

Inspection of First Steps Nursery

West End Road, Maxey, PETERBOROUGH PE6 9HA

Inspection date:

29 September 2025

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

The provider fails to respond appropriately to concerns and allegations raised by members of staff. Staff attend relevant training and are confident to report any concerns or allegations to the management team. However, the setting's policies and procedures are not followed appropriately. When concerns are raised regarding staff's conduct and behaviour towards children, the provider does not take action to protect children from any potential harm. Therefore, concerns and allegations are not reported to the relevant agencies and the provider has failed to meet their statutory duty to notify Ofsted, as required. This impacts on children's safety.

That said, staff working with the youngest children are compassionate and responsive to children's needs. They provide comfort and support when children are upset. However, the learning and development opportunities that are provided are not good enough. Staff's attitudes are poor and some staff lack enthusiasm. This is reflected in the learning opportunities that they provide for children. Consequently, children's attitudes towards their own learning are poor. For example, activities on offer do not spark children's interests and attention. Children wander around in the room, disengaged. Staff do not recognise children's low engagement levels, nor do they deploy themselves well across the setting to support children in their play and learning. While the curriculum is not always well implemented, practice for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is secure.

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

- The provider has failed to ensure that there is a suitable person, who is trained and knowledgeable, to take the lead role on safeguarding concerns when they arise. When allegations are raised regarding the suitability of staff, the provider does not report these concerns to the relevant agencies. This impacts on children's safety at the setting.
- The management team hold regular supervision for staff to support them in their roles. During these meetings, they discuss any concerns or training needs for each staff member. However, when staff raise concerns the provider fails to take action. Furthermore, the provider has not put in place effective measures to ensure staff's ongoing suitability to work with children. This compromises children's safety and welfare.
- Staff attend regular safeguarding training and clearly understand their responsibilities for reporting allegations about another member of staff to the management team. However, when these concerns are raised, the provider does not follow the setting's policies and procedures and does not handle this information effectively. Therefore, effective measures to ensure children's safety are not met. Additionally, the provider has failed to meet their statutory duty to

notify Ofsted of any allegations raised, as required.

- Although the management team have clear intentions for a sequenced curriculum, they do not support staff to implement this across the setting. Children are not always encouraged to be independent and learning opportunities do not extend and build on children's confidence. Staff attend professional development opportunities. However, the management team do not support staff to implement these new ideas and deliver a high-quality curriculum across the setting to ensure all children make good progress.
- There are plans in place for staff to take children on regular outings in the local community. Children visit a range of places, for example they go on walks to local parks and visit neighbours to look at the Christmas lights in the village. There are also opportunities for children to ride on public transport. This extends children's experiences, giving them a wider understanding of their local community.
- Overall, learning opportunities for children are poor. Activities do not excite or interest children and this impacts on their engagement during play and learning. Children often sit to join an activity but leave quickly after. Staff do not always recognise children's low engagement levels and fail to provide meaningful learning opportunities that spark children's attention.
- Staff working with the youngest children are mindful and responsive to their needs. They spend time providing comfort and reassure children when they are upset. However, this is not consistent throughout the setting. Staff are not appropriately developed or encouraged to carry out their roles and this affects their ability to engage and support children in their play. Staff do not deploy themselves well enough across the setting to support children's learning effectively.
- Arrangements in place to support children with SEND are effective. Transition arrangements take into account children's needs and specific training is identified for staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to support children with SEND. Children display high levels of engagement due to well-planned activities for this group of children. They progress well as a result.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

There is not an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
ensure the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) understands their lead responsibility when allegations against a member of staff are raised	27/10/2025
ensure the DSL receives adequate training to carry out their role effectively	27/10/2025
take appropriate steps to ensure staff's ongoing suitability to work with young children	27/10/2025
implement safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure all allegations and concerns are reported to the relevant agencies.	27/10/2025

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that professional development opportunities support staff to offer high-quality learning opportunities for all children	22/12/2025
ensure staff interact with children in a way that provides them with the support and engagement they need to benefit from the activities and learning opportunities on offer	22/12/2025
improve the deployment of staff to help children get the support they need to make good progress in their learning and development.	22/12/2025

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY423564
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10407902
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	73
Number of children on roll	85
Name of registered person	First Steps Nursery (Maxey) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP909327
Telephone number	01778 341522
Date of previous inspection	21 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Nursery registered in 2011 and is located in Maxey, Peterborough. The nursery opens from 7.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, all year round, except for the week between Christmas and New Year. The nursery employs 24 members of childcare staff. Of these, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The setting provides government funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Vikki Reynolds

Inspection activities

- The deputy manager, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager showed the inspector relevant documentation.

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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