

Inspection of First Steps Childcare @ Chichester College

Chichester College, Westgate Fields, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1SB

Inspection date: 2 August 2023

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	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Friendly staff warmly greet children as they arrive in the setting. Children are confident and demonstrate a sense of belonging. Staff interact gently with the youngest children and offer them comfort. This supports their personal, social and emotional development and helps them feel safe and secure.

Managers and staff have created a culture of respect and teamwork. They give children opportunities to challenge themselves and to take appropriate risks. For example, children display good teamwork as they link up in pairs to push big, heavy tyres across the outdoor play area. They talk to each other and negotiate with each other how to move them. The staff recognise and encourage this shared effort and praise them for their persistence and cooperation. This helps children to build their confidence when linking up together to solve problems.

Children are polite, kind and show care and concern for one another. They help each other and respond well to the rules and boundaries. Staff give the children good levels of support to help them to manage their feelings and behaviour. They consistently model the standards of behaviour that are expected and give clear instructions and explanations. Children develop a strong understanding of what is right and wrong.

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

- Managers recently failed to notify Ofsted of a significant incident, as required. However, overall, they show a strong commitment to meeting requirements and took prompt action to improve practice following this incident. For example, they have put in place robust procedures so that all children's individual dietary needs are met effectively and to promote their well-being. The managers are fully aware of their responsibility to tell Ofsted about any incidents in the future.
- Managers have developed a well-thought-out curriculum with a clear sequence of knowledge that they want children to learn. This supports all children as they move through each stage of their learning and development. Staff know children well and effectively plan activities around their current interests and experiences. Therefore, children are well supported to move forward in all areas and flourish in their learning.
- Staff identify children with special educational needs and/or disabilities early, to give them the best start. They work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure consistency for all children. Staff create individual plans for children that are tailored to their needs and link to specific areas of learning. With effective strategies in place, children are encouraged to gradually develop skills that move them forward in their development. This helps all children make good progress.

- Children enjoy participating in group times that are part of the daily routine. They are actively involved and become engaged in their activity. However, staff are not confident about how to adapt the routine to better suit the children's needs. For instance, at times, children sit and wait passively, as staff are not fully prepared for what comes next. This does not fully support children's learning at these times.
- Managers are passionate and reflective about the provision they provide. They seek to continually improve practice. Staff are given opportunities to self-reflect and identify training needs that will enhance their performance. They speak positively about the support they receive and feel their well-being is important. This has a positive impact on children and the care they receive.
- Children sit well during story time, and staff read to them with excitement. Staff encourage conversations that link the children's experiences to the story. For example, children enthusiastically make links and recall foods that they enjoy eating. They discuss these as a group and staff value and appreciate their comments. This helps children to develop a love of books.
- Overall, children learn good hygiene procedures through their daily routines. Staff encourage children to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before mealtimes. However, staff do not regularly encourage children to develop their self-care skills further, such as teaching them to cover their mouths when coughing and to wipe their noses. Staff do not consistently reinforce these messages to ensure children develop strong foundations for their personal care.
- Parents express their gratitude for the care and education their children receive. They feel well supported and that there is open communication from managers. Parents speak fondly of the staff and their commitment to their children's care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have demonstrated an understanding of the responsibility they have to keep children safe and protect their well-being. With regular training and reinforcement, staff are supported to keep up to date with child protection issues. Staff are watchful for signs and indicators that could suggest that a child is suffering from abuse and understand the importance of acting swiftly to concerns. They are alert and committed to their role, with a shared approach to putting children first and protecting their welfare. There are robust vetting and recruitment procedures in place to ensure those who work with children are suitable.

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 improve how they transition between activities in the daily routine, so children understand better what is expected of them and do not wait

unnecessarily

- develop a more consistent approach to teaching children the importance of personal hygiene, to further enhance their independence skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	113485
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10303864
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 5
Total number of places	130
Number of children on roll	153
Name of registered person	First Steps Childcare Group Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP520759
Telephone number	01243 532043
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2020

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Childcare @ Chichester College registered in 1990. It operates from purpose-built premises on the campus of Chichester College in the Chichester area of West Sussex. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. It receives funding for early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery employs 24 staff to work with the children. Of these, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kelley Ellis

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 their children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to children to find out about their time at the setting.
- 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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