

Inspection of First Steps Montessori Day Nursery

First Steps Montessori Nursery School, 254 Upland Road, LONDON SE22 0DN

Inspection date: 9 March 2023

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

Children are happy and relaxed in this welcoming nursery. They develop strong bonds with the caring staff. Children who are new to the nursery or arrive upset are comforted well by staff and settle quickly. Relationships between staff and babies are nurturing and receptive, and all children form secure attachments. Staff are positive role models and children giggle with delight as they join their play. Purposeful activities are planned to support children in their learning. For example, younger children have fun moving mud with diggers at the construction area, while older ones work together to build the train track. Staff support children to make good progress in their development.

Children develop their independence as they put coats on to go to the garden, and older children enjoy the responsibility of completing different jobs assigned to them, for example setting the table at mealtimes. Children relish their time outside and demonstrate good physical dexterity. They climb and balance on climbing equipment and develop their imaginative play as they wait for the bus, while younger children practice throwing and catching to develop their skills. Staff teach children to take appropriate risks and challenges as they play, building their confidence and self-esteem.

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

- The newly appointed manager has an ambitious vision for the nursery. She supports staff to plan a sequenced curriculum. Activities are often linked to what the children need to learn next and their interests. Children engage in their work and develop creative and practical life skills.
- Staff support children to develop their curiosity and be motivated to learn. Younger children enjoy dressing up and role play. Older children eagerly explore different textures as they develop their small hand muscles, filling pots using tweezers. However, staff do not always join children's play effectively to build on children's learning.
- All staff establish secure and trusting relationships with children. They get to know their individual personalities well. This includes what they like and dislike. Staff fully understand children's individual needs and any particular interests they may have. Therefore, children make good progress from their starting points, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Staff support children's communication and language development. They engage children in meaningful conversations and use effective questioning techniques. Staff support children to build their vocabulary by narrating their play. For example, babies enjoy a singing activity using instruments and listening to different sounds and tones. Staff introduce new words during activities. Older children enjoy talking about the letters in their name as they write in sand.

Children are very good communicators.

- Overall, children behave well, and staff promote children's positive behaviour from a young age. This includes learning to take turns and respecting their environment. Staff regularly praise children for their efforts and engagement during daily activities. This promotes children's self-esteem and confidence securely. However, sometimes children do not listen to instructions and requests from staff, which are at times unchallenged by adults. Therefore children are not responsive to what is expected of them.
- The manager and staff get to know the children and families particularly well. There is a two-way sharing of information that greatly enhances learning and development. Parents are encouraged to share in regular nursery events, such as coming to read to the children during World Book Day, to help them support their children's development.
- Staff are professionally qualified or working towards their qualifications. They speak enthusiastically about their roles and say they feel valued and supported by the management. They receive information during their induction about the expectations of their role. Staff are well supervised and meet regularly with the manager to discuss their professional development. They receive guidance and training to help them improve their skills and knowledge.
- The manager continuously evaluates the performance of the nursery and considers the views of children, staff and parents. She has a clear action plan for improvements for the nursery. For example, she has made changes to the routines during the day to minimise long waiting times for children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Manager and staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. Robust recruitment and vetting systems are in place, ensuring that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know the signs that could indicate a child is at risk. They understand the correct procedures to follow if they have concerns about children's welfare. Staff have a clear understanding of the procedure to follow if they have concerns about the conduct of a colleague. Daily checks are completed to identify hazards and reduce risks in the nursery environment.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to effectively join children's play to ensure that children's learning is enhanced further
- help children to listen to instructions to better understand what is expected of them.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY462360
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10264909
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	35
Number of children on roll	54
Name of registered person	The Beeches Nursery Group Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP532567
Telephone number	0208 2996897
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2017

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Montessori Day Nursery registered in 1997 and re-registered as a limited company in 2013. It operates from East Dulwich, in the London Borough of Southwark. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 50 weeks of the year. The nursery employs ten members of staff. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery follows the Montessori philosophy of teaching.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tracey Murphy

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about the nursery's curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager showed the inspector key documentation on request.

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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