

Inspection of First Step Day Nursery

11 Harold Road, LONDON SE19 3PU

Inspection date:

27 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

The nursery offers a warm welcome. Children are happy and settle well on arrival. The nursery is clean and spacious, with a range of age-appropriate resources. However, not all children enjoy quality teaching and interactions. For example, staff sing songs and read books to engage children at group circle time or when moving from one room to another. This supports children's language development and promotes confidence. However, a focus on routines dominates the day. Children are often left waiting for extended periods, particularly when waiting to go outside.

Children and staff engage together in some activities, but staff regularly do not make the most of opportunities to extend learning. Activities are not challenging, meaning that children are not stimulated. At times, children are left with very little interaction or focus from staff. An emphasis on adult-led activities means children miss out on exploring their own interests. Children become bored and lose motivation, wandering from one thing to another. This does not support children's development or help them to make good progress across the areas of learning.

Staff promote good manners by role modelling and reminding children to use manners and be kind to friends. Expectations for behaviour vary across the nursery. As a result, children's behaviour is inconsistent. Therefore, older children become distracted by high levels of noise and younger children climb on chairs unnoticed.

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

- Leaders and managers do not create a curriculum that meets children's needs effectively. This results in a lack of quality teaching and learning experiences for children. Teaching focuses on overall themes, such as spring for all children, regardless of their age or stage of development. Children learn new words related to these themes but miss out on thoughtful conversations and challenging questions based on their individual levels of understanding.
- Toddlers and pre-school children eat in small groups with one member of staff at each table. Staff help children to serve themselves, which supports independence. Staff manage dietary requirements well. All staff are aware of children's allergies. However, teaching about healthy eating is inconsistent. Staff discuss methods to support children in trying new foods, yet when children choose not to eat parts of their lunch, these are not used.
- Hygiene practices, such as the personal needs of the children, are inconsistent. Staff support children with potty training, and routines are in place for children to wash their hands before eating. However, some children are left for extended periods with dirty noses.
- Children play outside twice daily. Staff show children how to put on their coats,

then praise their efforts in doing so. This promotes children's confidence and independence. The garden has a range of activities for physical development, such as trikes and slides. Staff are deployed effectively to keep children safe. Some children enjoy being read to, while others run around. Chalks are available for mark making, and some staff work with children to draw images and write their names on the ground.

- There is an established key-person system for sharing information with parents, such as termly reports. Parents feel confident that staff know their children well. Parents of younger children are given daily paper updates. However, communication throughout the setting is inconsistent. Parents lack information needed for consistency at home and children's next steps. An online system is being introduced to help address this.
- Staff use key words to help settle children who speak English as an additional language. Multilingual staff can soothe children and translate information for parents, which supports the settling-in process. Despite this strength, opportunities for celebrating home languages and cultures with other children are missed.
- Staff work well to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Outside professionals, such as physiotherapists, support children with care needs. Information is shared with staff and parents.
- Long-serving staff give stability to the nursery. Established staff support new staff members while they are studying. There are arrangements in place for the regular supervision of staff, staff meetings, training days and online training. However, weaknesses in the evaluation of practice mean these are ineffective and children do not receive meaningful and purposefully planned education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers complete regular training for the role as designated safeguarding leads. They ensure that all staff have completed and remain up to date with their safeguarding training. Managers test staff's knowledge to ensure understanding. All staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of when children are at risk of or exposed to abuse. Robust recruitment procedures mean that all staff undergo ongoing suitability checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Staff carry out daily checks in each room to ensure the learning environment is free from hazards. Children's allergies and dietary requirements are managed well.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
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implement and maintain a curriculum that meets the individual learning and development needs of all children	04/09/2023
improve support for staff to ensure they have the skills to plan suitable activities in response to children's interests	04/09/2023
ensure all staff are consistent in promoting positive behaviour to help children understand what is expected of them.	01/05/2023

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

- review the organisation of routines to reduce waiting times for children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY297574
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10276310
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	90
Number of children on roll	75
Name of registered person	First Step Day Nursery
Registered person unique reference number	RP904301
Telephone number	0208 771 7727
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2017

Information about this early years setting

First Step Day Nursery registered in 2004 and operates from a converted house in Upper Norwood, in the London Borough of Croydon. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery is funded to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery employs 23 staff. Of these, one holds a foundation degree, and 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Zoe Duggan

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 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 each room.
- 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 on children's learning.
- The manager/special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a reading activity with the manager.
- Parents spoke to the inspector during the inspection and shared their views.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability 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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