Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

First Steps Day Nursery (Rhos on Sea) Limited

1 Llandudno Road, Rhos on Sea, Colwyn Bay, LL28 4TR

01492541946

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): 08/07/25

Service Information:

Operated by:	First Steps Day Nursery (Rhos on Sea) Ltd
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	56
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	Yes
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service provider is not meeting the Welsh language and culture needs of people and this requires improvement.

Ratings:

Well-being	Adequate
Care & Development	Adequate
Environment	Adequate
Leadership & Management	Adequate

Summary:

Children have a few free choices and communicate confidently with staff. They settle well and form positive relationships with staff and other children. Children interact well and enjoy playing alongside their friends. They learn to respect others and be well mannered. Children have a few opportunities to follow their interests and develop skills through their play.

Staff implement appropriate policies and procedures to ensure children are safe. They generally follow effective hygiene procedures to help prevent the spread of germs. Staff show care and understanding with the children. However, sometimes social opportunities to support children's communication and speech and language skills are missed. Staff plan and provide some suitable activities and resources. However, these do not always support children's learning effectively or allow them to self-direct their own play.

Leaders implement effective measures to ensure children's safety, including clear staff responsibilities, regular checks, and risk assessments. The environment is clean, secure, and well maintained, with appropriate facilities and equipment. While some areas promote limited

independence and exploration, others restrict choice and access, reducing opportunities for child-led learning and play.

Leaders are actively involved in the setting and maintain clear oversight of daily operations. They ensure key documentation, policies, and procedures are in place, although some require further development. Staff receive appropriate supervision and training. However, adult-to-child ratios are not always maintained during mealtimes, impacting the quality of care and interaction.

Findings:

Well-being — Adequate

Children sometimes have a voice and can express themselves. For example, older children are asked for ideas of what they would like to do during the school holidays. They have a few opportunities to freely choose what they want to do and how they spend their time. Children confidently communicate with staff when responding or asking questions, knowing staff will listen and answer them. For example, when requesting more snack or lunch and asking for items they would like out to play with.

Children arrive happy and separate well from their parents showing they feel safe and content. They develop a good relationship with staff, feeling relaxed and happy to approach them for comfort or support when needed. Some children know their wants, needs and moods will be considered by staff, which helps those children feel valued and understood. However, sometimes children's needs are not fully considered due to staff having other distractions. Children develop positive self-esteem and a sense of belonging as they are familiar with routines, have consistent staff caring for them and feel comfortable in their surroundings.

Children interact well for their ages and stages of development. They learn to follow the routines well, giving them a good understanding of what will happen next. For example, they know to wait for everyone to finish lunch before they can leave the dining area. Children enjoy playing alongside their friends and learn to be respectful. They share space and resources cooperatively. For example, understanding when they need to wait to have a turn on a ride on toy as another child was using it. Children learn to use toys and resources appropriately, helping to put them away when they are finished.

Children have a few opportunities to engage in an activity they have freely chosen. They generally focus appropriately on activities and play experiences provided by staff. Children have limited opportunities to self-direct their own play as most experiences are chosen by staff and adult directed, such as craft activities. Children are keen to share their experiences with others and happily invited us into their play or talked about what they were doing. They keenly play alongside others or alone. For example, when choosing to look at a book on their own or chasing each other around outside.

Children have a few opportunities to freely access resources that allow them to follow their interests. They have some planned activities that support their learning and development.
For example, they enjoy being physical outside as they run and climb and develop their creativity as they play the musical instruments. Children have some opportunities to develop their independence. They confidently feed themselves and those who are able use toilet and hand

washing facilities independently.

Care & Development — Adequate

Staff keep children safe as they follow effective policies and procedures. They have appropriate training, so they are aware of the correct procedure to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns. Staff can deal with minor accidents and incidents effectively as nearly all staff have completed first aid training and appropriate records are kept and shared with parents. Regular fire drills are conducted so staff and children know what to do in an emergency. General records are completed to evidence children and staff attendance, so it is clear which staff are caring for which children.

Staff ensure children have access to a nutritious diet with healthy meal and snack choices including fruits and vegetables and only offering milk or water to drink. They generally follow effective procedures to help prevent the spread of germs, such as, cleaning tables and following an appropriate nappy changing procedure. However, children are not always discouraged from eating food that had been provided for play purposes as advised by The Welsh Governments food and nutrition guidance. Children have some opportunities to be active as they access outdoors where they can run around and get fresh air.

Staff show care and understanding towards the children. They create a calm and relaxed atmosphere, supporting children to settle well. Staff sometimes join in with children's play and interact with them effectively to help support their speech and language development. However, opportunities to create more sociable experience are missed. For example, staff did not have the time to sit with children at lunch and during play activities staff are sometimes engaged with other children's needs. Staff implement some effective behaviour management strategies to support and teach children about rules and support and encourage children to be well mannered. For example, reminding and praising them when they say please and thank you and supporting children to share resources.

Staff plan some suitable activities that consider the children's interests and next steps in their learning. However, this is not always done effectively to ensure the activities support children to develop a range of skills. Staff identify children with additional learning needs (ALN) and have a good system in place, ensuring they are providing appropriate care, including working with parents. Staff provide a few suitable resources and some activities that support children to learn through their play. Some resources and activities are freely available, but these are limited which restricts the children's opportunities to self-direct their own play. Staff follow the settings embedded routines and children get to know them well. However, these are sometimes not appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the children which results in them sitting for long periods of time.

Environment — Adequate

Leaders have suitable measures in place to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities in relation to the safety and welfare of children. Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. For example, external doors are locked, access is controlled, and all visitors recorded. Effective risk assessments are in place and displayed on noticeboards in each room, so staff can access them easily. Staff check the outdoor area for hazards every time a group of children goes outside. If they find anything unsafe, they take action straight away to make it safe before the children use the area. Leaders make sure there is an effective cleaning routine, which helps keep the nursery clean and tidy. They ensure all fire equipment is serviced and building safety checks are completed and documented correctly.

Both the indoor and outdoor areas are well maintained. Leaders ensure suitable facilities are available including toilets, hand washing and nappy changing areas. Indoors, the rooms offer spacious play spaces, are brightly decorated and filled with natural light. Although most resources are positioned within children's reach, staff limit their access, reducing opportunities for independent choice. The Toddler Room includes some learning areas, such as role play and a play kitchen. However, similar areas are limited in other parts of the setting, which restrict children's ability to explore freely and make their own choices. The outdoor area is spacious with soft flooring, a canopy offering shade, various play equipment, and a shed for storing resources. However, leaders do not organise the environment effectively which limits the range of suitable play opportunities for the children. At the time of the inspection, work was underway to improve sections of the outdoor area. Leaders explained that the new developments will offer children more opportunities for creative and exploratory play.

Leaders ensure children have access to age-appropriate furniture, toys, and equipment, all of which are in a good condition. Some children have access to a limited selection of realistic and meaningful resources. For instance, the play kitchen in the Toddler Room includes real-life items such as saucepans and a kettle. However, this could be improved by extending the range of authentic resources in areas of learning throughout the setting. This would support children to develop practical life skills and enhance imaginative play scenarios. Leaders provide some natural resources, but these are not always freely available to children. This restricts opportunities to spark children's curiosity and encourage exploration. Staff provide some opportunities to develop cultural awareness through books and dolls, which promote diversity and inclusivity.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders are actively involved in the daily operations of the setting, which gives them a good understanding of the care and support provided to children. The statement of purpose reflects the setting well and contains the required information. Leaders ensure policies and procedures are in place, but some of these were missing important information. Leaders addressed this during the inspection. Leaders keep comprehensive, up-to-date records, including children's files, and ensure all necessary legal documents are in order.

Leaders complete a quality-of-care review annually, which includes feedback from children, parents, and staff. They consider these views and identify strengths, but they do not use them to prioritise improvements. The review does not outline strategies to achieve future improvements or reflect on past progress. However, improvements have been made to the environment, including refurbished toilet facilities and ongoing work to enhance the outdoor areas.

Leaders follow recruitment procedures and confirm all staff hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. They are aware of the mandatory training requirements for staff. Leaders hold staff meetings and have a system in place for the supervision and appraisal of staff. Staff we spoke to were positive and complimentary of the support they receive. Leaders do not deploy staff effectively enough to consistently maintain the required adult-to-child ratios. During the inspection, there were not enough staff present at lunchtime and afternoon snack time to meet the needs of the number and ages of children attending. Outcomes for children require improvement because there were not enough staff available to provide support and meaningful interaction. We expect the provider to make improvements.

Leaders develop good relationships with parents. They gather all relevant information before children start at the setting to enable them to support individual needs effectively. Leaders keep parents informed about their children through a variety of methods including verbal feedback, daily diaries and open days. They make good use of their community to help children gain a sense of belonging. For instance, children have visited the local fire station and a veterinary practice.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
Due to insufficient staffing during mealtimes, children received limited support and lacked meaningful interactions, which reduced their opportunities for social engagement.	08/07/25

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 23 - Equipment	To provide more freely accessible resources and develop areas of learning that encourage and support children to develop and learn through their play.
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	To provide more natural and authentic resources to encourage children to use their imagination and build on their natural curiosity.
Standard 10 - Healthcare	Ensure staff are fully aware of the The Welsh Governments guidance in relation to providing real food to enhance play opportunities.
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	To develop planning to ensure it considers children's interests and skills development.
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	To provide more opportunities for children to self-direct their own play.
Standard 20 - Child protection	Ensure the safeguarding/Child protection policy clearly outlines the procedures and times scales to follow should concerns about a child be identified.

Best Practice

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Recommendation(s)

To not rely on the television during certain times of the day.

Mae’r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

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