

Inspection of First Steps Day Nursery

Ashford Hospital, London Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 3AA

Inspection date: 10 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are confident, happy and emotionally secure in this friendly setting. They receive a warm welcome from the caring staff team, which helps them to settle in quickly. Children are enthusiastic learners and show high levels of interest and engagement in their play. They are curious and imaginative. Children make independent choices from the activities and resources. For example, older children spend a long time making 'cakes' in the sand tray, talking with their friends about the different flavours they have made. Toddlers smile and clap with joy as they scoop sand to find hidden objects in the sand tray. Children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning.

Children have developed strong bonds with the kind and nurturing staff. Expectations for all children are high. For instance, staff communicate with non-verbal children using visual prompts. This helps children to engage with the curriculum, which supports their learning. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from an inclusive and nurturing learning environment.

Children have ample opportunities to develop their social skills and they display positive behaviours. For instance, older children work together as they build different-sized towers. This reinforces their self-confidence and emotional well-being. Children behave well.

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

- Leaders and staff understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on children's development. Overall, they have designed a well-sequenced curriculum with a particular focus on children's personal, social and emotional development. Staff know what the children are working towards and can speak about the progress that they have made in specific areas of learning. However, occasionally, staff are not clear about the knowledge they want children to learn from planned activities, to help them make the best possible progress.
- Staff support children to develop their communication skills in a variety of ways. For example, they use single words with younger children as they play with bubbles. They say 'pop' as bubbles are blown, and encourage children to reach out for them. Staff commentate on children's play and offer choices to develop their understanding of words. However, sometimes, older children are not consistently challenged to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Behaviour in the nursery is good. Staff place a high priority on supporting children to take turns and build friendships. For example, toddlers are encouraged to take turns as they play a game of skittles and use the slide outside. Staff provide children with lots of praise and warm smiles. This supports

children's self-esteem.

- Children learn about a healthy lifestyle. They have daily opportunities to be outside in the fresh air and play with a wide range of resources. Children have nutritious meals according to their specific dietary needs and preferences. They are supported in developing their independence. For instance, children pour their own drinks and cut their food up using knives and forks at mealtimes. This helps to support their good health and physical well-being.
- Leaders and staff support children with SEND very well. For example, staff monitor development closely and provide specific activities to support children's development. Furthermore, staff have developed good partnerships with a wide range of other professionals, such as social workers, health visitors, and speech and language professionals. These relationships help to close any gaps in learning for children who require additional support. Children make good progress in their development.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Staff work hard to get to know each family, which helps them to tailor children's care and learning to meet their individual needs. Parents comment on the excellent communication with their key person. They say that staff are 'caring' and 'attentive' and that they can approach any member of staff for advice and guidance.
- Leaders regularly observe staff and evaluate practice in the nursery. Staff benefit from access to a range of internal and external training. For example, training in childhood trauma has supported staff to further understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This supports children's development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They know the possible signs of abuse and what to do should they have concerns about a child. Staff are secure in their knowledge of the whistle-blowing policy. They understand the procedures to follow if they are concerned about the practice of another member of staff. Staff provide a safe environment for children. They teach children how to keep themselves safe. Staff ensure that the premises are well maintained and secure.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- continue to develop staff's knowledge of the intention behind educational programmes so that activities have a clearer focus
- enhance teaching skills further to challenge older children and develop their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	120034
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10228198
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	74
Number of children on roll	71
Name of registered person	Ashford and St Peters Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Registered person unique reference number	RP902251
Telephone number	01784 884757
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2016

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Nursery registered in 2001. It operates within the grounds of Ashford Hospital, Ashford, Surrey. It opens from Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 6pm, all year round. The nursery employs 19 members of childcare staff. Of these, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one at level 4 and 15 at level 3. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kelly Lane

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 manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- Parents shared their views on the nursery with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in 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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