

Inspection of First Steps Nursery

The Burton Unit, The Conquest Hospital, The Ridge, St. Leonards-on-Sea, East
Sussex TN37 7RD

Inspection date: 25 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Since the last inspection, the nursery has relocated to new, purpose-built premises in the hospital grounds. Children enjoy their time in the new building. They receive a warm welcome at the door and on entering their classroom. Children feel safe and secure. Younger children increase in confidence as they explore their environment and make choices about what they would like to do.

Children are kind, caring and respectful to each other. They follow the good social skills displayed by staff and respond well to the praise they receive. Children play happily with their friends. Any minor disagreements are quickly sorted out. Staff are always on hand to help resolve any upsets and support children to share and take turns. For example, they encourage children to look at the green number eight and the red hand on the clock to know when their turn will start.

Children enjoy learning and are curious about what is happening all around them. They are enthusiastic to share their experiences with visitors. For example, a child was keen to inform the inspector that his friends, who were having a great time playing with blocks, were not all following the 'golden rules'. Children are able to explain in detail what they are going to do next. This demonstrates their understanding of everyday routines.

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

- The manager works closely with staff to ensure that well-being is high and staff feel supported. This has been a focus of the leaders during the pandemic and is planned to continue as staff settle into the new building. For example, there is now a room to provide a quiet space for staff to take breaks.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Staff know children and their families well. Parents report positively about the caring and nurturing approach of all managers and staff. They appreciate staff taking time to share information with them at the end of each day. Parents and carers are keen to feedback on the positive difference the staff make for their children.
- Staff very successfully help children to understand about leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, they talk about the fruit they are eating during snack. Staff ensure that children's lunches are healthy and meet their dietary requirements. Staff recognise the importance of ensuring that children have opportunities to get fresh air and exercise daily as part of developing healthy lifestyles. They are currently working to improve the outdoor area.
- Children are well supported to understand the diverse society they live in. They take part in activities and discussions that help them to learn about the different customs and festivals. For example, they have recently learned about Chinese New Year.

- Older children are confident talkers and engage in many lively discussions. Younger children also receive good support from staff. However, distractions in their learning environments make it hard for them to hear staff clearly. For example, the noise levels are sometimes very high and music playing in the background adds to this. This does not support the language development of the youngest children as effectively as possible.
- Arrangements for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective. Staff liaise well with parents and relevant professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to make sure that children's needs are met. Staff use sign language and visual prompts to support individual children.
- Overall, teaching is strong. Staff plan a broad and interesting range of activities based on children's interests. However, at times, they do not target these as well as possible to reflect the ages and abilities of those taking part. For example, during an activity based around a popular book, some toddlers did not engage well as the activity was too complex. However, a similar activity based on the same book was very successfully delivered to the older children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding and effective arrangements to identify, help and support children who may be at risk. Staff keep up to date with changes in legislation by completing regular training, provided by the NHS Trust. All staff have a secure knowledge of safeguarding issues, such as the risks associated with exposure to extreme views and beliefs. Staff know the procedures for reporting any concerns to the relevant agencies.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- monitor and take action to minimise the distractions, primarily caused by high noise levels, in the group rooms of the youngest children to support their language development more effectively
- provide support for individual staff to improve their skills in planning so that activities are targeted more effectively and have a clearer intent for children's learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	508988
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10226595
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	92
Number of children on roll	92
Name of registered person	East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Registered person unique reference number	RP522670
Telephone number	03001315218
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2017

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Nursery registered in 1990. The nursery provides places for the children of staff working for the NHS Trust. It is open each weekday from 6.45am to 6pm, all year round, closing on bank holidays. There are 13 staff who work at the nursery, all of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or level 3. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education for children aged three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jo Gunne

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed the interaction of staff and children during a range of activities, indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector spoke with staff, parents and children at appropriate times.
- A range of relevant documents were viewed.
- The manager showed the inspector all the areas used by the children and discussed the intent behind the educational programmes.

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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