Nursery Manager

Our Vision
To create a safe and joyful place where every child is nurtured and inspired to grow with confidence, curiosity and pride.

Our Mission
Through strong relationships, skilled teaching and a culture of kindness, we support children to develop the foundations they need to grow, achieve and feel proud of who they are.

Our RECIPE Curriculum
As a Nursery Manager, you will lead and inspire a team to deliver high-quality experiences and opportunities that support children to become:



Our Values
All team members will:

- Demonstrate kindness, respect and professionalism in all interactions.
- Promote children's emotional security and wellbeing.
- Build nurturing relationships with children, families and colleagues.
- Foster inclusive environments where every child feels valued and respected.
- Work collaboratively to support the success of the nursery and wider organisation.
- Actively contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and learning.

Job Purpose
To lead and manage the nursery as a welcoming, inclusive and high-quality early years provision, providing a safe, nurturing and inspiring environment where children can thrive, learn and develop. As Nursery Manager, you will provide strong and visible leadership, ensuring the delivery of exceptional care and education in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the First Steps Vision, Mission, Values and RECIPE curriculum. You will be responsible for the quality of education, safeguarding, compliance, operational performance and financial sustainability of the nursery, while developing a highly skilled and engaged team committed to achieving the best outcomes for children and families.

Key Responsibilities
Child Development, Learning and Curriculum

- Lead the planning, delivery and evaluation of a high-quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Characteristics of Effective Learning and the First Steps Vision, Mission, Values and RECIPE curriculum.
- Ensure the provision of a safe, nurturing, stimulating and inclusive environment that promotes positive outcomes for all children.
- Ensure the RECIPE curriculum is embedded consistently throughout the nursery and reflected in the experiences, environment and opportunities provided for children.

- Monitor children's progress, development and outcomes, identifying trends and implementing strategies for improvement where required.
- Lead on the identification and support of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including overseeing assessments, coordinating support plans, working in partnership with parents and external professionals, and completing referrals and funding applications.
- Drive continuous improvement in the quality of education through monitoring, coaching, professional development and reflective practice.
- Role model outstanding early years practice, interactions and professionalism at all times.

Leadership and Team Development

- Provide strong, visible and values-led leadership across the nursery.
- Lead, inspire and motivate staff to achieve high standards of care, education and professionalism.
- Create a culture of accountability, collaboration and continuous improvement.
- Lead, support and develop the staff team through regular supervision, appraisals, staff meetings and performance reviews.
- Identify training and development needs and support continuous professional development across the nursery.
- Support succession planning and career development opportunities for colleagues.
- Work closely with senior leaders to support effective recruitment, induction, retention and workforce planning.
- Support and develop Early Years Team Leaders and the Early Years Lead Practitioner to maximise their impact on quality and outcomes.
- Foster a positive, reflective and collaborative team culture.

Quality Assurance and Compliance

- Monitor and evaluate the quality and consistency of provision across the nursery.
- Lead the development, implementation and review of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs).
- Ensure compliance with all statutory requirements, company policies and nursery procedures.
- Complete audits, monitoring activities and quality assurance reviews to maintain high standards.
- Prepare for and lead inspections, audits and quality assurance activities.
- Ensure accurate documentation, records and systems are maintained across the nursery.
- Support a culture of continuous improvement and reflective practice.

Safeguarding and Welfare

- Act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the nursery.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at all times.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are recognised, responded to, recorded and reported in accordance with statutory guidance and company procedures.
- Provide guidance and support to colleagues in relation to safeguarding responsibilities and decision-making.
- Ensure appropriate risk assessments, healthcare plans and safeguarding arrangements are in place for all children.
- Maintain compliance with Health and Safety legislation and company requirements.
- Promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and children's wellbeing remains at the centre of all decision-making

Operational and Financial Management

- Manage the day-to-day operations of the nursery to ensure efficient, effective and high-quality provision.
- Monitor occupancy levels and work towards agreed occupancy targets.

- Take responsibility for achieving staffing, budgetary and operational targets set by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ensure staffing ratios are maintained and resources are deployed effectively to meet children's needs.
- Plan and oversee staff rotas, ordering of resources and the organisation of children throughout the nursery.
- Monitor nursery performance data and use information to inform decision-making and improvement planning.
- Maintain an awareness of nursery income, expenditure and occupancy trends, taking appropriate action to support the long-term sustainability of the nursery.
- Ensure the effective use of resources to support both quality provision and financial sustainability.
- Support the promotion and positive reputation of First Steps within the local community

Partnership Working

- Develop and maintain strong, professional and respectful relationships with children, families, colleagues and external professionals.
- Promote open, honest and effective communication with parents and carers.
- Ensure families feel valued, informed and actively involved in their children's learning and development.
- Work in partnership with external agencies and professionals to secure positive outcomes for children.
- Support effective communication and collaboration between teams, nursery locations and senior leaders.
- Represent First Steps professionally and positively at all times.

Professional Practice

- Demonstrate and promote the First Steps values of Kindness, Safety and Emotional Security, Nurture and Relationships, Growth and Learning, Teamwork and Professionalism, and Inclusion and Respect.
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism at all times.
- Keep up to date with developments in early years education, safeguarding, childcare legislation and best practice.
- Participate fully in management meetings, development activities and professional learning opportunities.
- Act as an ambassador for First Steps and contribute to the success and development of the wider organisation.
- Adhere to all First Steps policies, procedures and professional standards

Safeguarding

First Steps is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. All appointments are subject to satisfactory safeguarding and employment checks.

Person Specification

Qualifications	
Essential Criteria	*Desirable Criteria*
• Full and relevant Level 3 Early Years qualification (or equivalent). • GCSE English and Maths (Grade 4/C or above) or equivalent. • Paediatric First Aid Certificate or willingness to complete within an agreed timeframe. • Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training or willingness to complete within an agreed timeframe. • Food Hygiene Certificate or willingness to complete within an agreed timeframe.	• Level 2 or Level 3 qualification in Leadership and Management (or equivalent). • Foundation Degree, Early Childhood Studies Degree or other relevant higher qualification. • SEND-related qualifications or training.
Experience	
Essential Criteria	*Desirable Criteria*
• Minimum of two years' experience working in an early years setting, or 2 years other suitable experience. • Minimum of one year's supervisory experience within an early years, education, childcare or other relevant setting. • Experience of leading, managing and developing staff teams. • Experience of recruitment, induction, supervision, coaching and performance management. • Experience of overseeing curriculum planning, children's experiences and developmental outcomes. • Experience of leading quality improvement initiatives within an early years setting. • Experience of managing operational requirements, including staffing and ratios. Experience of working in partnership with parents, carers and external professionals.	• Experience contributing to positive Ofsted outcomes. • Experience of acting as a Designated Safeguarding Lead. • Experience of managing budgets, occupancy or business performance. • Experience of leading inspections, audits or quality assurance activities
Knowledge	
Essential Criteria	*Desirable Criteria*

• Comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). • Comprehensive knowledge of child development and early childhood education. • Strong understanding of safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. • Strong understanding of Health and Safety requirements within an early years environment. • Understanding of SEND and the identification of emerging additional needs. • Understanding of Ofsted requirements, inspection frameworks and quality standards. • Understanding of safer recruitment and employment practices relevant to people management. • Understanding of occupancy, staffing ratios and operational performance indicators. • Commitment to the First Steps Vision, Mission, Values and RECIPE curriculum.	• Knowledge of local authority processes relating to SEND, inclusion and funding. • Understanding of budget management and financial planning. • Knowledge of continuous improvement and change management approaches.
Skills and abilities	
Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
• Strong leadership, organisational and interpersonal skills. • Ability to inspire, motivate and develop high-performing teams. • Ability to manage performance and hold constructive, challenging conversations where required. • Strong mentoring and coaching skills. • Ability to communicate effectively with a diverse range of people both verbally and in writing. • Ability to analyse information, identify priorities and make sound decisions. • Ability to monitor quality, evaluate practice and drive improvement. • Ability to manage workload effectively and meet deadlines. • Ability to build positive relationships with children, families, colleagues and external professionals. • Competent IT skills, including Microsoft Office applications and nursery management systems.	• Experience using nursery management and safeguarding systems such as Connect, iConnect or CPOMS. • Experience presenting information, delivering training or leading professional development activities.
Personal attributes	
Essential Criteria	
• Kind, caring and nurturing approach. • Positive role model for children and colleagues.	

- Passionate about early years education and child development.
- Leads by example and demonstrates accountability.
- Professional, reliable and trustworthy.
- Resilient and solution-focused approach.
- Motivated to achieve high standards and continuous improvement.
- Commitment to inclusion, equality and respect.
- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- Able to demonstrate the First Steps values of Kindness, Safety and Emotional Security, Nurture and Relationships, Growth and Learning, Teamwork and Professionalism, and Inclusion and Respect

Other requirements

Essential Criteria

- Able to work flexibly within the nursery operating hours and participate in an agreed shift pattern.
- Able to attend and lead staff meetings, training events, parent consultations, open events and other nursery activities.
- Willingness to undertake occasional evening or weekend work to support nursery events, training, professional development or business needs.
- Willingness to work across different First Steps locations where required, to support organisational priorities and operational needs.
- Able to travel to alternative First Steps locations and external meetings when required.
- Demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Satisfactory completion of all required pre-employment checks, including Enhanced DBS, references, qualification checks, right to work checks, health assessment and compliance with childcare disqualification regulations.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

Any appointment is subject to the Company's terms and conditions of service.

Working hours per week:	37
Working weeks per year:	52
Salary range:	£35,441 – 38,721 per annum
Salary progression:	Salary progression is achieved through annual increments, in accordance with the Company's Performance Management Scheme.
Holiday entitlement:	The annual leave year runs from 1 January to 31 December. 27 days per annum. In addition, the days between Christmas and New Year are not deducted from your leave entitlement.
Holiday restrictions:	Leave cannot be taken on certain days designated by the Company, e.g. development days. Leave is to be agreed in advance with the line manager.
Pension scheme:	Permanent and fixed term staff (regardless of how many hours they are contracted to) will automatically be entered into the National Employment Savings Trust ("NEST"), provided their appointment is for at least three months in duration. Participation is subject to its terms and conditions. The Company's policy is to contribute as an employer to staff in membership of the NEST only. Should staff opt out of the NEST, the Company will comply with the employer duties under Part 1 of the Pensions Act 2008 in respect of staff and it will automatically enrol or re-enrol staff into a pension scheme as and when required by law.