

# Inspection of First Steps Nursery and Play Scheme

Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Barrack Road, Exeter EX2 5DW

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Inspection date: 1 November 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

Children settle very quickly when they arrive as they are very secure and confident. Staff skilfully support children in a warm and caring manner. Leaders are very ambitious for all children to succeed. They have designed an extremely well-sequenced curriculum. It brilliantly supports each individual child's interests and stage of development. For example, staff skilfully encourage children of all ages to be independent. In the baby room, staff effectively signal the end of play using a bell and clear language. Mobile babies independently make their way to the bathroom to wash their hands for lunch, where staff expertly support them. In the toddler room, staff expertly support toddlers to understand why they need to put their wellington boots away. Staff help them to understand why this is important by explaining that tomorrow they will be able to find them.

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make excellent progress. Staff skilfully observe, assess and plan for each child. They ensure that children are confident in what they know before teaching them new skills and knowledge. For example, staff introduce words such as 'silky' and 'smooth' as toddlers explore textures in an autumn display, helping them to increase their vocabulary rapidly. Pre-school children learn the names of unfamiliar instruments and the different sounds they make during an exciting music session. Children behave incredibly well. They are deeply engaged in purposeful play throughout the day. Staff are excellent role models. They help children to develop respect towards each other and adults.

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

- Children feel very safe and secure as they develop a close bond with their key person. Highly effective settling-in procedures ensure that staff know the children well before they start. Staff knowledgeably meet children's needs and provide activities that interest them. They help children to understand the routine to promote the children's independence. Children become very confident and are always willing to try new things and learn new skills.
- Partnerships between the nursery staff and parents are very effective. They support children's continuous development in the nursery and at home extremely well. The managers recently introduced new software to improve communication with parents and carers. Parents highly value this. It helps them to understand how and what their children have learned.
- The managers are passionate and knowledgeable about providing children with rich and meaningful experiences. They want the very best for all children. They inspire staff and support them to attend training and develop their practice. The managers identify areas for development through highly effective appraisals and supervision meetings. Staff feel extremely respected and valued. They take pride

in their job and know that the managers have high expectations for them to enable children to reach their full potential.

- Staff give children the opportunity and space to learn the routine and to be independent. This means that children develop excellent skills for life. This ensures that they are ready for the next stage in their education. For example, pre-school children serve fruit to their friends at snack time. Others volunteer to clear up. They wait calmly for fruit or a chance to do a job as they are confident that their turn will soon come.
- Children develop excellent communication and language skills. Staff help children to recall what they know. For example, after playing in the garden, staff ask children what they learned. Children recall that the slide was very slippery when wet leaves were on it. They enjoyed collecting the leaves to make it safe again. Staff use open-ended questions to develop children's thinking.
- Children show consistently positive attitudes towards play and learning. For example, babies engage deeply at circle time. They attempt to say the words for objects. Toddlers thoroughly enjoy leaf printing. They watch carefully as colours change when they mix the paints. They stay focused for a long period of time. Staff give children continuous reassurance and praise for their effort and success. This helps children to relish a challenge and persevere until they succeed.
- Care practises strongly promote children's confidence and self-help skills. Nappy changing times are an opportunity for staff to sing lullabies with babies. Pre-school children learn why maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important. Staff encourage them to notice changes in their bodies as they run and move freely in the garden. Children who get overwhelmed by their emotions are superbly supported through highly successful deep-breathing techniques. This supports children to be calm and enables them to continue learning and playing.
- Staff work closely with parents and outside agencies to support children with SEND. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that children have effective targets and receive the support they need to flourish. Staff are highly skilled at meeting individual children's needs and calmly help them to access all of the activities that the nursery offers.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a robust knowledge of their duty to safeguard children. They know the different categories of abuse and how to identify potential signs of harm. Staff are secure in their knowledge of how to report any concerns about children or staff. The managers ensure that staff attend regular training for safeguarding. They reinforce this knowledge through discussions in regular staff meetings. Leaders put in place effective health and safety procedures. Staff understand their duty to assess and reduce risk so that children remain safe. Leaders ensure that staff are suitable to work with children through robust recruitment systems. They check staff's ongoing suitability through regular appraisals.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY407433
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10235389
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	129
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	141
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Royal Devon and Exeter N.H.S Foundation Trust
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP529622
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 405858
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 January 2017

## Information about this early years setting

First Steps Nursery and Play Scheme registered in 2010. It is situated on the site of the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital and opens from 7am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. The nursery serves staff from the hospital only. They receive early years government funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are 47 staff. Of these, 30 have a level 3 early years qualification and six have a level 2 qualification.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspectors

Sian Bath  
Linda Williamson

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspectors and the managers completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery. They discussed the early years curriculum and what the managers want children to learn.
- The inspectors spoke to staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection and took their views into account.
- The inspectors spoke to the managers and staff about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspectors carried out joint observations of a music time activity.
- The inspectors spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors looked at relevant documentation and reviewed the 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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