

Early Steps Preschool

Waterlea Adventure Playground, Crawley RH10 6SP



Inspection date	5 June 2019
Previous inspection date	Not applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	3
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Requires improvement	3
Outcomes for children		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents

This is a provision that requires improvement

- The provider, who is also the manager, informs new staff about the setting's policies and procedures. She encourages them to attend training, such as first aid and safeguarding. However, she does not implement her induction and supervision procedures effectively to check their understanding or identify ongoing coaching and training needs.
- The procedures for risk assessment are not consistently robust enough. Potential hazards, specifically with the outdoor area, are overlooked and are not addressed quickly enough to minimise risk of harm to children.
- The quality of teaching is variable. At times, staff do not effectively engage children in learning. Some group activities do not support the older and most able children's engagement as well as they do for younger children.
- The provider reviews the services provided to children and their families. However, identified actions, such as risk assessments, are not always addressed in a timely manner.

It has the following strengths

- Staff help children to behave well towards each other. They give gentle reminders to children about using kind hands.
- Staff develop positive partnerships with parents. They are helped to seek advice and support from other professionals, such as health visitors. Parents say that the provider is very helpful and that they have noticed a difference in their children's social skills since starting at the setting.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage the provider must:

	Due date
improve induction and supervision to make sure that staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities is discussed and monitored, to help ensure that coaching and training are identified and implemented	05/07/2019
ensure that effective risk assessment procedures are fully implemented and understood by staff to identify and minimise potential hazards to children when playing outdoors.	05/07/2019

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

- monitor more effectively the quality of teaching, particularly in adult-led activities, to help extend the older and more able children's learning
- develop further self-evaluation and plan for identified actions to be addressed in a timely manner to continually make improvements in order to benefit children's outcomes.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed how staff-to-child ratios are met. She also observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the provider, the staff team, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the provider and discussed children's learning.
- The inspector looked at samples of children's records and evidence of the suitability of staff working with children.
- The inspector sampled a range of other documentation, including accident records and the safeguarding policy and procedures.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

Although the provider completes induction and supervision meetings, she does not effectively monitor staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities, such as their interactions with children. The provider evaluates the setting and identifies actions to take, such as the need for the removal of brambles and nettles. However, the evaluations are not regularly reviewed to ensure that actions are achieved in a timely manner. Overall, the arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The manager and staff have an appropriate awareness of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. They know the procedures to follow if allegations are made about them or if they have concerns about management and other staff members. The provider is aware of the need to check the ongoing suitability of staff, for example discussing any issues that may impact on the care of the children. She ensures that adult-to-child ratios are met. Staff respond appropriately to any accidents and report these to parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

The quality of teaching varies due to the weakness in the monitoring of staff interactions with children. At times, some staff supervise children's play rather than engaging with them to support and extend their learning. As a result, staff do not always react to opportunities to increase children's thoughts and ideas. Nonetheless, other staff are attentive to children's needs. They engage appropriately with them during singing sessions and imaginative play. However, staff do not always extend the older and most able children's learning during adult-led activities. Some staff are studying towards higher qualifications and are learning sign language. This has a positive impact on children who use this form of communication. Staff complete observations, including the progress check at age two, and share children's progress with parents. The manager uses educational funding to enhance children's experiences, such as arranging visits from organisations who bring animals into the setting.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Due to a weakness in the risk assessment procedures, potential hazards to children are not swiftly minimised. The manager offers a flexible settling-in procedure for new children attending. As a result, they happily explore the resources set out for them. Staff support children's physical development. For example, they assist children on the climbing apparatus and help them learn how to give their friends space when jumping off. Staff remind children about how to keep safe, for example not climbing on chairs and the reasons why. They are aware of children's dietary needs and work with parents to help children try the nutritious lunches provided.

Outcomes for children require improvement

Overall, all children make progress from their starting points. However, the variable quality of teaching does not help children to make consistently good progress in their learning. All children follow instructions, such as helping to tidy up prior to lunch. Older children attend to their own personal needs. They count items in their play and demonstrate social skills when they organise imaginative games together. Younger children happily explore the environment and resources, such as wheeled toys.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY554037
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10107140
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	21
Name of registered person	Owen, Judith
Registered person unique reference number	RP554036
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01293544513

Early Steps Preschool registered in 2017 and operates from a playroom in Waterlea Adventure Playground, Crawley, West Sussex. It is open each weekday from 8.45am to 2.45pm. There are five members of staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The provider holds early years professional status. The pre-school provides funded free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

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