared for in three designated playrooms and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery has a pet rabbit.

The nursery opens five days a week from 8am until 6pm, all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 119 children on roll in the early years age range. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are currently 12 staff employed at the nursery. Of these, 11 hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3, and the manager and pre-school room supervisor also hold a foundation degree. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to further develop the tracking systems that already identify gaps in children learning and development.

Inspection judgements

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

The staff working throughout the nursery have an exceptional knowledge of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They use this effectively and consistently to fully support children through all aspects of their learning and development. The environment is interesting, stimulating and highly engaging, and contains high quality resources which excellently promote children's learning through a wide range of inspirational learning experiences and activities. The nursery's individualised, designated playrooms for the care for babies, toddlers and pre-school children are staffed by dedicated practitioners who ensure that resources and activities are age- and stage-appropriate for every child. Each play area provides enhanced areas of learning which truly inspire children to become highly motivated, independent and active learners. Staff in the pre-school skilfully extend children's communication skills and thinking by modelling

language and posing challenging questions. For example, while children fill buckets with dry silver sand in the sand tray and then pour it out, the member of staff asks them, 'What do we need to make the sand mould together?' When the children explain how the water makes it wet and it will then mould together, the member of staff asks them, 'How will you get the water to the sandpit?' This teaching strategy promotes children's memory and extends their language skills.

Children's learning at home is effectively supported as staff encourage them to take home a range of 'book bags' so that parents can support children's learning at home. Children become extremely confident and self-assured as they explore their surroundings with lots of enthusiasm from an early age. They move freely from indoors to outside to independently select numerous natural and manufactured, high quality resources, and enthusiastically engage in physical play. The whole environment is language rich with numerous displays that exhibit children's work, positive visual images of other cultures and signs and symbols. Staff support new children settling into the nursery who speak English as an additional language by displaying key words in their home language and in English. This also encourages children to notice print and words in the environment. The outside play area is exceptionally well organised. It provides different learning areas which offer age-appropriate resources for the children and opportunities for them to explore and observe the natural world.

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The robust observation and assessment procedures completed by staff effectively monitor children's learning as they rapidly progress and develop the necessary skills in readiness for school. Observations clearly identify the next steps in children's development as staff are highly skilled in using the Early Years Outcomes and the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. This enables them to clearly identify children's skills and assess their development. Parents contribute significantly to their children's learning by ensuring the key staff are made fully aware of their child's most current interests. They follow up the activities given to them to help children at home, and add comments to information boards and children's progress records. Staff undertake a number of detailed observations and photographs to highlight children's learning. They regularly discuss these with parents to identify children's next steps in their development. Children's interests are clearly recorded on planning boards ready to inform the forthcoming week's planning to continue to inspire and challenge children during activities. For example, pre-school children are fascinated with small world role play, superheroes and pirates, so staff continue to engage this interest by planning to make treasure maps and hide treasure in the playroom. Resources are stored on low-level shelving and storage units for all children to help themselves. Storage boxes have photographs or written labels detailing the contents, which enables all children to make independent choices in their play and helps them know where things belong when tidying up.

Staff engage highly effectively with parents and develop excellent partnerships with them. Parents provide a wealth of invaluable information through the excellent settling-in procedures and by completing 'All about me' forms at regular intervals. In addition, staff ensure that they have very comprehensive information about the individual needs of the children, including the babies, so that their care routines are consistently met. Initial observations which identify children's developmental starting points when starting at the

nursery are rigorously completed for all children. This enables a consistent approach in supporting children's needs, especially between home and nursery. Parents and carers feel that they are kept exceptionally well informed of children's progress. This is completed in several ways. For instance, through verbal feedback at collection times, written entries in their blue book, checks contained in progress records, and parent evenings and newsletters. Staff provide specialist care and support to ensure that all children's needs are effectively met, especially for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

The staff team give the utmost priority to ensuring children's safety, both within the premises and grounds of the nursery and on outings and visits into the community. For example, staff supervise the children outdoors, and before children peddle bikes down the ramp outside, the staff endorse a traffic light system so that children think about others and check that the ramp is clear before they race down it on their bike. Staff encourage the children to share and take turns, and talk to them about the appropriate use of equipment. Before children visit the local Chinese takeaway restaurant to collect their afternoon snack and watch it being prepared and cooked, the staff discuss road safety and stranger awareness before leaving the premises. The discussions clearly show that safety is fully explored and is clearly understood by the children. Children develop an excellent understanding of the importance of fresh air and physical exercise through a wide variety of activities. They choose for themselves whether to play indoors or outside during the day. Children freely access the outdoor play areas where they can peddle bikes and push wheeled toys around the paths outside. They climb and balance on climbing frames and practise their kicking skills while playing ball games.

Children enjoy walks around the local community. They visit the fire station and go for 'dinosaur hunts' in the small woodland area in the school grounds. Children develop an understanding of healthy eating through discussions at snack and lunchtimes and regular baking or food-tasting activities. They learn to make healthy choices and explore where food comes from. For example, as a treat the children visit the local Chinese takeaway restaurant to collect their meal as part of their celebrations for Chinese New Year. Children's individual dietary needs are effectively managed through close working with parents, who provide children's packed lunch meals which are hygienically prepared by staff at lunchtime. Children learn about what foods are good for them while growing their own fruit and vegetables outside in raised beds. Children access their water bottles at all times throughout the nursery rooms. Staff ensure that children are changed at regular intervals and when required to ensure their comfort and well-being. Staff ask parents to bring in several sets of clothes and appropriate all-weather clothing so that the children can experience outdoor messy play and activities in all weathers.

All staff develop a strong bond and extremely close relationship with their key children. The key person system is well established throughout the nursery, which means that children feel emotionally safe and secure. Children are very well behaved. They remain totally engaged in their play and know what staff expect of them because boundaries are consistently and sensitively applied. Staff constantly praise and encourage the children

during their play. As a result, children grow in confidence and their self-esteem is effectively promoted. Staff encourage children to think about the feelings of others through the use of dolls and puppets which sit in the reading area in the pre-school room. They also display times when children have thought of others with acts of kindness. Staff ask the children about how they feel today and what they have enjoyed doing. Children learn about different cultures and beliefs by celebrating a range of festivals throughout the year. Staff plan a wide variety of activities to allow children to explore different cultures, such as food tasting, creative activities, cultural dressing-up clothes and using a range of multicultural resources. Opportunities to explore the wider world through the use of dual-language signs are also introduced to effectively support the use of children's home languages.

The nursery has highly effective partnerships with the feeder schools in the local area, therefore, children are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Progress and transition documents are completed by staff as children move between rooms in the nursery and on to school. Staff consult with other professionals to identify children's individual needs, such as the speech and language team and health visitors. Close working relationships with parents ensure any medical needs are fully met and children are fully included in the activities within the nursery. There are sensitive and secure procedures for obtaining information about children's health, such as allergies, from parents in order that these are fully acknowledged, followed and understood. Staff give priority to enabling children to build on their existing skills and growing independence. The exceptionally well-planned environment is significantly enhanced through the excellent use of resources, wide variety of interesting and varied activities, and play opportunities that promote children's independence, choice and decision making. This supports children's personal, social and emotional development extremely well and develops the skills required for their future move on to school.

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

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are completely understood and implemented by the manager and her highly skilled staff team. This means that children are well protected and kept safe and secure in the nursery. Staff complete safeguarding training and are well informed about child protection procedures and who to contact should they be concerned for any child in their care. Excellent systems are in place which fully enhance safeguarding practice. For example, policies are discussed at staff meetings and effectively implemented by all staff. The staff use meetings as a platform to cascade training to each other and to offer their views and introduce new ideas. There are robust procedures in place when selecting, recruiting and inducting new members of staff, and the requirements for numbers of children attending and staff ratios are met at all times. Parents are kept well informed about all aspects of the nursery, including the safeguarding and complaint procedures, and through regular newsletters and the parents' notice boards. Parents are extremely complimentary about the nursery and the dedication and commitment of the staff team.

Children are kept safe and secure in this well-maintained and well-organised nursery

setting. Comprehensive risk assessments cover all areas of the premises and outings to support children's safety and security further. The manager and room supervisors oversee the planning and implementation of the highly productive educational programme. Through supervision and appraisals and by observing staff practice, the manager closely monitors the effectiveness of the quality of teaching and the staff's targeted programme of professional development. Therefore, the ongoing continued professional development of the staff team ensures that their knowledge is exceptional and kept up to date. Children's individual progress is recorded and tracking systems are used to identify children who may need further support to ensure that they reach their full potential. There is scope to look at the statistics from the monitoring of children's progress in more depth to implement even more detailed tracking of children's development and ensure continued high levels of support for all children.

Leadership and management is inspirational. There is focused drive and commitment to continued improvement. All practitioners, parents and children are provided with opportunities to be involved in evaluating the quality of the provision. The manager makes excellent use of the different formats they have introduced, such as staff meetings, parents' evening and parental questionnaires, where they take full account of what the staff and parents have to say. A robust action plan successfully targets areas they wish to improve on and this has outstandingly improved the quality of the provision. For example, staff have refurbished the outdoor play since the last inspection and now provide a separate partitioned area for the babies so all children can access fresh air and outdoor activities throughout the year. The recommendations from previous inspections have been successfully addressed making continuous improvements to benefit the children. The views of parents, staff and children are valued and included as part of the nursery's self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation and monitoring of the provision is excellent, which contributes to them having an honest and realistic view of the setting's strengths and the areas that can be improved. The nursery places a strong emphasis on promoting inclusion for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language. There are effective partnerships in place with the local children's centre, schools and other agencies. The setting is highly committed to working in partnership with all professional organisations. Therefore, the needs of all children are securely met, with any additional support they may need.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
The requirements for the voluntary 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	EY288187
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	861302
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	68
Number of children on roll	119
Name of provider	Newtown Community Learning Centre
Date of previous inspection	12/11/2009
Telephone number	01228 522249

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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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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