



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 122618

DfES Number: 543215

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 23/03/2005  
Inspector Name Carol Newman

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name First Steps  
Setting Address 18 Albury Road  
Merstham  
Redhill  
Surrey  
RH1 3LS

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Jacqui Tidey

## 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 nursery opened in 2000 and operates from four rooms in a detached Victorian property in Merstham village in Surrey. A maximum of 31 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round, excluding bank holidays. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll. Of these 5 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. Five of the staff, including the manager hold an appropriate early years qualification. Two members of staff are currently on a training programme. Four members of staff hold a current first aid certificate.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Childcare Service.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The educational provision at First Steps is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Children's progress in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is generally good. Progress in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and communication, language and literacy has some significant weaknesses.

Quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have an adequate understanding of how children develop and learn. They plan a range of activities that cover all areas of the curriculum. However, individual activities are not sufficiently planned and daily planning is not fully implemented. Children are not encouraged to visit all learning areas and the outdoor area is not sufficiently utilised to encourage learning in all areas. Children behave well. They learn to respect and care for others. Staff use appropriate behaviour management strategies, such as daily reward charts, to encourage good behaviour.

Children's significant achievements are recorded and children's progress is identified in the record keeping. However, this is not effective for more able children as observations and records are not based on all stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

Leadership and management is generally good. The management is committed to improving the quality of care and education and staff are encouraged to enrol on relevant courses. However, the provision for nursery education is not evaluated regularly to ensure that the resources remain inviting to children. Staff have limited time to plan and refresh the learning environment.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are well informed about the children's activities. Staff share their observations of the children informally, on a daily basis. However, parents have limited opportunities to contribute to children's learning at home.

### What is being done well?

- Children use their senses to explore and describe experiences. They express themselves creatively through a range of mediums such as painting, drawing and making collage.
- Staff use appropriate behaviour management strategies and children respond well. Staff make expectations of behaviour clear to ensure children understand why certain behaviour is not acceptable.
- There are clear aims for the outdoor provision. These aims reflect a commitment to improving the quality of care and education. Staff have the

opportunity for professional development and the management actively encourage staff to attend training.

**What needs to be improved?**

- the implementation of weekly planning and the clear identification of learning intentions in detailed activity plans that include individual children's next steps
- the staff support of children's learning in all areas of the curriculum by engaging enthusiastically in children's chosen tasks and by ensuring all learning areas are inviting and regularly refreshed
- the observation planning and record keeping to ensure that children's individual learning needs are effectively identified and regularly incorporated in short term plans.

**What has improved since the last inspection?**

not applicable

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children enjoy exploring new activities such as jelly and ice and show curiosity. They persevere when using the scissors. Children speak confidently about home experiences during circle time and free play activities and when they take "Honey Bear" home. They show independence when they find the recycling box. However, children are not encouraged to access the full range of resources or to be independent at snack time. Children have limited opportunities to learn about the cultures of others.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children talk openly about themselves and their families. They listen carefully when taking turns to speak in groups. They negotiate well during role-play. Children sometimes learn about the letter of the week. They know the initial sound of their own and others' names. They talk about the parent entry in the "Honey Bear" book and treat books with respect. The writing area and room labelling are not inviting to children and children have limited opportunities to recognise the rhythm in words.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count well. They choose number activities such as counting their pictures during free choice activities and they enjoy number songs. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They recognise the properties of simple shapes and use appropriate mathematical language during free play activities. The daily routine is not used effectively to encourage the children's understanding of number operations. Children do not regularly access construction activities.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children investigate using their senses. They notice change when exploring jelly and ice. Children are confident in using information and communication technology. They demonstrate good mouse control when playing games on the computer. Children learn about their environment through visits to local amenities, such as the library. They search for minibeasts in the outdoor area and care for the fish indoors. Children have limited opportunities to design and make using a range of materials.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children move confidently and negotiate space well indoors. They are competent when using the "ride in" cars and the small slide. They show good co-ordination when jumping and running outdoors. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They use small equipment, such as scissors, scoops and pencils efficiently. Children do not have access to any challenging climbing or balancing equipment and resources in the outdoor area are poorly maintained.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children use their senses to explore and describe ice as it melts, the smell of jelly and the feel of a range of textures. Children express themselves creatively through activities such as painting, drawing and making collages. Children find opportunities to play imaginatively. However, they do not freely access additional resources for role play and there are limited imaginative resources outdoors. Staff do not maintain the role play area so that it is inviting to the children.

**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**

- ensure weekly planning is thoroughly implemented and that learning intentions are clearly identified in detailed activity plans, that include individual children's next steps
- support children's learning in all areas of the curriculum by engaging enthusiastically in children's chosen tasks and by ensuring all learning areas are inviting and regularly refreshed
- develop the observation planning and record keeping to ensure that children's individual learning needs are effectively identified and regularly incorporated in short term plans.

*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.*