

First Steps Day Nursery

26 Church Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 1SB

Inspection date	12/11/2012
Previous inspection date	30/10/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Managers do not effectively oversee the educational programmes, nor have they effectively monitored staff practice. This means that the provider has not identified key weaknesses in practice.
- The nursery does not have a system in place for assessing children's development in partnership with parents when they start at the nursery.
- Systems for observing, assessing and planning for children's development and progress are inadequate because staff have a poor understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.
- Staff do not take all opportunities to extend children's physical development by encouraging them to become independent and learn the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Staff do not have an adequate understanding of how children learn, which has a significant impact on children's learning especially in areas such as mathematical and physical development.

It has the following strengths

- Staff support children's language development well, including those children who are learning English as an additional language.
- The nursery forms suitable partnerships with parents and provides them with daily feedback about children's daily care and activities.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the nursery environment.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager of the nursery.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and the registered provider.
- The inspector took account of the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plans.

Inspector

Linda du Preez

Full Report

Information about the setting

First Steps Day Nursery is run by a limited company. It opened in 2004 and operates from three rooms in a two storey renovated chapel in central Croydon. The nursery has kitchen facilities and a secure outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 52 weeks of the year. It serves families from a wide catchment area. There are currently 39 children on roll ranging from twelve months to four years old. Children attend

a variety of sessions or the whole day. The nursery employs nine members of staff including the registered provider and a manager. Of these, eight have appropriate early years qualifications including one holding an Early Years Degree and one having Early Years Professional Status. The nursery supports children who are learning English as a second language and receives funding for the provision of free early education for children age two, three and four years.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all the areas of learning and development, with particular regard to physical development and mathematics
- plan and provide outdoor activities on a daily basis
- improve the arrangements for the supervision of all staff to provide support, coaching and training in order to a) develop staff's understanding of ongoing assessment and planning; b) develop all staff's understanding of all seven areas of development and c) enable all staff to respond to each child's emerging needs and offer a consistent approach to managing behaviour
- Improve the key person system by a) involving parents in initial assessments of children's starting points when they start at the nursery and b) ensuring that key persons support each other and share up-to-date information when children change from one key person to another

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

- support children's growing independence by allowing them to pour their own drinks and serve their own food.
- place water containers where children can find them easily and get a drink when they need one

Inspection judgements

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

The nursery has an adequate range of resources for children to play with, which are located within easy reach for children to choose and help themselves to. However, observations and assessments of children's learning are significantly out of date and the standard of the educational programme is currently inadequate. This means that the needs of all children are not met because staff have a poor understanding of where children are in their learning and what they should be learning next. As a result, planning is inadequate and currently just lists a few basic notes, which do not take into account the individual needs of each child or their learning priorities. Furthermore, some practitioners who have recently changed key groups have a very limited understanding of their key children's individual learning and development. This means that although the nursery has an adequate range of resources, children are not suitably challenged and do not make adequate progress. This impacts on children's motivation to play and explore and they become uninspired due to the lack of challenge. As a result, they wander around aimlessly. Furthermore, it means that children are not supported in developing the skills necessary for starting school.

Some staff talk to the children and introduce new words to help them to extend their vocabulary. They chat to babies as they play and introduce new words, such as the names of animals as they play with plastic cutters. Babies repeat the words and staff praise them. This helps babies to feel valued and develop their confidence in talking. Staff also offer support to children who are learning English as an additional language. Staff learn a few basic words in children's home language, display the words around the nursery and use symbols to help them understand the routines of the nursery. This helps children to feel supported and valued. However, practitioners working with older children do not use good questioning techniques to encourage children share their ideas and thoughts or to think further. They sometimes ask children questions, but do not give them time to answer. Staff also use inappropriate language for the ages of children they are talking to, such as 'pat, pat, pat the sand' when talking to a four-year-old, rather than encouraging them to talk about the textures, for example. This does not support children's language and communication skills. Furthermore they do not use everyday opportunities to introduce children to mathematical concepts during their play, such as comparing objects, counting and considering similarities and differences. Therefore, children do not receive adequate levels of support and encouragement from staff to help them develop skills for their future development and progress.

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

Staff greet children and parents with a warm welcome when they arrive at the nursery. Staff support children to settle in and any upsets are short lived as children soon settle and begin to play. However, although staff support children's emotional development, they do not have a suitable understanding of other areas of children's development, due to a poor understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. For example, staff do not make good use of the outdoor area; this means that even though the weather is dry and the area has a range of resources available, children do not always get the

opportunity to play outside to get fresh air and exercise. This is despite the local authority having invested in the provision to develop the outdoor area and management identifying it as an area to improve the quality of the provision and enhance learning experiences for children. Children do not have their independence skills supported fully. They do not pour their own drinks, help lay the table or serve their own food at lunch time. Furthermore, although drinking water is available to children, staff place it at the back of a table where children do not always notice it and do not encourage children to have regular drinks. As a result, it remains untouched all morning, even when children become warm inside the room as the windows are closed and the room is hot. This is a poor approach to supporting children in developing their awareness of how to keep healthy.

Each child is allocated a member of staff who helps them to settle in. However, staff do not seek information from parents about their children's development when they start at the nursery. This means that they do not start off with an accurate picture of each child's learning requirements. The nursery does not have a system in place to support children in the absence of their key person. However, children are supported emotionally when they progress from one age group to another, as staff arrange a gradual settling-in period and inform parents of the changes about to take place. However, the transition between key persons is not effective in supporting other areas of development, as practitioners do not have an accurate overview of children's individual progress. The nursery has some systems in place to aid transitions on to school as they have visits from local teachers and form positive links.

Children are well behaved and are aware of familiar routines, which further help them to feel secure. Staff promote a sense of belonging by displaying children's pictures, drawings and photographs around the nursery. Most staff have effective strategies in place to manage children's behaviour. However, these are not always consistent. For example, some staff praise children and give them clear guidance about how to behave. However, others do not and tell children that they are 'being silly'. This is not an appropriate response to developing children's understanding of acceptable behaviour.

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

The provider has a clear understanding of their responsibility in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements and has worked hard to meet all previous actions and recommendations relating to safeguarding and welfare. For example, the nursery has implemented robust risk assessments, which are updated regularly and keeps accurate registers to record times of arrival and departure of children, staff and visitors. However, the provider does not have a clear understanding of their responsibility in meeting the learning and development requirements. Observations and assessments of children's progress are not up to date and the management team has failed to effectively monitor planning. This means they have not identified a significant weakness, resulting in inadequate practice throughout the nursery. The nursery does not accurately identify next steps in order to provide sufficient challenge, identify, and close any gaps in children's

progress and development.

The nursery forms links with the local authority for advice and support and demonstrate a suitable understanding of their responsibilities to liaise with professionals to support children when necessary. Parents benefit from daily discussions with staff, regular newsletters and consultation days. Staff also complete daily diaries for younger children to share information with parents about children's daily experiences and care. Parents say that their children are happy at the nursery and that they are pleased with the care they receive. The nursery seeks the views of parents through questionnaires and acts on their feedback. For example, they created a larger area for parents to store pushchairs during pick up and drop off times.

The management team has completed a self-evaluation to identify areas for further improvement. However, they have not been successful in putting this into place. For example, they identified making better use of the outdoor area as an area for development, but have only gone so far as to mention this to staff at meetings and have not supervised staff to ensure that it is put into place. As a result staff have not carried this out and the impact of this is that children who learn best in the outdoor environment are not given the opportunity to do so.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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.
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

Unique reference number	EY289832
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	814754
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	39
Name of provider	First Steps Nurseries Limited
Date of previous inspection	30/10/2008
Telephone number	020 8681 8430

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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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