

# First Steps Pre-School

Scout and Guide Centre, Longwick Road, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire,  
HP27 9HN



## Inspection date

21 May 2015

Previous inspection date

16 April 2012

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Inadequate	4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Inadequate	4
The setting <b>does not meet legal requirements for early years settings</b>			

## Summary of key findings for parents

### This provision is inadequate

- The provider and manager do not follow robust recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of those employed to work with children. For example, they do not always follow their recruitment process or obtain references, and not all records of staff suitability are available for inspection.
- The management team does not safeguard children's welfare. They have failed to notify Ofsted of changes to committee members so that suitability checks can be completed. Additionally, they fail to obtain prior agreement from parents to administer medication. The provider breaches a number of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated Childcare Register.
- Staff plan a range of activities that enable children to make some progress in all areas of learning. However, these activities are not always well planned. As a result, children's interest is not always captured and challenged.
- The supervision and monitoring of staff is not effective in ensuring that all teaching is consistently good. As a result, the quality of teaching remains variable and children do not make the best possible progress.
- Staff are not consistent in their approach to managing behaviour. As a result, children receive mixed messages about what is acceptable behaviour.
- The provider and manager are not effective in identifying areas of the provision that need improving.

### It has the following strengths

- Children are provided with lots of opportunities to develop and progress in their physical skills. They enjoy the bikes and large apparatus outside.

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

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

- ensure recruitment procedures are robust and that all necessary vetting and suitability checks are completed, to ensure that those looking after children are suitable to do so
- provide Ofsted with the necessary information to determine the suitability of committee members to fulfil their role
- ensure that all activities are well planned so that children's interest is captured, and they are excited to take part and are challenged in their learning, to help them make the best possible progress across all areas of learning
- ensure staff supervision and monitoring of practices are used to raise the quality of teaching and improve the monitoring of the planning, to engage and motivate children in their learning
- ensure a consistent approach to behaviour management is used so that children receive clear guidance about what behaviour is acceptable
- ensure that written permission is obtained from parents prior to administering medication
- ensure all staff records are easily accessible and available for inspection.

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

- improve the use of self-evaluation in order to accurately identify areas of the provision that require improvement.

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

- implement effective systems to ensure that the registered person and any other person caring for, or in regular contact with, children (including on a voluntary basis) is suitable to work with the children (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- inform Ofsted of the name, date of birth, address and telephone number of every member of the governing body (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure all children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- keep a record of parental consent to administer medication (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- implement effective systems to ensure that the registered person and any other person caring for, or in regular contact with, children (including on a voluntary basis) is suitable to work with the children (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure all children's behaviour is managed in a suitable manner (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- keep a record of parental consent to administer medication (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

**Inspection activities**

- The inspector observed children and staff, indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their understanding of child protection, safeguarding and first aid.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.
- The inspector sampled documentation, including children's records, policies and staff qualifications.

**Inspector**

Sarah Holley

## Inspection findings

### **How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement**

Staff organise the day so that children can choose when to play indoors and when to play outdoors. However, the quality of teaching is variable and not all activities are well planned. Although children generally acquire the basic skills needed for a successful move to school, they do not make the best possible progress. They often move quickly between activities and do not always become engrossed in what they are doing. Outside, staff provide resources that help children practise climbing, running and balancing. Staff are close by to help children. Staff sit with children at snack time and make use of this time to encourage counting. For example, they ask children to count out pieces of fruit. At other times, staff are less involved in children's learning. Nearby staff do not help children struggling to cut and mould dough. More able children are not always challenged or encouraged to mark their own pots during a planting activity. Although some staff 'sing and sign' clearly and enthusiastically during a planned music activity, other staff members do not. As a result, some children become frustrated and distracted. Staff find out about children's interests before they start and routinely observe all children. However, they do not consistently use this information to plan activities that are always challenging and engaging.

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

Before children arrive, staff check that the premises and grounds are secure and clean. They greet parents and children as they arrive and have sensible procedures in place to ensure children cannot leave the premises unattended. However, they do not ensure that all records are sufficiently detailed to ensure children's safety and good-health. For example, some written permissions to administer medication are incomplete. Staff are not consistent about how they manage children's behaviour. Sometimes they are patient and clear about their expectations when reminding children to share and take turns; however, on other occasions, they do not effectively deal with situations. For example, staff do not challenge children who are inappropriately kicking equipment or being disruptive during story time at the end of the session. As a result, children are not receiving clear guidance about acceptable behaviour.

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

The manager and provider do not fully fulfil the requirements of their role. They do not take adequate steps to safeguard children. For example, they did not formally interview all current staff at the pre-school and have not ensured that records held by Ofsted about committee members are up-to-date. Additionally, not all these records were available at the time of inspection. This demonstrates a weakness in leadership and breaches the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated Childcare Register. Staff have an appropriate understanding of child protection issues and how to report concerns

about a child's welfare. Most staff hold childcare qualifications and have an adequate understanding about how children learn. Staff have attended some additional training, for example, to further their understanding about meeting the needs of two-year-olds. As a result, new resources were purchased. However, these are not always available to the children or used effectively to support their learning. The current arrangements for staff supervision are not fully effective in improving the quality of teaching, care and education for the children who attend. This demonstrates that the quality of reflective practice and their drive for improvement are weak.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116702
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	835986
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 8
<b>Total number of places</b>	24
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	39
<b>Name of provider</b>	First Steps Playgroup (Princes Risborough) Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 April 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	07762326772 or 01844 275467

First Steps Pre-School registered in 1995. It is located in Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire. It is open from 9am until 3pm on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 9am until 1pm on Tuesday and Friday, during term time only. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. It employs eight members of staff, six of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at Level 2 or Level 3.

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