

First Steps Early Years Centre

Cockayne Street North, ALLENTON, Derby, DE24 8XB

Inspection date	29/07/2014
Previous inspection date	01/08/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	4
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Staff are friendly towards the children and provide a range of activities in a well-resourced and welcoming learning environment, both indoors and outside. As a result, children's emotional well-being is well supported.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective. This ensures children's welfare is protected and children are kept safe from harm.
- Management is strong in prioritising the needs for improvement and is driving the nursery forward with the necessary changes to improve the quality of the provision.
- Partnerships with parents are effective. Staff and parents communicate very well, which helps children's continuity of learning and care.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not always extend children's learning through asking what, where and why questions or interact appropriately to motivate and challenge children enough to fully maximise their learning so they make best progress.
- Observation and assessment procedures are not yet firmly embedded and do not focus on individual children's learning needs, so that they receive appropriate support, to enable them to make good progress.
- Staff do not make the most of everyday routines and activities, to develop children's understanding of shape, size and measurement to increase children's mathematical skills.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all playrooms and the outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and spoke to the staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff working with the children and evaluation documentation.

Inspector

Janice Hughes

Full report

Information about the setting

First Steps Early Years Centre was registered in 2012 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in Allenton, Derby and is overseen by 4Children. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from Osmaston/Allenton Sure Start Children's Centre and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff; of whom, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The manager holds Early Years Professional status, another member of staff holds a level 6 qualification and one is unqualified. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round, except for the week between Christmas and New Year and bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm and children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 83 children attending who are all in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children and supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery receives support from a member of staff from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure all staff improve their teaching so that they interact and communicate effectively with children to provide rich and challenging experiences, that encourage them to think and help all children make good progress
- ensure all staff use observation and assessment effectively to identify children's next steps in learning and use this information to provide good levels of challenge so that all children make best progress towards the early learning goals.

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

- support children in developing a further understanding of mathematical concepts by using language about shapes, size and measurement more frequently during play and planned activities, for example, through water and sand play.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children demonstrate that they are enjoying their time at the nursery. They eagerly enter their room with enthusiasm and excitement and are greeted by friendly and welcoming staff. Staff have a suitable understanding of the learning and development requirements

of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They teach, observe and assess the children regularly and use the information they gather to plan activities for each child's learning. However, when staff use the information, they do not yet effectively identify children's next steps accurately. As a result, staff do not always know where children need the most support, to ensure they make best progress. Although, the identification of the needs for children who have English as an additional language does usually prioritise the support needed with clear and specific targets and details of what staff need to do. Planning is appropriate and has thoroughly improved since the last inspection. Staff plan suitable opportunities to support children to learn in most of the seven areas of learning and provide experiences that take into account children's interests. Consequently, children make steady progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points. In addition, children are acquiring the necessary skills for their future learning. Partnerships with parents and carers are given careful consideration and parents are involved in their children's learning from the start. Useful information is shared on a regular basis, through discussions, the children's daily communication book and regular review meetings. Parents' ongoing contributions are encouraged. This promotes a two-way approach to support children's learning and development at the nursery and at home.

The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the nursery. Nevertheless, there are some instances of good quality teaching. For example, the practice of staff in the baby room is purposeful and developmentally appropriate. Their expert knowledge of the areas of learning and clear understanding of how children learn ensures babies have enjoyable and challenging experiences that support their learning and interests. For example, children become interested in the flowers outside; they touch and smell them and keep going back to them throughout their play. Staff use this opportunity to encourage babies to pour and use their handling skills, by watering the flowers. Staff talk to the children about what they are doing by giving them a running commentary about the flowers growing and ask them questions, such as 'what colour is this flower?'. They give the babies time to answer and respond sensitively, encouraging the babies to repeat words and therefore increasing their vocabulary. However, in contrast, the teaching in the mixed room of toddlers and pre-school children requires improvement. Although children receive attentive support from staff, teaching does not always challenge them enough to make the most of activities provided. While staff regularly talk to children about what they are doing, too often these conversations do not fully encourage children to think and talk about the learning process, or to explore ideas and make links to their experiences. For example, as children hunt for bugs, staff ask what are they looking for as they lift the log, but do not hold a conversation about where the bugs might live, or what they eat. As a result, teaching is ineffective.

Children are active learners as they thoroughly enjoy being outdoors and extend their physical skills appropriately in this area as they run, jump, climb and slide. They also practise their drawing skills as they try to draw the bugs they have seen. Children have an interest in the mud kitchen and make pretend cakes and a cup of tea for the inspector. Staff generally interact with children, for example, encouraging them to experience the feel of the mud. However, they do not always make the most of opportunities to extend children's learning and promote their problem-solving skills. For example, they do not encourage children to consider why they cannot make sandcastles from dry sand. Staff promote children's mathematical skills adequately. Both older early years and younger

children have opportunities to count while they play and use mathematical language, such as 'bigger' while they build towers. However, there are less opportunities or planned activities to help children learn about shape, space and measurement and solve problems. For example, children use different sized blocks in the construction area to build, but staff do not refer to the sizes or shapes of the blocks and do not encourage them to work out how to create a building. Children enjoy using books and have opportunities to freely access these from inviting cosy areas. They sit and turn pages carefully and talk about the pictures they can see. Staff expand these opportunities and read stories using props and puppets. Children listen, concentrate and participate as they join in and predict the end of the story. This is developed further as children sing popular rhyming songs. These activities help children's literacy skills appropriately and begin to enhance necessary skills in readiness for school. Children have access to a wide range of tools. This includes pens, paintbrushes, scissors and glue sticks. Babies have fun as they feel the texture of the corn flour, water and rice, helping them learn about the changes that occur when they add water to the corn flour. Children use their senses to explore and investigate the various mediums and materials, such as paint, sand, shaving foam and play dough.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are building trusting relationships with the staff who support their emotional well-being appropriately. Key staff, who have responsibility for particular children, liaise with the parents to gain clear information about each child's individual care needs. They obtain some key words in children's home language to aid communication with children learning English as an additional language to help them settle in. The key-person system works well and staff are aware of their responsibilities. Staff interact in a warm and caring manner, offering sensitive support to new and less confident children. They provide cuddles and reassurance when needed which helps children feel settled and emotionally secure. The clear behaviour policy is made available to parents and staff have sent out guidance in newsletters to share the rules that have been put in place since the last inspection. This helps parents to understand how staff deal with children's behaviour at the nursery. The manager and her staff team have developed their behaviour management strategies further and overall, provide consistent messages to help children learn how to play together cooperatively. They talk with children to help them understand what acceptable behaviour is and provide clear explanations as to why certain behaviour is unacceptable. Staff praise children's achievements and encourage them to take turns and share while playing, which boosts their self-esteem. As a result, children know what is expected of them and behave well.

Effective security measures are in place. Staff maintain close supervision of the entrance door during arrival and collection times to make sure children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. Staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and supervise them well enabling the children to move around freely and safely. Children are learning about how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, as children find blackberries in the garden, staff talk to them about the dangers of eating berries; this teaches children to be aware of items they might find when walking out and about. Children take part in regular fire evacuation practises which helps raise their understanding of what to do in an emergency. Children are learning to manage their own

personal hygiene needs. They know to wash their hands before they eat their food showing confidence as some children do this independently. This helps develop their understanding about keeping healthy. Staff organise the pre-school effectively, working hard to provide an inviting and enabling environment for children. As a result, children enjoy a well-resourced play and learning environment. Children are able to make independent choices of what they want to play with and how they want to play, such as whether to play indoors or outdoors.

Children benefit from regular access to the outdoor area for fresh air and exercise. Children are supported to develop a sound understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Younger children benefit from appropriate rest, sleep and meal time routines. A variety of balanced nutritious meals and snacks are served daily and staff ensure children's dietary needs are met. Drinking water is accessible to children who can help themselves throughout the day. Children develop good self-help skills as they lay the table, serve themselves their food and tidy away the plates when they have finished lunch. Children are also sensitively supported when they are ready to move up rooms within the nursery, benefiting from tailored experiences that ensure they are emotionally prepared to make the move and continue on their learning journey. Preparations for children moving to school and other settings are well established, leading to continuity in children's care and learning.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management are strong. The manager has been in post for a few months and in this short time has made many positive changes to the nursery. Her approach to improving practice is carefully monitored to ensure that each aspect is well embedded, providing solid foundations for further improvements. She has recently established a stable and effective team and this is starting to have a beneficial impact on staff. The nursery has made many improvements since the last inspection, when they received a welfare requirement notice and a number of actions to improve. The nursery has also had five monitoring visits from Ofsted. The latest monitoring visit found that the nursery had completed all of the actions from the last inspection, but that they were in breach of the legal requirements. This was because children were not always within sight or sound of the staff, not all information was shared with parents and Ofsted was not informed of a significant event at the nursery. Since this visit, the manager and staff have worked extremely hard. They understand their responsibilities to meeting children's needs effectively and cover all legal requirements. The manager understands the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She ensures the staff team implement these. Staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding protecting children and undertake safeguarding training and demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibility in keeping children safe. The procedures to establish the suitability of staff at the time of appointment are thorough. These include Disclosure and Barring Service checks, taking up references and carrying out rigorous induction periods. Staffing ratios are appropriately maintained to ensure children are supervised at all times. The manager is vigilant in recording visitors to the nursery and children's attendance. These procedures provide a clear record of who is in the nursery at any one time. The safeguarding policy

and procedure is updated by the manager and shared with staff, which includes the use of mobile phones. Risk assessments are thorough and robust, and assess everything that children come into contact with at the nursery and when on outings. These include a new assessment of losing a child within the nursery. When assessing the environment staff also think about the individual needs of children. All staff are first-aid trained and management ensures that knowledge is up to date in order to provide children with appropriate help if they have an accident. Policies and procedures underpin the daily running of the nursery. These are reviewed and when updated shared with parents and carers to keep them fully informed about staff practice.

The management and staff have a positive attitude towards the continuous development of the nursery. Systems of self-evaluation provide an overview of the nursery's strengths and areas for development. Many successful changes have been made since the last inspection, but some are still being embedded, such as the observation, assessment and planning systems. This means that not all children are currently making good progress. However, staff have undertaken training in behaviour management and as a result, this aspect has improved considerably and children behave well. The manager has put together a detailed action plan, which demonstrates that she knows exactly where improvements should be made and how. The national organisation undertakes regular audits and monitors practice, and provides support to further improve the quality of practice. Performance management systems are detailed and well thought through. For example, the induction process reflects the individuals' roles and responsibilities and prioritises the health and safety of the children appropriately. The detailed supervision and appraisal system provides an honest appraisal of staff effectiveness and where they need to improve. Challenging and measurable targets, as well as a comprehensive training programme, ensure that staff continually develop their knowledge and skills, which in turn benefits children as they are cared for by a knowledgeable work force. Monitoring of children's progress and the successful completion of the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years enables staff and the management team to effectively identify gaps in children's learning, meaning early intervention can be implemented so that children receive the appropriate support to meet their learning needs.

Staff work in partnership with parents and external agencies to make sure that children with specific needs receive appropriate support. The nursery also makes effective use of its links with children's centre staff that provide appropriate support when needed for both children and parents. The manager demonstrates a strong commitment to sharing information about children's learning and development with other early years providers where children attend, to help promote continuity of care. Parents receive clear and effective information about the nursery through discussion, regular newsletters and notices displayed on the parents' board. The manager is committed to working in partnership with parents and seeks the views of parents in a variety of ways to further enhance practice. Parents and carers say that they are well informed about their children's progress and that they feel involved in their learning. They praise the supportive environment and are pleased that their children are happy and making progress.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY440848
Local authority	Derby, City of
Inspection number	975390
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	64
Number of children on roll	83
Name of provider	4 Children
Date of previous inspection	01/08/2013
Telephone number	01332 383911

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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