

First Steps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Stacey Sangster

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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.

Description of the setting

First Steps Nursery is one of two settings owned and managed by the East Sussex Hospital's NHS Trust. It opened in 1990 under the name of Health Tots and operates from a building on the site of the Conquest Hospital in Hastings, East Sussex. There are four rooms used for childcare as well as office space, a staff room, a kitchen and toilet facilities. The nursery also has use of two enclosed outdoor areas. The nursery provides places for the children of staff working for the National Health Service.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered to care for up to 52 children in total. The registration allows all of these children to be in the early years age group if needed. The setting is open for 52 weeks of the year, Monday to Friday from 06:45 - 18:00. The setting closes on Bank holidays.

There are currently 69 children from four months to eight years on roll, 23 of these are in the early years age group. This includes children in receipt of funding for their nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are available within the full day from 6:45 until 17:30.

There are 13 permanently employed staff, including the manager and deputy. Nine of these staff hold qualifications equivalent to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 and three other staff are NVQ level 2 or above. There are two qualified nursery nurses who are available as bank staff.

The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Staff promote all aspects of children's welfare and learning with successful outcomes. Children make good progress in all six areas of learning. Excellent security, the promotion of health and hygiene and the positive relationships between children and staff are key strengths of the setting. Self evaluation for the purpose of continual improvement is well established and ensures that weaknesses are quickly identified and addressed. Meeting the individual needs of each child and their family is given high priority and this ensures that the setting provides a service which is inclusive and acknowledges that each child is unique.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- increase the frequency with which parents receive information about the specific next steps the setting are working towards with each child's development
- ensure that the assessment includes parents' observations of what their children have achieved outside of the setting
- ensure that the setting records details of other EYFS settings that children attend so that the required information can be shared where appropriate at the end of the foundation year

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting has a strong leadership and is line managed by an area co-ordinator who supports this setting and one other owned by the Trust, based in Eastbourne. Staff within this setting are well qualified and have access to training both in-house and that provided by outside agencies. All staff have regular opportunities to contribute ideas and suggestions to improve the running of the setting and senior staff are encouraged to be involved in updating systems and policy documents. The recently appointed acting manager, has worked in the setting for a number of years, she is fully conversant with the setting's aims, objectives and plans for the future. Her involvement in previous decision making and close links with the management team enables continuity and consistency during the period that she provides manager cover. The setting values their relationship with parents, and note their views and comments on a regular basis both informally during their day to day contact and more formally in questionnaires and open days. Due to the setting's close links with the NHS links with health professionals such as speech and physiotherapists are excellent and the setting works closely with such agencies to support children where needed. Links with local schools are well established and the setting work with them to support the older children's transition to school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are provided with an environment which effectively supports their development in relation to the six areas of learning and with the help of good-quality interaction from staff, helps children to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

A mix of child and adult led activities are provided as part of the carefully planned but flexible routines within the setting. The key worker system is successful in ensuring that children are cared for by people who get to know them well. Key workers identify where children are in their learning as well as the next likely step in their development. They use this knowledge to plan activities which effectively support each child's individual welfare and learning needs.

The assessment of children's progress is linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage and includes both pre-planned observations as well as spontaneously kept records of significance. These learning journeys contain well written, meaningful observations which provide good quality information about what the child is like as

well as where they are in their development.

Key workers regularly let parents know how children are progressing and the children's learning journey files are available for discussion. The systems in place to promote positive two-way communication between parents and staff is very successful in relation to children's general welfare, however it is less successful in relation to sharing information with regard to children's educational progress. Although staff regularly identify the next step for children in their key groups, this information is only presented to parents two or three times a year. In addition, apart from the information shared when a child joins the setting, the assessment files rarely include a record of anything that parents have noticed subsequently, that their children can do. The lack of input from parents in the ongoing assessment reduces the completeness of the developmental picture that the assessment record is able to provide.

Children are encouraged to respect each other's views and opinions, they have opportunities to find out about each other's cultures and religions. All children are able to take part in celebrations and festivals which are important to themselves and their families as well as learning about celebrations which are important to others in the wider community. Behaviour is well managed with staff observed to provide children with lots of praise and gentle reminders or explanation if dealing with unwanted behaviour.

Children of all ages receive good-quality care. Consideration has been given to the different needs of children within the different age groups. For example babies are cared for in the spacious carpeted room with comfortable furnishings and facilities for parents to breast-feed or just pop in for a cuddle. Resources are organised at floor level to enable the babies to access them freely, soft music plays in the background and brightly coloured mobiles hang from the ceiling. As children progress through the nursery the organisation of the resources reflects their need for increasing independence and reflect their growing abilities. By the time they reach the preschool area resources are labelled with both text and images so that children can locate items independently and at this stage they are also included in planning activities for the forthcoming weeks.

Children in the setting are given many opportunities to develop skills which will support their future independence, progress and economic well-being.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met