# First Steps Nursery - Nairn
## Day Care of Children

20 High Street
Nairn
IV12 4AU

Telephone: 07808 504 586

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
20 July 2022

**Service provided by:**
First Steps Nursery - Nairn

**Service provider number:**
SP2003001786

**Service no:**
CS2004065188

## About the service

First Steps Nursery is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 40 children aged from birth up to attending primary school age.

First Steps Nursery is a privately run childcare centre based in the town of Nairn. The accommodation consists of a large, open plan playroom with a separate sleep room, kitchen and dining areas and toilets. There is direct access to a fully enclosed outdoor area.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 July 2022 between 09:00 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with people using the service and received feedback from 28 families;
- spoke with seven staff and the management team;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents .

## Key messages

Children experienced warm, caring interactions from all staff.

Children were leading their play and were now able to choose when they wanted to play outside or inside.

The indoor and outdoor environments were well resourced, clean and tidy.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation was driving improvement forward.

Staff were flexible and supported each other to work well as a team.

## From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | 4 - Good |
| How good is our setting? | 5 - Very Good |
| How good is our leadership? | 4 - Good |
| How good is our staff team? | 5 - Very Good |

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning? 4 - Good

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good, performance that demonstrates major strengths supporting positive outcomes for children.

Children experienced kind, warm and nurturing care from all staff members. Staff knew all children well, speaking to them with ease about their interests. One parent told us "They treat all the children with such compassion and individuality that it feels like leaving your child with a trusted family member". We saw that children were relaxed and happy, and having fun with their friends and staff. This meant that children were well supported to feel safe and secure.

Snack and mealtimes were unhurried, calm and relaxed. Children were given opportunities to develop life skills through preparing and serving snack. Independence was encouraged with children cutting fruit, pouring drinks and self-serving salad and vegetables. Staff sat with children making mealtimes a safe and sociable experience; they were focused on the children, supporting younger children with eating. School age children could eat with younger children or siblings if they preferred, or eat with their friends around a dinner table. As a result, all children benefited from a positive, social experience.

Children's medical and allergy information was now stored efficiently and safely. Clear protocols and procedures were in place for staff to follow to support children with medical or allergy needs. This ensured children and parents felt confident in the care provided.

Effective personal planning, taking account of the wellbeing indicators, supported children to meet their potential. Information shared by parents and families ensured that care and support was tailored to each child's likes and preferences. One parent commented "All staff take a genuine interest in each individual child in order to meet their individual needs when planning for care and learning". Staff were proactive in seeking additional support when children needed it, working with other professionals such as speech and language therapists to identify appropriate strategies and support. As a result, children received the care and support that was right for them.

### 1.2 Play and Learning

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality indicator as good, important strengths that clearly outweigh areas for improvement.

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning. During the inspection, one group of children went to the beach to float boats they had made while other children were experimenting with objects that would sink or float. Some children had designed and sourced materials to create their own volcanoes. Staff used skilled questioning to support and extend children's thinking and natural curiosity. As a result, children benefited from play experiences that developed their skills in problem solving, language, numeracy, and literacy.

Floor books and mind maps clearly showed children's choices were being followed and documented their learning. Planning for children's play and learning was in the process of being further developed, taking account of national guidance and best practice, such as the Curriculum for Excellence and Realising the Ambition. Staff linked observations to health and wellbeing indicators. The management team and staff should continue to evaluate the effectiveness of their planning systems to ensure children receive high quality experiences. This would contribute to children progressing well and meeting their potential.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of child development and schematic play, using their knowledge to provide play and learning experiences suitable for the wide age range of children. We saw that children made informed choices about their play within a stimulating and creative setting. As a result, children were developing a broad range of lifelong skills.

The overall evaluation for key question 1 is good, important strengths that clearly outweigh weaknesses.

## How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

**2.2 children experience high quality facilities**

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good, performance that demonstrates major strengths supporting positive outcomes for children.

Significant improvements had been made since our last inspection. Both the inside and outside areas were visibly clean, tidy and safe. Staff had undertaken training in assessing risk and demonstrated a good understanding of how to address any concerns. As a result, children were supported to enjoy challenging, fun learning experiences.

The indoor environment was warm, welcoming and inviting to children. Younger children now had their own area in which to play safely. New, natural resources had been added which provided opportunities for inquisitive play suitable for children's stage of development. Children had been consulted on the design and layout which was reflected in the improvements made. One parent told us "Staff have created a nice welcoming environment for the children enabling them to play and learn in a homely environment". Resources reflected children's interests which meant that they felt valued and respected.

Children were able to direct their own play, choosing where they wanted to play throughout the day following significant changes made since the last inspection. Warm and cosy areas were available inside and outside for children to rest and relax in. As a result, children felt that they were listened to and that their opinions mattered.

Effective infection control procedures were consistently implemented by staff, including supporting children to wash their hands. The preparation and serving of snack and lunches followed best practice guidance with all safety measures adhered to. Children were protected as staff took all necessary measures to prevent the spread of infection.

## How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality indicator as good, important strengths that clearly outweigh areas for improvement.

The setting's vision, values and aims reflected the aspirations of children, families, and staff for the setting. One parent commented "The centre is keen to involve parents/children to help develop the service and there are regular opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions via questionnaires and informal chats". The management team used feedback from families to inform positive change, sharing responses and subsequent actions via regular newsletters and digital forums. Children were actively involved in designing and developing areas within the setting along with all staff. This meant that children, and their families, were involved in developing the service in a spirit of genuine partnership.

Identified areas for improvement had been actioned by the management team following our last inspection. The management team had made considerable progress in re-establishing effective self-evaluation and quality assurance processes. They were undertaking monitoring of staff practice, giving feedback and support where needed. Staff were supported to reflect on their practice and confidently contributed to improving the service. Staff told us they felt much more involved in the setting which gave them a sense of ownership and pride. As a result, children received high quality care based on guidance and best practice.

The management team led meaningful staff meetings, encouraging all staff to reflect together. Staff were evaluating their own practice using "A quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school aged children" alongside the Health and Social Care Standards and other key documents. This supported continuous improvement to bring about positive change for children's experiences and outcomes.

## How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

### 4.3 Staff deployment

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good, performance that demonstrates major strengths supporting positive outcomes for children.

The service was well staffed to ensure that all children's needs were supported effectively. On the day of inspection seven staff were present, they were observed to be flexible and working well together. This ensured that children received high quality support and that newer members of staff were also supported in their roles.

Snack and mealtimes were a relaxed and sociable experience with staff now focused on the children. Staff sat with children during mealtimes, offering them support and promoting social skills and language development. This meant that children received care and support that was right for them.

Staff made effective use of the mix of knowledge, skills, and experience within the team to ensure children received high quality experiences. Clear and effective communication between staff during busier times of the day, such as a group visit to the beach, and transition to lunch, ensured that children's needs were fully met.

There was a positive ethos among the staff team. Staff appeared relaxed and happy in the setting, commenting that they felt respected and confident to share their knowledge and experience with each other. The outcome focused approach to staffing meant that children received high quality continuity of care across the day.

## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

### Requirements

**Requirement 1**

By 22 April 2022, the provider must ensure that children receive care in an appropriate and safe environment. To do this, the provider must ensure, at a minimum:

a) effective systems are in place to ensure the environment is a safe place for children; and
b) staff are confident in identifying and addressing risks.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4 (1) (a) (Welfare of Users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My environment is safe and secure.' (HSCS 5.17)

**This requirement was made on 28 February 2022.**

Action taken on previous requirement
Immediate action had been taken following our last inspection to ensure that children experienced a safe and clean environment. Staff had undertaken training in assessing risk in play with further training opportunities identified. They were using their improved knowledge and understanding to continually ensure children had a positive experience.

Met - within timescales

### Requirement 2

By 31 May 2022, to improve outcomes for children, the manager must develop and implement an effective system of quality assurance to monitor and improve all areas of practice.
To achieve this, the manager must, at a minimum

a) identify sufficient time to carry out the managerial role;
b) put clear and effective plans in place for maintaining and improving the service including the use of effective self-evaluation processes; and
c) develop an effective monitoring programme.

This is to comply with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210 - Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HCSC) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19)

**This requirement was made on 28 February 2022.**

#### Action taken on previous requirement

The manager had identified time in which to carry out self-evaluation and quality assurance, including monitoring of practice. They had delegated responsibility for some tasks within the management team such as support to staff and self evaluation of practice against national guidance. A clear action plan had been developed, and was being actioned, with impacts being evaluated on an ongoing basis.

#### Met - within timescales

## What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

## Areas for improvement

### Previous area for improvement 1

To support children's wellbeing, the provider must ensure that all children are supported to experience a relaxed mealtime. This should include, but not limited to, reviewing staff deployment to support children during snack and mealtimes.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

**This area for improvement was made on 28 February 2022.**

### Action taken since then

Mealtimes were now a relaxed and social experience. New seating arrangements for younger children supported a more sociable experience . Staff were deployed to ensure safe and effective support and supervision was given to all children.

## Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children's medication needs are met and children are safe, the provider should ensure that medication is safely managed and is in line with best practice guidance. This should include, but not limited to, safe and appropriate storage of lifesaving medication and well organised records.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HCSC) which states that:

'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective.' (HSCS 1.24)

**This area for improvement was made on 28 February 2022.**

### Action taken since then

Improvements had been made since the last inspection. Effective systems were now in place to help staff to support children's medical needs. Medication and children's medical information were now stored securely and safely.

## Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure all children can access well-resourced play areas and experiences which support and extend children's learning, the management team and staff should review the use and layout of the environment. This should include, but is not limited to, children's access to inside and outside areas and defined areas for younger children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity'. (HCSC 2.27)

**This area for improvement was made on 28 February 2022.**

### Action taken since then

Significant improvements had been made since the last inspection. The management team and staff had reviewed all areas of the nursery with new resources being purchased. Younger children had their own area which was furnished with age appropriate resources. Children could free flow between inside and outside for the majority of the day.

## Previous area for improvement 4

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure staff are supported to reflect upon their practice. This should include, but is not limited to involving staff in the systematic review of their practice.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HCSC) which state that:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional codes of conduct.' (HSCS 3.14)

**This area for improvement was made on 28 February 2022.**

### Action taken since then

Staff now regularly reflect upon their practice using best practice guidance. The management team provide support and supervision for all staff and a comprehensive induction programme for new staff.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

## Detailed evaluations

| How good is our care, play and learning? | 4 - Good |
|---|---|
| 1.1 Nurturing care and support | 4 - Good |
| 1.3 Play and learning | 4 - Good |

| How good is our setting? | 5 - Very Good |
|---|---|
| 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities | 5 - Very Good |

| How good is our leadership? | 4 - Good |
|---|---|
| 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well | 4 - Good |

| How good is our staff team? | 5 - Very Good |
|---|---|
| 4.3 Staff deployment | 5 - Very Good |

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