

First Steps

18 Albury Road, Merstham, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 3LS

Inspection date	12/08/2014
Previous inspection date	20/08/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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 quality of teaching is good because staff effectively extend children's learning and help them to make good progress.
- Staff understand children's initial interests and abilities, and regularly observe and assess their progress. Therefore, they plan children's next steps in learning effectively.
- Children have warm relationships with each other and the staff team, so behave well.
- There are established systems to promote staff training and ongoing development, which promotes good outcomes for children.
- The nursery team has formed positive partnerships with parents and outside agencies, which helps to achieve a consistent approach to meeting children's learning needs.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not consistently enable all children to explore a variety of natural and textured objects and materials. This slightly reduces opportunities for children to enhance their growing curiosity, sense of discovery and creativity.
- Staff have not fully considered involving children in a wider range of opportunities to increase their awareness of keeping safe.

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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children taking part in a range of activities, both indoors and outside.
- The inspector held discussions with staff at appropriate times, focusing on safeguarding children.
- The inspector sampled children's developmental records and checked the monitoring of the curriculum.
- The inspector sampled a range of policies and procedures, which included safeguarding, accident and medication records and risk assessments.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents and children.

Inspector

Janet Thouless

Full report

Information about the setting

First Steps Nursery is privately owned and was registered in 2000. First Steps operates from a house in Merstham, Surrey. Children access four play rooms and an outdoor play area. Children come from the local community and surrounding areas. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It operates from 8am to 6pm, all year round, excluding public holidays. There are currently 55 children on roll in the early years age group. The provider receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. Staff care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who learn English as an additional language. A total of 13 staff work with the children, including the manager. All staff members, except one, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- develop the use of a range of objects and materials in various textures, weights and materials to excite and encourage young children's interests and sense of discovery
- strengthen opportunities to increase children's understanding of keeping themselves, and others, safe.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and provide a good range of activities, which support children's all round development. Staff plan and provide activities that cover the seven areas of learning, and offer a wide range of learning opportunities. This helps children to gain the necessary skills in readiness for school. Staff complete observations to understand children's learning styles and current interests, then use this information to shape the learning experiences they offer. This ensures teaching focuses on individual children's interests and the next steps in their learning. Children's development records clearly show how each child is challenged appropriately across all areas of learning. Staff quickly identify any gaps in learning and additional support is put into place, should children require it, to support the children's specific needs. Parents are involved in contributing towards children's assessments, including the progress check for two-year-old children. They also make valuable contributions to their children's development records by readily sharing news about what their children learn and experience at home. This enables staff to build a complete picture of the child's progress and future learning needs. In addition, staff constantly offer parents ideas on good

childcare practice, and how they can support and continue learning at home. This leads to good relationships between staff and parents, and successfully engages them in the education of their children.

Children are involved, motivated and engaged in a good range of interesting, hands-on activities, which provide good levels of challenge. Staff make the most of everyday activities to promote children's communication and language skills. For example, babies are keen to join in with action rhymes or sit with staff to look through books. Staff encourage the children to actively think and communicate by providing a running commentary as they play, and by asking older children well-chosen questions. For example, as young children engaged in role-play and pretended to prepare a snack, staff talked to them and asked questions about what they were doing. They listened to children and followed their lead in conversation. In addition, during snack time, older children and staff talked about a thunder storm the previous night and compared what they had heard and seen. This effective input helps children to think and respond in different situations.

Staff enabled children to paint pictures and make masks from their favourite story book characters. They helped them to learn by discussing where they thought certain body parts should go and discussed scenarios within the story line. This gave children the opportunity to think creatively, solve problems and link ideas. Staff provide children with many opportunities to use items, such as shredded paper, ice, shaving foam and dough. However, children do not always have opportunities to explore creatively and use different textures when playing with everyday objects and materials. In addition, staff provide fewer resources for children to explore and make things during outdoor play. As a result, they do not take all opportunities to fully enhance children's developing sense of discovery. Staff provide opportunities for children to play with puzzles and games based on numbers, and construction activities, such as trains sets and computer programs that encourage simple mouse control skills.

Children help themselves to writing materials during daily activities and write and make marks for a variety of purposes. Older children write their names confidently and they recognise the sounds that the letters make. They are beginning to read words and simple sentences. Furthermore, staff are aware of how children learning English as an additional language learn to communicate. They discuss their development frequently with parents and use key words in their home languages to encourage children's understanding. Therefore, children are very well supported to become confident communicators. In addition, books are used very thoughtfully to develop children's interest and readiness for reading.

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

An effective key-person system is in place. Children demonstrate affectionate and trusting relationships with staff. Staff know the children's backgrounds and interests through their discussions with parents when children start at nursery. This allows children and parents to build meaningful relationships with staff. Parents share written information with staff before their children start at the nursery. This provides an important link between parents

and staff, so that children's needs can be understood prior to admission. Young children enjoy lots of cuddles and reassurance, and routines are consistent with their experiences at home. As a result, staff help them to settle quickly. For example, comforters were ready and waiting in individual cots, and staff gently rubbed babies' backs as they settled them down to sleep, which promoted their emotional well-being. Older children chat happily to staff about what they are doing. The atmosphere, in all rooms, is calm and relaxed, which helps children to engage in activities and learn. Transfers between age-related group rooms are also well planned and staff accompany children for settling-in visits prior to when they move on to the next stage of their learning. This means children are confident in their new surroundings, because they see familiar faces and can play while being supported by staff who understand their needs.

The nursery environment, both indoors and outdoors, is organised to provide children with an exciting range of play experiences that support their development well. Staff make sure the playrooms enable children to choose from a good variety of toys and resources, many of which are stored on low-level shelving with picture labels and words. Therefore, children can make choices about what they want to do, which supports their growing independence.

Staff make daily visual checks of the indoor and outdoor environments, to check the safety of equipment and toys. They offer children choices, guidance and gentle reminders about the nursery rules to help keep them safe. Therefore, children take responsibility for decision making for themselves, with older children taking ownership of their actions. However, staff provide slightly fewer opportunities to enhance children's awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe in some areas of the nursery, for example, in the newly refurbished garden. This means that although staff are effective in keeping children safe, they do not take all opportunities to develop children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Children enjoy playing in the sunshine in the newly refurbished garden. They show good agility as they ride about on tricycles, skillfully negotiating well-placed obstacles and other children. They excitedly share two-seater tricycles and giggle as they travel together around the garden. Therefore, they develop firm friendships and learn how to negotiate and take turns. Children behave very well and, therefore, demonstrate that they feel safe and content, and emotionally secure. Consequently, children's behaviour is good.

Children are developing a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet. This is because the nursery cook prepares nutritious, healthy meals and snacks. In addition, at mealtimes, key persons sit with the children, offer them individual help, and talk to them about what they are eating and why it is good for them. Parental preferences are respected, for example, as meals meet vegetarian, cultural and dietary requirements. Staff understand children's needs and routines well. Younger children sleep when they need to, with staff monitoring them regularly. A daily feedback sheet details nappy changes and mealtimes, so that parents are aware of their child's needs once they are back at home. Older children use the toilet under limited supervision from staff and understand the importance of washing their hands to promote good hygiene practices.

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

The leadership and management of the nursery is strong. Recruitment and induction procedures for new staff, and systems for regular supervision and training of all staff, are robust. All appropriate and required checks are completed, both when staff are newly appointed, and during supervision and appraisal systems. This means that the provider is able to maintain the ongoing suitability of the adults who work with children. Staff demonstrate an effective understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff complete child protection training as part of their robust induction procedures and then receive further training to ensure their knowledge remains current. Staff are able to demonstrate a secure understanding of the procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child in their care. In addition, procedures are in place to further support staff in reporting any concerns about the conduct of other adults. Risk assessments of the nursery environment, and daily checks both indoors and outside, promote children's safety and well-being. Staff are deployed effectively throughout the day and ratios of staff to children are well maintained.

Staff offer children and their families a welcoming and inclusive environment. They have a clear vision of how they want to make further improvements to the nursery. Good levels of self-evaluation are in place, supported by action plans and monitoring documentation. The nursery's action plan is clear and concise with a strong focus on continual improvement. Parents, staff, children and local authority advisors are involved in the self-evaluation process, through meetings, discussions and the use of surveys. This ensures that the nursery continues to deliver good quality childcare for families and the children attending. Staff have been working on ideas for developing the outdoor area, for example, by adding further play items and resources to offer children more physical challenge. The manager and staff team monitor the delivery of the educational programmes to identify any emerging gaps in children's learning. Staff and room meetings take place on a regular basis where, together, staff evaluate the delivery of the curriculum, which helps to improve outcomes for children.

Partnerships with parents are positive and well established, and this makes a strong contribution to meeting children's individual needs. The nursery implements robust policies and procedures, which staff adhere to appropriately. They share the policies with parents, so that they understand the procedures that support children's health and well-being. Parents are fully informed about all aspects of nursery provision through an information notice board, regular informal discussions, newsletters and parents' evenings. In addition, parents now receive regular updates through a weekly email. The regular parents' evenings ensure that staff can formally share children's achievements. Parents and children are able to view the children's development records whenever they wish to see them. Well-established links with other professionals enable staff to work closely with outside agencies in order to meet the needs of children effectively. This means that children with additional needs and/or disabilities receive good support to extend their learning, and to experience success. The nursery offers children and their families a welcoming and inclusive environment, and staff work in close partnership with parents to facilitate this. Parents spoken to are complimentary about the nursery, expressing a high

regard for staff and the learning that takes place. The nursery has developed relationships with local schools to prepare children for their move to school.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory 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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	122618
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	813641
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	31
Number of children on roll	55
Name of provider	Jacqui Tidey
Date of previous inspection	20/08/2009
Telephone number	01737 215136

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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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