

Inspection of First Steps

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

Inspection date: 18 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

The quality of teaching is variable. At times, staff miss opportunities to help extend children's interests and challenge their learning. As a result, staff do not always build on what children already know and enjoy. Nonetheless, children have good relationships with the staff and they are well behaved. Those caring for babies help them to treat each other with respect and to feel secure and settled. For instance, they sooth children when they are upset and provide cuddles. Babies and young toddlers like joining in with singing sessions and exploring the toys set out for them. Older children enjoy learning about people who help us. Staff are attentive to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and supervise their play. For instance, staff help them to develop their physical skills and coordination when using the outdoor play equipment.

Pre-school children's imagination is well supported. For instance, an interest in pirates leads to the making of various artefacts, such as treasure maps. Staff place a strong focus on promoting children's independence. This is evident when older children help to lay the table for mealtimes. Younger children show that they are very familiar with the routine when they gather their comforters ready for a nap.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The manager has regular discussions with staff about their well-being. She is aware of the importance of this and the impact it can have on the care and welfare of the children. The manager monitors staff and completes supervision meetings with them. However, these are not precise enough in identifying specific targets to help enhance their practice.
- Staff do not always respond promptly to children's interests or adapt the environment to enrich their experiences further. Sometimes, some staff do not challenge children's thinking, such as using probing questions to extend their thoughts and ideas.
- Staff are kind and caring, and some are good role models for the less experienced staff. Staff use the local environment to help children develop an awareness of their community. They teach children how to be safe. Staff take children to visit the local park and to join in with purposeful activities at the library, such as singing and rhyme time.
- Children's emotional well-being is positively promoted. Staff provide consistent messages and soothingly reassure children as necessary. They offer lots of praise and reminders about how to be considerate towards each other, such as taking turns. Consequently, children develop an understanding of how to play cooperatively together. They listen attentively during story sessions and follow instructions very well during the routine of the day.
- Older children concentrate well on tasks. For instance, they use mud to make

pretend cakes and proudly show these to visitors and other children. Staff introduce mathematical language, such as early calculations, and discuss how long a cake will need to cook. Younger children enjoy joining in with number songs and learn about numbers and colours during their play.

- Children have fun playing outdoors and gain fresh air. They practise their physical skills when climbing up and down the wooden climbing structure and learn how to use the slide safely. Staff ensure that babies and younger toddlers have access to their enclosed outdoor play spaces when the weather is suitable.
- Staff support children with SEND appropriately. They build strong partnerships with parents and implement guidance obtained from them to help support children's emotions. Staff seek advice from external agencies and strive to put this into practice.
- Parents speak positively about the nursery, and staff develop close partnerships with them. They share information about their children's day. However, staff do not maximise opportunities to help parents to build on their children's learning and development.
- Children receive healthy and nutritious meals that are prepared on the premises. Older children say that the food might be a 'pirate's dinner' and that it 'smells delicious'. They confidently use equipment such as knives and forks. Children know where to find their water bottles when they are thirsty.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The management team and staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues. They know what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare or an adult caring for them. Staff complete safeguarding training to ensure their knowledge is updated. They complete risk assessments to help ensure all areas are safe for the children to use. The provider follows secure recruitment procedures to help ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. New staff complete a detailed induction programme to enable them to become familiar with the policies and procedures. The management team ensures that ratios are always maintained and children are supervised to help promote their safety.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
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improve arrangements for the supervision of staff to provide targeted support, coaching and training to help raise their confidence and the quality of provision.	20/03/2020
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- take more account of all children's interests and abilities to help ensure that activities support, challenge and extend their learning
- extend the partnership with parents to provide more opportunities for them to be involved in supporting their children's learning and development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	122618
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10145889
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	0 to 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	66
Name of registered person	First Step Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP905706
Telephone number	01737 215136
Date of previous inspection	6 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

First Steps registered in 2000. It is located in Merstham, Redhill, Surrey. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks a year, excluding public holidays. It employs 13 members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from level 2 to level 6. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Inspection activities

- The inspector completed a learning walk of the areas used by the setting to find out how they are organised and the range of activities provided indoors and outdoors.
- The views of staff, children and parents were obtained at appropriate times.
- The deputy manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation. They discussed the impact of teaching on children's learning.
- A meeting was held with the manager and the deputy manager. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working at the nursery.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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