

First Steps Kindergarten

Yewtree Lane, Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1PU

Inspection date	26/03/2014
Previous inspection date	22/10/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The relationship between staff and children is outstanding, and as a result all children settle in extremely well and make smooth transitions and good progress.
- Safeguarding and welfare is outstanding because the safeguarding lead has an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare and ensures that all staff receive training and support of a high quality.
- The extremely sharp focus on children's language and communication skills ensures that all children are particularly well supported to develop these skills.
- Staff ensure that parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through parents' meetings, ongoing informal discussions and access to their children's development files. As a result, parents feel well informed and valued and are able to contribute to planning the next steps for their children.
- Effective use of the key person system ensures that children form secure attachments and that their emotional well-being is well promoted and developed.
- Teaching is consistently good, ensuring that all children make good or better progress in their learning and development.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to further enhance the outdoor area so as to enrich children's experiences.

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

Inspection activities

- The inspector undertook a tour of the nursery with the manager.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, the deputy manager and the key persons of children tracked.
- The inspector looked at various documents, including policies and procedures, risk assessments, records kept on children, evidence of the suitability of staff, and staff qualifications and training.

Inspector

Terence Gould

Full report

Information about the setting

First Steps Kindergarten is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated on the site of Poynton High School and Leisure Centre in Poynton, Cheshire. The premises consist of two single-storey demountable buildings. The kindergarten building has four activity rooms and a sleep room. Toilet and nappy changing facilities directly adjoin each of the playrooms. The out of school club building has one playroom and a computer room. Children are able to access one of three outdoor enclosed play areas. A total of 16 staff work directly with the children, 15 of whom hold a recognised childcare qualification. Two further staff are employed for cooking, cleaning and maintenance duties.

The setting is open Monday to Friday throughout the year between the hours of 7am and 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting provides funded places for two-, three- and four-year-olds. Children who attend the out of school club are transported to and from schools in the local area. During school holidays holiday club provision is also open to children who attend other schools. There are currently 65 children on roll, 40 of whom are in the early years range.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- make improved use of the outdoor environment to provide an enhanced range of experiences for children.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are happy and motivated to learn because staff know them well as unique individuals and ensure they use their knowledge to effectively meet each child's individual needs and foster their identified interests. Babies are enabled to freely explore their environment, developing good physical skills as they move around independently. The impact of this is that all babies make very good overall progress and particularly do well in their physical development. The quality of teaching is consistently good, and in some cases outstanding, because staff know their children well and use this knowledge effectively to plan and deliver educational programmes which inspire children to learn. This ensures that all children make good or better progress in their learning and development. On starting at the nursery, the children quickly settle and respond well due to the warm and welcoming approach adopted by all staff. This helps to create a calm and nurturing environment in which children form secure attachments. As a result, children respond positively to being at the nursery and are enabled to be ready to learn.

Children are encouraged to develop their personal, social and emotional well-being as they respond to familiar people. They are enabled and encouraged to independently select from a wide range of appropriate resources. As a result, they play with purpose and concentrate well on self-chosen activities as well as those led by adults. Planning clearly identifies what children need to learn and how, when and where this will be delivered and provided. The key person role is used particularly well in each room as staff work in teams to identify, through observations and discussions, what children know and can do and the next steps for them in their learning and development. In the pre-school room children enjoy playing with dough, actively engaging in learning about shape and developing number recognition skills. Children make monsters and snowmen using dough and confidently talk in detail about what they have made. Children are very confidently able to use language to express their ideas, interests and needs because they are provided with a wide range of support for their communication and language skills, including the extension of their spoken vocabulary through a range of exciting indoor and outdoor activities, ensuring that all children make good progress in this area. For example a 'mini-beast roadshow' visits the setting and children are able to observe, handle and talk about such things as giant land snails, snakes, hermit crabs and giant millipedes. At other times firefighters make visits and children are able to explore inside the fire engine, try on firefighter hats and look at the range of equipment they use.

Children are encouraged to bring in their pets from home to share with others, such as rabbits and guinea pigs. Each year a teddy bears' picnic is organised. This takes place outdoors and children bring their teddy bears in or borrow one for the day. In the outdoor area, children are supported to grow and harvest a range of fruit and vegetables including tomatoes, beetroot, green beans, carrots, lettuce and potatoes. Sometimes role play is provided outdoors, such as a pretend building site using life-like bricks, a sit-on digger, sand, water and pebbles. Children play imaginatively as they dress up as builders and wear hard hats and high-visibility jackets. The children are extremely happy to share their thoughts and ideas with others, initiating and engaging in many worthwhile conversations, such as talking about their activities at home or at nursery during group time. The outdoor area is used on a daily basis whatever the weather and is used to support all seven areas of learning. However, there is scope to make improved use of the outdoor environment to provide an enhanced range of experiences for children.

Parents comment that children make good progress in their learning from their starting points and they are kept extremely well informed about things their children do at the nursery, including activities they have engaged in, food they have eaten and the progress they are making. Older children are supported to develop early writing skills as they write their names on their artwork. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of young children in their care and use this well to support the quality of their teaching, which is consistently good and in some cases is outstanding. Staff work together to provide an environment in which children can learn independently. They support children's learning through providing a range of exciting activities during which staff model language, ask them open-ended questions to challenge their thinking and explore and discuss ideas with them, as well as demonstrating, explaining, offering encouragement and giving positive feedback. This supports children to confidently acquire the key skills needed for the next steps in their learning as they move

to new rooms in the nursery or on to school. Every child has a learning journey file which clearly shows their individual progress, and this is used to identify any gaps in their learning and to plan the next steps for them. This is regularly and effectively shared with parents, who make positive comments. A well-established key person system successfully enables staff to engage with all parents and supports clearly differentiated work with children.

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

Children feel secure with staff and respond very well to them because of the positive praise and encouragement that staff offer to every child. As a result, children's emotional well-being is particularly strong and they are supported to develop well. The setting follows robust safety procedures to safeguard children and supervise them appropriately at all times. This helps to effectively promote children's sense of security and well-being. Relationships between children and staff are warm, purposeful and caring and there is a very calm atmosphere throughout the setting. Attention is paid at the start of children's placement to organising settling-in visits. These visits support smooth transitions for the child and for their parents or carers. Staff have a calm and consistent manner with children and act as positive role models. Children approach staff for reassurance and a cuddle, which provides them within a secure and safe environment that helps develop their confidence and self-esteem. Children's behaviour is very good throughout the setting and staff have little need to challenge behaviour. This is because children are well supported to know how they should behave and respond appropriately to this. Staff have an agreed behaviour policy which is consistently applied and is based on a secure understanding of child development by all staff, who all adopt a sensitive but consistent approach. Children learn to be independent and show consideration for each other. For example, children come indoors for resources to dry the bicycles which have got wet, ensuring they are dry for others during outdoor play. They have a good awareness of keeping themselves safe, and staff routinely encourage them to consider aspects of safety. For example, staff remind children of the rules in keeping themselves safe as they gather together in key groups and play in different areas of the setting.

Children learn about the importance of a healthy diet and how to keep healthy through regular exercise. They are provided with a good range of healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. Snack and meal times in all rooms are sociable occasions where conversation is encouraged and children are supported. Children develop independence through everyday routines; for example, washing hands, feeding themselves and pouring their own drinks. Children have lots of opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise in all weathers. They run through puddles and explore using their senses, such as when they puddle jump on the flooded grassy areas. Children look for mini-beasts outdoors and sometimes find ladybirds and spiders. They enjoy spontaneous play alongside staff; for example, making marks with chalks and exploring number recognition. Children learn good hygiene routines as staff remind them to wash their hands regularly and especially after using the toilet, after messy or garden play and before eating. Children's safety is treated with great importance by all staff. The setting's doors are kept locked and only opened by staff. Visitors, including parents, must sign in and out of the nursery, particularly when bringing or collecting their children. This ensures that children only leave with their known adults.

Children are very well supported in their transitions within the setting and on their move to school. Teachers from the local feeder schools visit the setting and staff visit these schools. Transitions are generally smooth and seamless due to trusting relationships being formed with their new key person through a series of visits to their new room, or a new class at school, and discussions around their move. Across the setting there is a strong staff team in place, many of whom have worked at the setting for a long period of time. Low staff turnover helps to ensure continuity for both children and parents.

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

Comprehensive and detailed recruitment procedures are in place, which include the full vetting of all staff to ensure their suitability. When staff take up their employment at the setting, induction systems in place are suitably robust; so to ensure that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and the provider's policies and procedures. Staff take positive steps to safeguard children's welfare through detailed risk assessments and routine safety checks, which contribute significantly to children's safety and well-being. Staff are vigilant about children's safety and supervise children as they move between the indoors and outdoors. In addition, staff follow clear procedures regarding supervision of children in all areas.

The management team have a very good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and use this to make sure that the learning and development requirements are fully covered. As part of their child's settling-in process, parents complete detailed information sheets which form part of children's initial assessment. This helps staff to recognise children's starting points and individual needs and to plan activities at an appropriate level. Successful partnerships with parents promote a shared approach to meeting children's individual needs and interests. Staff work together well as a team and are very supportive of each other. They plan together to identify and provide for the next steps in children's learning and development. Planning is highly effective because parents are able to contribute towards it and because it clearly indicates how, when and where staff will meet children's identified needs and support their interests. Planning is effectively monitored by the management team, which helps to ensure that planning is of a precise quality and is consistent across all age groups. This is a strength of the setting. Children's progress is also monitored with parents and support is provided to staff as necessary. The impact of this is that all children are suitably supported to maximise their progress.

Effective role models are provided by a proactive management team, which motivates the staff team to strive to achieve the best for all the children. In addition to annual appraisals and regular team meetings, supervision is used effectively to drive forward improvements, as well as to monitor staff training needs and the quality of provision. Staff indicate that they feel the management team ensures they are fully supported, and they feel valued because they recognise that their supervisions and appraisals are a key part of the setting's self-evaluation processes. For example, the staff team are currently involved in exploring how outcomes for children can be improved by further developing the outdoor

areas. As a result, this has now been identified as a priority for future action. Staff have up-to-date safeguarding and child protection knowledge, which helps them to protect the children in their care. They are led and trained in this by a very knowledgeable and suitably qualified safeguarding lead and all feel confident that, as a result of this, it is an area of particular expertise of their setting. Regular management monitoring observations across the setting and feedback, alongside the open-door policy that management adopt, ensure that any potential concerns and issues are quickly identified and dealt with. This enables the provision to continue to develop and provide high quality care and learning.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. 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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	305058
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	871757
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	65
Name of provider	First Steps Kindergarten Partnership
Date of previous inspection	22/10/2008
Telephone number	01625 859 867

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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