

CASE STUDY

First Steps Day Nursery, St Peter's Hospital, Surrey



Location: Chertsey, Surrey

Year Completed: 2021

Project Value: £69,000

Featured Products: Balksbury Play Unit, Darrell Gazebo, Ocean Tray, Ocean Water Chute, Storyteller's Chair, Button Stools, Extra Large Sand Pit, Sensory Totems, Beehive Finger Maze, Chalkboard, Concave Mirror, Convex Mirror, Minibeast HQ

A fantastic series of playground equipment and a sensory area have been installed by Hand Made Places at First Steps Day Nursery. The nursery provides care for the children of staff employed by Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The trust has invested more than £100,000 in the facility at the St Peter's site in Chertsey, Surrey.

At the heart of the play area is a Balksbury Play Unit. Perfect for little ones aged three and above, the activity centre includes a slide and fireman's pole. Youngsters are challenged to cross the unit using a balance beam, climbing wall, scramble net and bridge, with a ladder and ramp leading to various platforms. To capture imaginations, Activity Panels, including a Chalk Board, Mirrors and a Finger Maze, line the perimeter of the playground along with a Minibeast HQ to encourage children to learn more about the natural world. A Totem garden, with six handcrafted themed posts, adds to the sensory experience at the nursery, while a Caversham Gazebo provides cooling shade as well as shelter from the elements.

Staff at First Steps want children to enjoy a wide range of activities in the outdoors, with a corner of the play area dedicated to lessons and story time. This includes the beautiful Hand Made Places Storyteller's Chair surrounded by a series of Button Stools engraved with different insects. Messy play is also encouraged with the inclusion of an extra-large Sand Pit and a bespoke water play table complete with Ocean Water Chute. The nursery, which is registered for 81 childcare places, continued the nature theme with a custom-made timber planter built into the layout.

Hand Made Places was selected by the Trust to work with them designing the play area around the needs of the nursery. Products were manufactured to order at our North Staffordshire timber workshop. Our teams also looked after the removal of existing kit, the installation of the new play equipment as well as ground works and resurfacing, with bound rubber mulch and artificial grass complementing the different zones. James Thomas, Chief Operating Officer at Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals (ASPH) NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The nurseries play a vital role in supporting our staff who support our patients, which makes ASPH a great place to work! The playground really does make a real difference for our staff's children who will enjoy the new play equipment for many years to come."

