

# First Steps Nursery

169 - 171 Somerset Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 2JF

## Inspection date

17/03/2014

Previous inspection date

17/05/2013

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

3

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
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## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision requires improvement

- The staff team is vigilant with regards to ensuring hygiene and identifying potential risks to children. Consequently, children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are supported well. Staff successfully help children to communicate and feel included in nursery life.
- Relationships between staff and parents are good and the nursery has worked very hard with children and their parents to promote the benefits of healthy eating.

### It is not yet good because

- Opportunities to successfully support and build on what babies enjoy, know and can do are not maximised. This is because not all staff working with the babies fully understand how to effectively plan and provide consistently appropriate learning experiences.
- There are not enough resources available to babies that invite them to explore using all of their senses or to help older children understand how words and numbers are used in everyday life. Consequently, children's enjoyment and opportunities for learning are reduced.
- The way that all aspects of the provision are monitored and reviewed is not fully effective in raising the quality of teaching and identifying weaknesses and priorities for improvement.

## **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 inspected had a tour of the premises.
- The inspector spoke with management and staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector interacted with children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector observed activities throughout the nursery in both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- The inspection conducted a joint observation with the manager of a planned creative activity taking place in the baby room.  
The inspector looked at a selection of documentation, including children's records,- learning and development information, staff training records and a selection of policies and procedures.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability for all adults working on the premises.
- The inspector asked the provider and manager about self-evaluation methods.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents gathered through discussion during the inspection and from written questionnaires sent out by the nursery.

**Inspector**  
Carol Johnson

## **Full report**

### **Information about the setting**

First Steps Nursery was registered in 2012 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is privately owned and operates from a converted property in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children have access to an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

There are currently 48 children attending the nursery who are in the early years age range. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

There are currently 11 members of staff working directly with the children, 10 of whom have an appropriate early years qualification. The manager has a BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies and holds Qualified Teaching Status. One member of staff has a BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies and another has a foundation degree and holds Early Years Professional Status. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association. The nursery also employs a cook and a domestic member of staff.

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

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

- improve staffing arrangements, so that the needs of babies are effectively met over the lunchtime period
- ensure that all staff fully understand how to use information gathered through assessment and communication with parents and other professionals to plan and provide appropriate learning experiences for children; this particularly relates to staff working with babies
- develop the educational programmes for communication and language, literacy and understanding of the world by; including more resources that encourage children to read and write for a purpose within the toddler and pre-school role play areas and the outside play area; and provide babies with improved access to a wide range of different objects and materials for them to explore and investigate.

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

- monitor the routines and the quality of teaching more effectively, in order to accurately identify priorities for improvement and staff training and support needs.

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

Overall, children make satisfactory rather than good progress from their starting points because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Staff confidently describe children's individual personalities, needs and preferences. This is because they ask parents to share what they know about their children and carry out regular observations of children throughout the day. Also, they liaise with any other professionals involved in children's care and education. This information is then recorded in children's individual files, their progress assessed and the next steps in their learning planned. However, not all staff are effectively using what they see and hear to plan children's experiences. While, staff working with the toddlers and pre-school children plan experiences that match children's interests and provide suitable levels of challenge, this is not always the case in the baby room. For example, a collage activity inspired by St. Patrick's Day is not planned or presented appropriately to suit the needs and abilities of babies. Pieces of green tissue paper, printed pictures of a Shamrock and pots of glue and paint are placed on a low table. Staff invite the babies to come to the table and participate in the activity. Some are keen to do so and enjoy experimenting with the resources. However, some of the smaller children are unsteady on their feet and find it difficult to stand and paint at the table.

Furthermore, their safety, comfort and enjoyment are not fully promoted because some of the aprons they are wearing are too long. Staff explain that the purpose of this activity is for children to learn about St. Patrick's Day but they fail to see that this is an unrealistic expectation for children of this age. This shows that some staff lack a good understanding of how young children develop and learn. However, another member of staff in the baby room cleverly encourages a very young child to crawl by placing toys she knows they like just out of their reach. She then successfully encourages another child to take a few steps by offering praise and holding out her hands. This practice shows a clear understanding, by some staff, of ways to help develop young children's physical strength and confidence. Consequently, it is evident that the knowledge base of the staff team and the quality of teaching at the nursery are variable. This means that children's enjoyment and learning potential are not effectively supported.

Staff provide a range of activities to help prepare children for their future learning and transition to other settings. For example, during regular cookery activities, children develop social skills as they learn to share, listen and follow instructions. Pre-school children talk about the various ingredients; describing their texture, colour and where some of them come from. Staff alert children to the numbers on the scales and children carefully weigh out required amounts, following a recipe staff have written on a whiteboard. Consequently, children see how words and numbers are used for a purpose and develop an awareness of quantity and size. However, opportunities to extend this concept further are sometimes missed. For example, the toddler and pre-school role play areas are currently set up as home kitchens but do not contain a clock, calendar or writing materials. Also, there are very few numbers and words evident in the outdoor area, despite this being raised as a recommendation at the nursery's last inspection. Consequently, children's mathematical and literacy skills are not effectively promoted. Furthermore, a wide range of stimulating resources that encourage babies to explore and investigate using all of their senses is not evident in the nursery. Many of the resources easily accessible to babies are plastic and they do not have access to a wide variety of natural and man-made objects and materials to listen to, touch and smell. Consequently, children's curiosity and sense of exploration are reduced.

Several children who speak English as an additional language attend the nursery and staff successfully support their communication and language skills. Staff model language and use gestures and facial expression to help children understand what they are saying. Furthermore, some staff speak more than one language and their language skills are successfully harnessed to aid communication between the nursery and some families; these staff members translate information and provide opportunities for children to hear their home language. This approach supports children's emotional well-being and progress and fosters partnership working. Parental involvement in their children's learning is successfully encouraged by the nursery. Staff regularly suggest a range of activities that children and their parents can undertake together. These experiences are designed to be fun and to support children's learning at home and in nursery. Furthermore, parents and carers are frequently invited to attend events, such as parents' meetings, workshops and outings. As a result, relationships between the nursery, staff and children are enhanced and knowledge is shared.

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

On the whole, children show by their actions and comments that they feel safe and secure in the nursery. Toddlers and pre-school children readily go to staff when they need support or reassurance and are keen to talk to staff about things that interest them. However, children's well-being is not always fostered as well as it could be. This is because staff deployment and the way that routines are organised are not always effective. This was particularly evident on the day of inspection in the way the lunchtime period was managed in the baby room. Two members of staff were busy setting up the room ready for children to sleep and did not readily go to the aid of a colleague struggling to satisfy the needs of a several children; a crying child seated on her lap and two younger babies who needed support to eat their food. The manager confirms that she is aware of weaknesses in this area and has been observing staff practice with a view to making improvements. However, mealtimes in the other rooms are managed well. Pre-school children help to lay the table ready for meals and tidy away afterwards. They pour their own drinks, scrape any unwanted food into the bin and place their used plates and cutlery in the sink. Consequently, children develop a sense of responsibility and learn to move about the room safely and sensibly. However, the lack of consistent and effective practice across the nursery means that children's well-being is not always fostered as well as it could be.

The nursery has a well-established key person system and this fosters trusting and supportive relationships between staff, children and their families. Key persons and parents regularly exchange information on children's welfare and progress and discuss children's individual needs, interests and abilities. As a result, parents receive reassurance and regular information about their children. Clear arrangements are in place to support children's movement between the different rooms of the nursery. Staff assess when individual children are ready to move on and discuss this with their parents. Subsequently, arrangements are made for the child to visit the new room for short periods before the planned move date with their key person. These visits enable children and staff to get to know each other better and familiarise children with the changes in routines and the environment. In addition, staff provide some support for children moving onto local schools. For example, nursery staff talk to children about what to expect at school and they encourage children's communication, language and independence skills.

Staff pay excellent attention to the cleanliness of the nursery and by doing so create a welcoming environment for children and adults and reduce the risk of infection. The provider demonstrates a strong desire to improve the health of children and their families. A display on the ground floor of the nursery informs parents about the amount of sugar in everyday food items and how they can access free vitamins for their children. Children learn about good oral hygiene as they brush their teeth after lunch and gain positive attitudes towards physical activity through lots of outdoor play and exercise. Food provided by the nursery is very healthy and prepared on site; menus are carefully planned to meet children's dietary needs and to encourage them to try a range of foods. Cookery activities are planned and provided on a weekly basis and these promote children's awareness of hygiene and healthy eating in a fun manner. Children learn to use tools and equipment safely and sensibly and wash their hands before cooking. They enjoy easy

access to liquid soap and paper towels and demonstrate independence skills appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children behave well because staff are positive role models and ensure children are clear about their behaviour expectations. For example, older children know that they are expected to take turns in their play. Any incidents of unwanted behaviour are quickly handled by staff in a positive and developmentally appropriate manner. For example, staff distract younger children and older children are asked to think about what they have done and consider the consequences of their actions. Staff promptly acknowledge and reward children's good behaviour, effort and achievement and this raises their self-esteem and their desire to co-operate and participate in experiences.

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

The leaders and managers in the nursery have a clear understanding of the requirements to safeguard children. The management contact the relevant authorities in the event of any concerns, for example, they notify Ofsted and the local children's social services. The setting follows advice given and conduct investigations as required. Staff are reminded of the nursery's safeguarding policy and procedures and their responsibility to safeguard children. The subject of safeguarding is covered as part of the nursery induction process and is routinely discussed during staff meetings. The manager is the person with designated responsibility for safeguarding and she is clear about appropriate child protection recording and reporting procedures; she provides advice and support to the rest of the staff team in this respect. Staff confidently describe some of the possible signs of abuse and neglect and understand that they are required to report any inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children and visitors are closely supervised. Furthermore, closed circuit television cameras are installed in various areas of the nursery; these allow management to monitor security and observe what is happening in the nursery.

Leaders and managers regularly monitor and review all aspects of the provision. However, their efforts are not effectively focused on identifying and addressing weaknesses in practice; in particular, the way that the outdoor environment is resourced and staff training and development needs. At the nursery's last inspection, a recommendation was raised to enhance the outdoor area to enrich children's mathematical and literacy skills and there has been little done in this respect. The manager identifies that the level of staff knowledge and the quality of staff performance are variable. Also, she describes how on occasions, lunch and sleep routines are not carried out as well as she would like. However, prompt and effective action has not been taken to bring about improvement and ensure high standards of care and education. Weaker and less experienced staff do not benefit from regular opportunities to be mentored and coached by the more qualified and experienced members of the staff team. Also, monitoring does not ensure that experiences planned and provided for the youngest children reflect their interests and suit their stage of development. Consequently, children's welfare and progress are not promoted to a consistently high standard. Nonetheless, leaders and managers express a strong desire for quality. Extensive building work, planned to increase the size of the



premises and enhance the learning environment is near completion. The intention is for the pre-school children to use the extended areas and these will provide them with additional space and direct access to nursery outdoor play area.

Partnership working arrangements between the nursery and parents are good. Two-way communication between nursery and home is successfully fostered. Key persons routinely talk to parents about their children's progress and welfare and all required information is obtained from parents. Lots of useful information is attractively displayed around the nursery and can be viewed on the nursery's website. The nursery has formed a 'Parents Club' and this is used well to encourage parental involvement in the nursery and to cascade useful information. Parents are invited to share their views, attend workshops and to go on outings with staff and their children. Parents interviewed as part of the inspection, praise the friendly staff and comment on how happy their children are to attend the nursery. The nursery has established good links with agencies in the local authority to support the inclusion of children with any special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are aware of local support mechanisms and recognise the value of working closely in partnership with parents and any others involved in children's care and education.

### **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY439949
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	954129
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	33
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	48
<b>Name of provider</b>	First Steps Nursery Partnership
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17/05/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	07956352684

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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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