

Inspection of First Steps

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

Inspection date: 26 July 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive at the setting, are collected by staff and settle into their age group room quickly. They promptly engage in the activities set out by staff to capture their interest, which enables learning opportunities to start immediately. Children develop good relationships with staff. There is an effective and well-established key-person system that enhances their emotional well-being and enables them to feel safe and secure. For example, babies receive warm cuddles when they wake from their sleep, allowing them all of the time they need on an individual basis.

Children develop good friendships with each other and spend large amounts of their time playing imaginatively. For example, older children took great delight in sharing and trying on the clothes and resources they may need for different holidays, such as swimming goggles. Children receive effective support to help them to understand when they may need to bring their chosen play to a close. For example, staff give them advanced notification throughout the day for routine changes and when they will need to stop and tidy up. This helps children to listen to and follow instructions well. Children learn to understand and value differences. For example, staff recalled previous discussions and children were able to explain that they are all different and unique and are not the same. Staff celebrate children's family heritage and cultures effectively and fully engage with family members to achieve this.

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

- Staff have a secure knowledge of what children can do and what they need to learn next. They effectively plan for the curriculum and ensure that all children make the progress that they are capable of. Staff seek additional support for children who need extra help with their learning and development. They use funding effectively to support children's individual interest and learning needs.
- Toddlers thoroughly enjoy their yoga sessions. They can recognise the names of the different positions from the cue cards and move their bodies to make the shapes. They make every attempt to balance on one leg, persevering with encouragement and praise from staff to achieve their goal.
- The manager is currently revising the system for planning for children's learning and is consistently liaising with staff to ensure that the changes are gradual and effective. This process is in its infancy and not all staff are fully confident in how they will ensure that planning continues to be effective fully in supporting all children to make the best possible progress.
- Partnerships with parents are good. The manager regularly seeks the views of parents, such as through questionnaires. Staff use an online system to provide parents with details of their child's development. Parents also make effective use of this system to share details of their child's learning at home. This helps to

support consistency for children's learning and development.

- Babies and pre-school children have opportunities to enhance their large-muscle skills required for learning to climb. However, toddlers do not have to same opportunities, which does not enable them to learn about taking risks or to build on their climbing skills.
- Children behave well. Toddlers receive support to help them to tell their friends that they do not want to play the game at that time. Staff provide clear explanations to children to enable them to fully understand the consequences to their actions. For example, pre-school children listen to staff's instructions on how to use the climbing frame safely.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills effectively. Babies thoroughly enjoy their singing and signing sessions and become animated as they join in with the simple actions to the songs and rhymes. Toddlers show a great enjoyment in looking at books and know what comes next in their favourite stories.
- The manager and staff have recently evaluated the equipment within the rooms. They have removed aspects which they felt slightly restricted children's enjoyment and also teaching. However, they have not undertaken this same evaluation within the baby room to allow staff more opportunities to further increase interest and intrigue.
- The manager engages with staff continually to ensure that she is fully aware of any pressures on their well-being from their workload. For example, staff report that they receive support with writing observations and providing these for parents using the online system. The manager has revised the supervision and appraisal system to enable this to be a more supportive experience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a secure knowledge of child protection, including the wider aspects of safeguarding. For example, they understand their role in referring any concerns they may have about a child in their care. They are also able to identify indicators that children may be exposed to extreme views or behaviours. Most staff hold a valid first-aid certificate and complete written records in the event of an accidental injury to a child. Staff complete daily risk assessments of the areas used by children and provide effective levels of supervision to children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- embed the new system of planning for children's interest and learning needs to ensure that all staff are secure in their knowledge of the process
- provide further opportunities for young children to develop their large-muscle

and climbing skills

- evaluate and revise the areas used by babies to allow staff to explore further ways in which to provide more interest and intrigue for babies in their environment.

Setting details

Unique reference number	122618
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10202690
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 at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	64
Name of registered person	First Step Nursery Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP905706
Telephone number	01737 215136
Date of previous inspection	18 February 2020

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 15 members of childcare staff, of whom 10 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

Helen Penticost

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together.
- The inspector carried out two joint observations with the manager and deputy manager, spoke with staff and interacted with children.
- The inspector gathered the views of parents through reviewing documentation.

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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