



Sure Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY331137
Inspection date	05 September 2006
Inspector	Chris Scully
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Registered person	Sure Steps Day Nursery
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sure Steps Nursery registered in 2006 and is managed by a private provider. It operates from three rooms in a large converted house in Allerton, a suburb of Liverpool. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 17.45 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 15 children aged from birth to under eight years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The setting is able to support children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs six members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within a clean and hygienic environment. Children are aware to wash their hands before and after certain activities, such as after using the toilet and before meals. Most children are confident to see to their own personal needs. Younger children's hygiene is handled effectively by the staff. For example, appropriate procedures are implemented and followed by staff during nappy time.

An appropriate sick children policy ensures staff are alert to children who may be feeling unwell and that any necessary arrangements and communication with parents is made. Consent is requested for the administration of medication, however, the medication record does not always contain all the necessary information. A number of staff are trained in first aid, which means children's accidents or incidents are dealt with appropriately. However, consent for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment is not in place for all children. This hinders the staff's ability to treat children.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to play outdoors and benefit from a large outside provision, offering several different well differentiated areas. They use a range of large resources well, which enables them to test and explore their physical control. However, more able children are not always sufficiently challenged outdoors as they use the climbing cubes and slides with ease. Children are becoming skilled at using wheeled resources, with more able children showing good levels of competence as they whiz around the garden on their scooter. Children use small resources with increasing control. For example, they use tools well to create patterns in dough and use a variety of resources to build castles in sand play.

Children's healthy eating is promoted through the provision of nutritious snacks and meals throughout the day. Meals are freshly cooked each day and offer the children a balanced diet. Staff liaise closely with the parents on all aspects of the children's dietary and nutritional needs. This means children individual needs in terms of allergies and preferences are known and appropriate arrangements are made to address these. Arrangements are in place to ensure all children have access to fresh drinking water in order to keep themselves refreshed. Children enjoy relaxed social occasions at snack and meals times. They sit together with the staff to eat and engage in conversations about the day's activities. This successfully promotes the children's enjoyment of meal times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a bright, welcoming and clean environment, which means they can play and explore their surroundings in comfort. This is supported by the appropriate maintenance

and cleaning systems in place to maintain the building. Children's rooms are generally well organised to encourage the children's choice and independence when selecting resources. For example, they are stored in child-height furniture. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure the safety of the toys, resources and equipment used by the children. Currently, there are limited soft furnishing available in the rooms to enable the children to rest or relax upon, for example, when reading a book. Children have access to some resources depicting diversity within their rooms.

Children are cared for within a safe and secure indoor environment because staff follow appropriate policies and procedures. These include the use of CCTV on the main entrance to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access to the setting and the use of key pad entry systems on internal doors. Staff check the sleeping children every 10 minutes to ensure they are safe. Children's safety is at times potentially hindered in the garden due fallen berries and potentially hazardous plants being within their reach. All policies and procedures relating to children's safety are in place and are reviewed as required, for example, the outdoor risk assessment. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussions and gentle reminders from staff, such as how to climb the steps safely and to hold the bar when using the trampoline.

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection. They are aware to report any concerns to the manager who is the child protection coordinator. A child protection policy is in place and is shared with all staff and parents. However, it contains insufficient information on the action to be taken should an allegation be made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled at the nursery. They receive good levels of support and interaction from the staff, which enables them to feel secure. This is further enhanced by the caring relationships staff build with the children. Younger children are able to take part in a range of activities within their designated room, although, on some occasions this is limited. However, staff are in the process of implementing the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which enables them to enhance the learning opportunities and experiences offered to children indoors. Children are able to explore a wider range of learning experiences outdoors. They are confident to build with a variety of construction kits and to use the larger resources. Younger children are keen to engage visitors in their play and direct them to the resources they wish to use, for example, their favourite bucket and spade when building sand castles.

Children benefit from their individual needs being met within a warm caring environment, which contributes to their sense of belonging. Daily routines are organised to provide active and quiet times for children. Children's art work and photographs are displayed within the rooms and promotes the children's self-esteem, for example, the pictures of my family. Staff regularly introduce new words to the children during activities, such as sticky when describing the texture of dough. Younger children use gestures and sounds well to communicate. Staff listen well to the children and ask appropriate questions to enable the children to be understood. This successfully enhances the children's self-esteem and enables them to feel valued.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff working with the children have a secure understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Appropriate systems are in place to enable new children to settle into their new room and to understand the daily routines. Plans are in place which cover all areas of the curriculum and are adapted to meet the needs of children with additional needs. Assessment systems are in place, but do not effectively record the next steps in the children's learning. Children are able to become engaged in a range of interesting activities throughout the year, these include mini beasts, senses and my family. They have particularly enjoyed the my family theme and have brought in many photographs from home to support this activity.

Staff consistently pitch questions at the right level for each child. The effective use of questioning enables the children to think, communicate and solve simple problems. Children are becoming interested learners who enjoy new learning experiences, such as 'Kim's game'. They are keen to explore the items and are particularly interested in the star fruit. One child comments upon it looking like a star in the sky. Children are becoming confident communicators. They have some opportunities to practise mark making but, this is limited to specific areas within the setting, such as the writing area. Staff aid children with limited communication skills by using picture cards to help them to understand and vocalise their ideas with one another. Children enjoy singing songs and will often burst into their favourite song as they play, for example, 'Twinkle, Twinkle'.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding of mathematics through activities and their access to some mathematical resources. However, they have limited opportunities to identify numbers and their meaning within the environment. Children are beginning to count independently, such as the bricks in their tower. Staff regularly introduce mathematical language to the children, which they are beginning to use in their everyday discussions, such as big, small, and medium. Children enjoy exploring the world around us through thematic work, such as mini beasts and Diwali. They are developing compassion for living things, for example, one child carefully lifted a spider out of the sink and set him free in the garden. However, their exploratory skills are hindered as there are no investigative resources available to them. Children are developing computer skills, however, they have limited opportunities to test and explore other programmable resources.

Children's imagination is developing appropriately. They are confident to create scenarios when using the puppet show and happily take on board the role of individual characters. Children have opportunities to explore a range of art and craft activities, such as building three dimensional models out of junk. Two children confidently created pictures using string and paint, with one child commenting upon their creation resembling a butterfly. Opportunities are created for children to explore different role play scenarios, such as the launderette, which enables them to develop their imagination skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are included in all the activities provided. Staff have a secure knowledge of the children in their care. This means they are able to provide appropriate care and activities to meet their individual needs. Most consents are in place, which means children are cared for in

accordance with their parents' wishes. Effective systems are in place to support new children, this includes a number of visits to the setting before they start to help them to settle. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the world in which we live through planned activities, such as festivals. They have access to a range of resources depicting diversity, which encourage them to develop a positive attitude to others.

Children are generally well behaved and respond well to the staff's requests. They learn to share and to take turns in a caring and supportive environment. This is helped by the positive strategies and role models staff provide. Children use manners appropriately, such as please and thank you. The care of children with additional needs is good. Children benefit from an effective partnership with the parents and other professionals, in order for staff to provide good quality care and play experiences. Individual education plans are in place to support the children's learning and development. These are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet the children's needs.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Information sourced from parents is used well to meet the children's individual needs. Appropriate communication systems ensure parents are well informed of the setting and its provision. This includes the use of home link books, which detail the activities of each child. Parents also receive regular newsletters and have daily opportunities to converse with the staff about their child's day and progress. Plans are underway to include open days for parents to discuss their child's progress in detail. Opportunities are created for parents to assist their child's education by bringing in items from home, such as photographs or making spider's webs in line with thematic work. Parents spoken to state they are happy with the care their children receive and are complimentary about the staff and the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children are happy and settled at the setting. Children benefit from good support from qualified staff. Effective recruitment and induction systems ensure all staff are suitably qualified, vetted and informed of their roles and responsibilities. Staff have appropriate opportunities to undertake training to further enhance their existing knowledge and skills, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Records and documentation, which contribute to the children's well-being and safety are in place and are well maintained, with the exception of the medication record. Detailed policies are available, which cover all aspects of the provision. However, there are some omissions within the child protection policy and the complaints policy as they do not conform to current good practice guidance.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The manager undertakes the regular monitoring of the provision looking at training, development and activities within the curriculum. She is currently taking the lead on the nursery education provision. Regular staff meetings ensure staff are working in a consistent manner across the provision and individual training needs are

identified. The manager and provider are committed to the ongoing improvement of the setting and its provision across all areas.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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.

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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):

- ensure children are not exposed to hazardous plants or berries in the garden
- obtain consent for each child for the seeking of any emergency medical advice or treatment and ensure the medication record is accurately completed
- revise the child protection policy and complaints policy to ensure they conform with current good practice.

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):

- revise the assessment systems to ensure the next steps in children's learning are clearly recorded and are used to inform future planning
- improve upon the opportunities for children to use investigative and programmable resources
- improve upon the opportunities for children to write for a purpose around the setting and to recognise numbers and their meaning.

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