

Inspection of First Steps Day Nursery

Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (MFT), Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oxford Road, MANCHESTER M13 9WL

Inspection date: 24 June 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Standards across the nursery have significantly declined since the last Ofsted inspection. Leaders have failed to comply with legal requirements, which puts children at risk. Leaders do not deploy staff to meet the needs of all children. Sleeping arrangements for some babies are extremely poor. Staff place blankets under the heads and near the faces of some babies. This poses a suffocation risk.

Leaders decide to place some babies in rooms where older children are. This is because there is not enough space in the room where babies should be. Leaders acknowledge that this does not support the learning and care needs of some babies. This has a negative impact for these children. For example, staff hold babies in their arms for prolonged periods of time as they cannot be assured of their safety while older children play. This means that the quality of learning experiences that some babies receive are inadequate.

Children adapt well to changes in routines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, they are polite, wave their parents off at the front door and eagerly greet staff. However, staff do not provide children with clear messages about their behaviour. Too often, children are unkind towards one another and do not show positive attitudes towards their learning. This does not prepare children for their next steps in learning, including school.

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

- Leaders have been too lax in their monitoring of the nursery. This results in a catalogue of failings, which have a negative impact on children and staff. Self-evaluation is overgenerous. Leaders fail to provide an adequate level of care and education to children.
- Children do not receive a curriculum that builds on what they already know and can do. The manager does not have a good enough understanding of the curriculum intent. This means that staff are unclear of the knowledge and skills that they need to teach to children, when to do so and in what order. Activities for children are pitched too low or too high. For example, staff teach babies the names of shapes and colours. They teach toddlers to count beyond 20 and have too low expectations of pre-school children while they make play dough.
- Hygiene practices are poor. Too frequently, children blow and wipe their noses without staff teaching them the importance of washing their hands afterwards. Additionally, some staff wipe children's noses without washing their own hands. They go on to tend to other children and pass them beakers to drink from. This poses a risk of cross-infection and compromises children's good health.
- Leaders fail to deploy staff effectively across the nursery. This means that the needs of children are not always met. Sleeping arrangements for babies are

poor. Babies are put at unnecessary risk when staff place blankets under their heads and near their faces as they sleep. The lack of understanding of safe sleeping from staff and leaders is concerning.

- The key-person system for younger children is extremely poor. Too frequently, younger children cry for long periods of time and do not settle. This does not support their emotional well-being. They remain distressed for too long and staff do not know how to best support them.
- Staff attend mandatory training and have annual appraisals. However, they do not receive supervision sessions from leaders. Many staff report that morale is low and that their workload is unmanageable. This has a negative impact on the quality of interactions that staff have with children. They spend too much time completing other tasks, such as observations of children's learning.
- Leaders fail to ensure that the needs of babies are met. They place some babies in rooms that are not suitable for their age and stage of development. This means that staff hold younger in their arms for most of the day, as their safety cannot be assured in the room with older children. Interactions are poor and some younger children are at a significant disadvantage to other children.
- Some staff lack the knowledge and skills to deal with children's behaviour. They do not provide clear messages about behaviour expectations. This means that children are not learning right from wrong. Some children are unkind to their friends and do not always follow instructions given by staff.
- Children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive satisfactory support. Partnership working is effective. For example, leaders have made links with external professionals and the local authority. Parental partnerships are secure. Staff provide parents with information about their children's time at the nursery.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The premises are safe and secure. Recruitment procedures are robust and staff undergo stringent checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff attend safeguarding training and are aware of some signs of abuse and neglect. However, too many staff do not understand the steps to take if there is an allegation made against a staff member or a member of the leadership team. They do not know where to find external support if they have a concern with how leaders deal with a child protection issue. This lack of understanding compromises children's safety. Staff are first-aid trained and understand how to respond to accidents.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
ensure that staff are deployed effectively to meet the needs of all children	05/08/2022
ensure that staff follow safe sleep guidelines for babies	05/08/2022
ensure that babies are provided with a learning environment that is age-appropriate	05/08/2022
provide children with an ambitious curriculum that is built on what they know and can do	05/08/2022
ensure that the key-person system successfully meets the emotional well-being of all children	05/08/2022
ensure that staff receive support, guidance and coaching during supervision sessions	05/08/2022
ensure that staff have a secure understanding of how to contact the local authority children's services and designated officer.	05/08/2022

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

- provide children with clear and consistent messages about their behaviour
- develop the self-evaluation process, to identify and address aspects of the nursery that need improvement
- strengthen hygiene practices across the nursery, with particular reference to handwashing after children's noses have been wiped
- better support staff to effectively manage their workload.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY302828
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10217729
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	89
Number of children on roll	103
Name of registered person	Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT)
Registered person unique reference number	RP547825
Telephone number	0161 276 4491
Date of previous inspection	29 September 2016

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Day Nursery registered in 2005. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 7.15am until 6pm, all year round, except for bank holidays. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are 28 members of staff working with the children, all of whom hold a qualification at level 2 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Luke Heaney

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 his evaluation.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children throughout the day and evaluated the impact these had on children's learning.
- A joint observation was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with the management team, staff, parents and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability and training of staff.

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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