

Inspection report

First Steps Day Nursery Day Care of Children

Allandale View
Glasgow Road
Dennyloanhead FK4 1QN

Inspected by: Patricia Bunyan
(Care Commission Officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 24 May 2007

Service Number

CS2003011443

Service name

First Steps Day Nursery

Service addressAllandale View
Glasgow Road
Dennyloanhead FK4 1QN**Provider Number**

SP2003002664

Provider Name

First Steps Day Nursery

Inspected ByPatricia Bunyan
Care Commission Officer**Inspection Type**

Unannounced

Inspection Completed

24 May 2007

Period since last inspection

3 months

Local Office AddressSpringfield House
Laurelhill Business Park
Stirling
FK7 9JQ
01786 406363

Introduction

First Steps is a privately - owned nursery and has been registered with the Care Commission since April 2002.

The service is registered for 65 children at any one time, aged from birth to those not yet attending primary school. The service provides a range of flexible day care for pre-school children in accordance with the needs of parents and carers.

The service is available between the hours of 8-6, Monday to Friday.

The nursery is situated in the village of Dennyloanhead and the premises comprise two-storey accommodation which was previously a private dwelling house.

Children aged up to three years are cared for in four ground floor playrooms and children from three upwards are accommodated in the upstairs playroom. The nursery has a spacious garden for outdoor play.

At the time of the inspection, 70 children were accessing the service.

In summary, the service aims to provide a welcoming, happy, safe and secure environment for children and families. Commitment is made to providing for and supporting children's development and learning and to working in partnership with parents.

Basis of Report

This report was written following an unannounced inspection, which took place on 24 and 25 May 2007.

The inspection was carried out by Patricia Bunyan and Amanda Preston, Care Commission Officers.

Information was gathered in support of this report from the following;

Twelve parent/carer questionnaires had been returned by service users as part of the inspection.

This service was inspected after a Regulation Support Assessment (RSA) was carried out to determine the intensity of inspection necessary. The RSA is an assessment undertaken by the Care Commission Officer (CCO) which considers: complaints activity, changes in the provision of the service, nature of notifications made to the Care Commission by the service (such as the absence of the manager) and action taken upon requirements. The CCO will also have considered how the service responded to situations and issues as part of the RSA.

This assessment resulted in this service receiving a high RSA score and so a high intensity inspection was required as a result.

The inspection was then based upon the relevant inspection focus areas and follow up on any recommendations and requirements from previous inspections, complaints or other regulatory activity.

During the inspection, evidence was gathered from a number of sources including:

Discussion with the providers, manager, and members of nursery staff.

A review of policies, procedures, records and other documentation, including the following:

- " Service information
- " Health and Safety Policy
- " Infection Control Policy
- " Risk assessment Records
- " Medication Records
- " Training Records
- " Public Liability Insurance
- " Registration Certificate

Observation of staff interaction with the children present.

Observation of the general environment and equipment used in the provision of the service.

The Care Commission Officers took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting the following National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 2: Safe Environment.

Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

Standard 14: Well Managed Service

In accordance with Care Commission policy for 2007-08 the focus of the inspection was on the key theme relating to:

Infection Control

The inspection also takes into account the Regulation of Care Act (Scotland) 2001 and the Scottish Statutory Instrument 2002/ 114.

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced new regulatory arrangements in respect of fire safety, on 1 October 2006. In terms of those arrangements, responsibility for enforcing the statutory provisions in relation to fire safety now lies with the Fire and Rescue service for the area in which a care service is located. Accordingly, the Care Commission will no longer report on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function, but, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Further advice on your responsibilities is available at www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Report

There were four requirements made as a result of the last inspection, all of which related to health and safety issues within the setting. The service had taken action to implement the requirements although there was further work still to be undertaken. This is detailed under standards two and three of this report.

Comments on Self-Evaluation

The self evaluation was completed and submitted by the service on 20 June. Strengths and areas for development were provided for all standards to be inspected.

View of Service Users

Children in the 3-5 age range were confident in the setting and familiar with the routines of the nursery as well as with the staff. They used all of the activities made available to them and were able to describe to the CCO's some of the recent activities they had experienced in nursery.

Babies and younger children were less settled in their environment.

View of Carers

Twelve out of twenty-two parent/carer questionnaires had been returned as part of this inspection. Eleven responses indicated that parents/carers were happy to very happy with the overall quality of the service, however one response specified that they were unhappy with the overall quality.

Generally, parents/carers were happy with safety, security, and cleanliness within the service. Most carers were also satisfied that their children were treated respectfully and that in the main staff, knew their child as an individual.

Most parents were aware of the service's complaints policy but only half of all parents were aware of the child protection policy.

Positive comments contained within the returned questionnaires included,

- "Staff are very caring.... and have children's best interests at heart."
- "My child appears happy, motivated and stimulated at nursery."
- "It is a good nursery with well-trained staff in the 3-5 room"

Less positive comments contained within returned questionnaires included

- "I do not agree with the reasons behind the "time-outs my child was given"
 - "Recently, my child has been refusing to go to nursery."
- "Unsure but don't think my child's age group are out much, even in good weather".

Regulations / Principles

Regulation :

Strengths

Areas for Development

National Care Standards

National Care Standard Number 2: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - A Safe Environment

Strengths

Security within the nursery and the outdoor play area was carefully monitored by staff and CCTV systems were in place. Parents confirmed that the door entry system was effectively managed.

All childcare rooms and toilet areas were observed to be in a clean and tidy condition at the start of the day, and prepared for children on their arrival. The surroundings were generally well-maintained and decorated to stimulate children's interests although there was room for improvements to be made, particularly in rooms for younger children.

Resources and equipment within the 3-5 area had been increased and the lay-out and presentation of resources for children had improved since the previous inspection. Staff were developing areas of interest for the children and were continuing to further develop recommendations made by the teacher previously allocated to the service.

Since the previous inspection, the service had taken steps to improve safety within the setting. Childproof locks had been purchased and fitted to low-level storage and fridges in the childcare rooms.

In general, improvements had been made in relation to achieving a more child-friendly environment.

The service had an infection control policy, which was adopted in April 2006. The policy detailed the service policies on issues such as the control of infectious illnesses, food hygiene, nappy changing procedures and arrangements for cleaning the nursery. Nappy changing procedures were displayed within the setting and most staff were observed to follow these procedures.

Toilet facilities for children were suitable for the ages of children attending and were generally checked for cleanliness on a regular basis. Some records to support this were kept but were inconsistent.

Cleaning records of resources and equipment were being maintained but required to be standardised throughout the service.

The service had a copy of the "Keep it Clean and Healthy", which contains best practice guidance on the control of infection, however staff were unaware of this guidance.

Children did not have access to inappropriate materials via the Internet.

Areas for Development

The children did not have regular contact with nursery pets or animals, however they had experienced a visit to a Safari Park where there was a petting zoo and they were also planning a visit to the nursery from "Zoo Lab". The service needed to introduce a policy and procedures detailing safe and hygienic practices in relation to contact with pets and other animals. See Requirement 1

Staff had not recently accessed updated infection control training and there was limited information available to them within the service. Not all staff washed their hands between nappy changing and some used antibacterial handgel as an alternative. Staff should be reminded about best practice in handwashing and be able to access appropriate training and information. Guidance for staff on handwashing practices should also be included within the infection control policy. See requirement 2

The service did not generally use potties in the course of toilet training children unless parents specifically requested they do so. Current infection control policies should be expanded to include best practice in safe use and management of potties and toileting/changing of older children. See Requirement 3

Large white plastic tubs were used for storing children's packed lunches. Many of these were observed to be grubby and contained the remnants of glue and glitter. Additionally, some of the plastic plates used for serving food were scratched and needed to be replaced. Not all children were provided with plates for their snack and ate their snack from the table.

One member of staff was inappropriately using sterilising solution to "sterilise comforters".

At the previous inspection the service was asked to make contact with Environmental Health Department to arrange for an inspection of their current arrangements for hygiene, cleanliness and infection control within the service and to send a copy of their report to the Care Commission. To date, this has still to be implemented. See recommendation 1.

It was noted during inspection, that insufficient caution was exercised by the drivers of vehicles entering and leaving the nursery car park. Whilst service users had been reminded of the need for caution, this needed to be more effectively monitored and action taken to improve safety for children entering or leaving the nursery. See recommendation 2

In some instances, staff forgot to replace childproof locks on low-level storage and there were occasions when surface cleaning sprays were left within reach of children. There needed to be better monitoring of staff practice within the child care rooms to ensure continued safety for children. Recorded risk assessments were shown to the Care Commission Officers at the time of the inspection, however these were not being effectively communicated to staff within the service. The manager stated that in-house staff training on

risk assessment processes, was being planned. This should proceed as described so that all staff become familiar with risk assessment processes and use them regularly within their work environment. See recommendation 3

National Care Standard Number 3: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Health and Wellbeing

Strengths

Standards 3.1 3.2 and 3.3 were not inspected on this occasion.

Parents provided packed lunches for their children and the nursery provided healthy snacks which included fruit, vegetables and milk and water. A suitable number of staff had accessed food hygiene training. Some staff had accessed training on "Cooksafe" and procedures had been introduced within the setting.

Records of children's allergies were maintained and allergies managed appropriately.

Children had access to the nursery garden for outdoor play, although some parents stated that they were unsure as to how often their children were able to play out of doors.

Arrangements were in place for children to sleep as required during the day, usually in cots or buggies. Sleeping arrangements for 2-3 year old children were for up to 5 children to sleep together on the same large soft mat. Two to three year old children slept together on a large mat in the corner of the playroom. The service needed to monitor this arrangement closely, particularly in relation to infection control.

Sleeping children were regularly monitored by staff.

The service had made improvements to their systems for the storage, administration and recording of medication within the service and had reviewed their policy as required at the previous inspection. Staff were clear about the procedures for the administration of medication.

A suitable number of staff were qualified in first aid.

Areas for Development

The individual care needs of younger children were not being adequately met, particularly during mealtimes and other routines. Lunch routines were rushed and many staff did not sit with the children to encourage social skills and some staff stood over the children when they were eating. One young child was being given breakfast by a staff member when this was interrupted for another child to be admitted into the room. The child had to wait for at least 15 minutes for the remainder of his breakfast. Staff needed to give more time to developing relationships with individual children and encourage meaningful and responsive interaction during routines such as mealtimes.

Two babies were woken from their morning naps to have lunch. When raised with the staff and the managers it was stated this was due to instructions from parents, although this instruction was not recorded.

In close consultation with parents and staff the service needed to assess and evaluate the current routines for babies up to three years to ensure best practice in the care of this age group. Reference should be made to the Birth to three document in this instance. See recommendation 4

The policy and procedures relating to medication, which had been reviewed and amended since the previous inspection, still required further work. The service was advised about medication information guidance available on the Care Commission website and was provided with a paper copy for reference. The policy should be further reviewed in line with most recent guidance and the reviewed policy provided to the Care Commission.

National Care Standard Number 14: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Well-Managed Service

Strengths

The nursery is jointly-managed by two managers , one of whom is the registered provider and the other who is the day to day manager of the service.

Job descriptions, roles and responsibilities have been clarified and senior staff within the service have also been assigned management tasks.

A range of policies and procedures were in place to support and guide the operation and management of the service. Many of these were under review at the time of the inspection.

Most staff were made aware of policies and procedures during their induction into the service and followed record-keeping requirements in their day to day work.

Improvements had been noted in respect of staff files and work had started to review and develop the policies and procedures of the service. The service has a contract with the Royal Bank of Scotland Mentor Services Employment Law Service.

The day to day manager had started the process of registering with the Scottish Social Services Council. She had not however identified a suitable course for which would allow her to gain a recognised qualification for a lead practitioner.

Areas for Development

There have been issues recently with the effective management of this service and recommendations were made at the last inspection for the service to address some of these issues. Both managers agreed that the arrangements for the joint management of the service had not worked well, due to issues of inexperience and lack of management skills on the one hand and inability to commit to the responsibilities of the management role on the other.

Recently, steps have been taken for the managers to work more closely together and support each other. The service has not, as yet provided the Care Commission with an action plan identifying how they will improve management effectiveness. See Requirement 4.

Staff supervision sessions had not as yet been re-established for all staff, although it was

noted that a system for this was being formulated. See Recommendation 5.

The service highlighted that they have no access to the Internet within the service and feel that they are at a disadvantage in relation to accessing up to date information and guidance on developments in childcare. They are considering having the internet installed.

In the interim they should look to alternatives such as childcare magazines, journals, access to training and linking with appropriate agencies for updated information and guidance on best practice in childcare.

Enforcement

Other Information

Requirements

1. The service Provider must develop and implement procedures for the safe contact with pets and other animals. This is to comply with SSI 114 Regulation 4 (1) (a) & (d)

Timescale: within 4 weeks upon receipt of this report.

2. The service-provider is required to ensure that there is an on-going training programme in place to with regards to infection control. This is to comply with SSI 114 Regulation 13

Timescale: within 4 weeks upon receipt of this report.

3. Health and Hygiene procedures regarding the use, cleaning and storage of potties, along with appropriate waste disposal must be developed and implemented. This is to comply with SSI 114 Regulation 4 (1) (a) & (d).

Timescale: within 4 weeks upon receipt of this report.

4. An action plan detailing the measures to be put in place to improve overall management of the service should be provided to the Care Commission as a matter of urgency. This is to comply with SSI 114 Regulation 4 (1) (a) and Regulation 7 (2) (d)

Timescale: within 4 weeks upon receipt of this report.

Recommendations

1. The service should contact the Environmental Health Department to arrange for an inspection of the service and the current arrangements for hygiene, cleanliness and infection control within the service. A copy of this report should then be sent to the Care Commission. National Care Standards (NCS) 2.4

2. In order to improve the safety of children entering and leaving the premises the service needs to review their arrangements for carpark safety. Ref: NCS 2.2

3. The service should ensure that all staff access suitable training on risk assessment and safe practice and implement this within the work environment. Ref: NCS 2.2

4. The service should assess and evaluate the care routines for younger children within the service to ensure best practice when caring for this age group. NCS 3.4

5. The service should identify the measures they will put in place to provide support and supervision to staff. Ref: NCS 14.7

Patricia Bunyan
Care Commission Officer