

# Millennium First Steps

Unit-1A, Station Approach, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 9UW

## Inspection date

15/10/2012

Previous inspection date

24/04/2012

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

3

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 3

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 3

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 3

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is satisfactory

- Children are helped to settle and to feel secure by the caring staff. They have good relationships with the staff and their peers. They show good levels of behaviour and are kind and consideration towards each other.
- Children enjoy conversation and a relaxed time whilst eating their meals. Staff sit with the children and engage the children in discussions.
- The acting manager has a clear vision for the nursery and has a sound understanding of having a positive relationship with parents and her co-workers so that there is a continuity of care and learning for all children.

### It is not yet good because

- Assessment of children and the two-year-old progress checks are not used to identify children's individual needs and the next steps in children's learning and development.
- Routines are not flexible enough to allow for children to make independent choices in their care and play.
- Monitoring is not consistent enough to identify weaknesses and areas to develop and not all staff are fully involved in this process.

## 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
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as 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 for inspection 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
- 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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the children's activities at the nursery which included indoor and outdoor play and meal times.
- The inspector observed and discussed the use of children's base rooms including the baby room.
- The inspector met parents and discussed their views on the service provided.
- The inspector spoke to staff, the acting manager and the providers at appropriate times and looked at a selection of policies and children's records.

### Inspector

Maura Pigram

## Full Report

### Information about the setting

Millennium First Steps was registered in 2010 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It previously operated under another company name. The nursery operates from five playrooms within a sole-use building close to the centre of the town of Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The building is accessed directly from a parking area and is set across two floors linked by stairs. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs sixteen members of child care staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. A Montessori teacher is also employed. The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 53 children attending who are within this age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and are able to support children with special needs and/or disabilities.

### **What the setting needs to do to improve further**

#### **To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:**

- review children's progress between the ages of two and three and provide parents and/or carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas and use observations and assessments to shape children's learning experiences and support children to choose freely between the indoor and outdoor area
- plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child's personal, social and emotional development by reviewing the; lighting in the pre-school base room, meal and care routines, imaginary play areas and the provision of exploratory resources for babies and pre-school children
- ensure food provided for children is healthy, balanced and nutritious and encourage children to make choices and develop independence skills during meal times.

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

- further develop the self-evaluation process to take into account all staffs' views and the views of parents and use this to identify areas to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.

### **Inspection judgements**

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

The staff plan activities to cover all the areas of learning although these do not always provide sufficient challenge and interest to meet their interests or learning and development needs. Planning is based on themes such as 'people who help us' and

'festivals'. Some staff give more consideration to children's individual interests and learning styles to promote the children's learning. This is particularly evident in the younger children's base rooms. Children's starting points are known and staff carry out observations and assessments. Staff use these to identify the next steps in children's learning. However, these are not yet linked to the revised Early Years Foundation Stage to support children's individual learning needs. Staff are yet to implement the progress check at age two although through discussion they are able to identify what children in their care are able to do. Overall, the assessment arrangements mean that systems to show children's progress are not clear. Some of the staff have started to become familiar with the revised Early Years Framework and training to support this is planned for the near future. Staff show through discussion that they have appropriate knowledge of their key children's stage of development. Children are generally working within the typical range of development expected for their age.

Babies and toddlers enjoy exploring the interactive toys provided for them and practice emerging skills, such as walking, by pushing wheeled toys. Although there are many resources, sensory items and mirrors are not always available to babies and toddlers to create interest and stimulation which support children's self-awareness. Children aged two to three years are well occupied and engaged in some purposeful learning. For example, they have opportunities to explore resources with their senses such as leaves, foam and paint. They enjoy exploring foam to find 'lost' or 'hidden' dinosaurs. Children's language and communication skills are supported through circle times, reading stories and the singing of songs. Children's development of the English language is supported by staff who learn key words in their home language. In addition, they develop their acquisition of English by recognising familiar words used in the welcome song each morning. Pre-school children are able to join in with French sessions led by a qualified teacher. Children enjoy play activities in the home area where they can develop their imaginative play. Although, at times staff interaction is positive, they do not always challenge children to extend their thought processes. The general organisation of the pre-school room does not provide children with the scope to provide interest to extend their learning and development during their child-led play. For example, the popular home area is not well organised to enable children to make spontaneous and independent choices to extend their own play and learning. Exploratory play for pre-school children tends to be adult-led which means that children are not able to fully make independent choices within their play. Mark making resources are easily available; children use sand handwriting books to support them in their emerging writing skills. Several Montessori resources are available to support children's understanding of a range of mathematical concepts such as number, shape and measure. On the day of inspection the room dedicated to the Montessori teaching was not used so use of these resources to promote children's learning was not evaluated.

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

Children are settled and form appropriate bonds with their key person and staff who are covering this role when the children's main carer is not present at the nursery. New children or those who are unsettled are sensitively helped to feel secure so that they join in with their peers. Children are able to access comforters when they are needed. Sleeping babies and toddlers are well monitored to ensure they remain comfortable and settled.

Staff in the baby room take positive steps to ensure care needs are well known and respond quickly to their individual needs.

Staff are attentive to older children's care needs such as wiping noses and assisting children in their personal toileting skills. Younger children follow timed routines to manage nappy changing and the outdoor play is a timed activity for all children. This means that choices for children which support their personal, social and emotional development is not fully promoted. Older children are encouraged to eat their food and to tidy up their plates when they have finished. Appropriate praise is offered and staff generally sit with the children to offer support and praise. However, staff do not use opportunities such as meal times to promote healthy eating and children's independence skills. For example, staff serve the children's food and butter their crumpets at tea time and do not always provide the correct utensils to promote their further learning, such as using knives and forks correctly. Meals are prepared on site although the use of processed foods such as ready-made sauces, jam and pastes do not contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Plans are in place to review the menus so that they are healthy and nutritious and fresh ingredients are used, parents have been involved in this process. This means that there is an appropriate partnership with parents in terms of children's care needs.

Ratios are monitored to ensure these are met at all times and staff are deployed appropriately at all times. Children are developing an effective understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, boundaries are given when older children use the stairs to access the garden. Children are reminded to use their 'indoor feet and indoor voices'. Outdoors they learn how to safely use the large play equipment which promotes their physical development. They know to go 'up the steps and down the slide'. Children behave well and they are learning to share and take turns, which supports their emotional, social and personal development. Resources in some rooms are well used although the organisation of these means that some areas such as the home area in the pre-school room does not fully support older children's imaginative development.

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

This nursery is undergoing a challenging management period. The provision are in the process of recruiting a suitable manager and clear recruitment procedures are being followed. Although the acting manager has only been in post for a short time, she shows clear leadership and management skills so that standards are continually improved. For example, she has identified the need for all staff to update children's assessment journals and has supported them in doing this. The acting manager is supported by staff, the senior management team and support services from the Local Authority. The acting manager has organised meetings with room leaders to discuss the best way forward for the staff so that the care of children is not jeopardised during this unsettling time. Policies and procedures have been updated to reflect the revised Early Years Foundation Stage and these are on display for parents to view. Some monitoring of the nursery has taken

place since the last inspection which included parents' and staff's views. However, this is not consistent enough to include all staff members' points of view and to ensure independence skills and healthy eating are monitored and promoted.

There is evidence that the recommendations raised at the last inspection have been addressed. For example, since the last inspection staff have attended safeguarding training so that they have up-to date knowledge on how to protect children in their care. There is a designated person for safeguarding. The acting manager is booked onto a designated safeguarding course so that she too can be a designated person for safeguarding. Risk assessments are carried out daily to ensure all areas are suitable for the children. The environment is appropriately cared for and some recent structural changes have improved the babies and toddlers rooms. However, one of the pre-school rooms lighting is not effective to offer a welcoming and attractive environment for the children. There are plans in place to replace some of the well-used resources so that interest and stimulation is provided.

There is a close partnership with parents and they receive regular updates about staff changes and the overall management of the nursery. Those spoken to were happy with their children's care but were less familiar about the Early Years Foundation Stage and the progress their children are making within this. The nursery has yet to implement the progress check at age two. The nursery have developed links with the nearby children's centre and are aware of the need to establish links with other providers such as schools so that children are supported in their transition to school.

### The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met  
(with  
actions)**

#### To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report.

### What inspection judgements mean

#### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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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.
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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	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. 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 inspected again within 12 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY420136
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	887062
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	0
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	53
<b>Name of provider</b>	Millennium First Steps Nursery Ltd.
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24/04/2012

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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 that are usually their 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.



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