

First Footsteps Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

First Footsteps at Fairwinds was registered in 2003 and is run by an organisation that operates a number of registered childcare provisions in the North West. This setting is located in the Norris Green district of Liverpool. The nursery operates from 7.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday all year round except for bank holidays. Children are cared for in three age related groups in a number of rooms on the ground floor and via a staircase on the first floor of the building. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

The provision is registered to care for a maximum of 40 children at any one time. There are currently 64 children on roll, of whom 16 receive nursery education funding. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported. There are 15 childcare staff of whom most hold the level 3 qualification in childcare and education. The manager holds the level 4 qualification and the two deputy managers have a foundation degree in early years. Other staff are working towards appropriate qualifications. This nursery is supported by an improvement officer from the local authority early years team. The nursery is registered on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the childcare register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

.The children's welfare needs are rigorously safeguarded. All aspects of the provision support children's progress towards the early learning goals within a well-planned and well-resourced environment although children have limited opportunity to solve problems independently. The partnerships with parents and other professional agencies are highly effective and significantly contribute towards individual children's learning and development. The children are valued as unique individuals and a strong inclusive ethos threads through every aspect of nursery life. Staff do not always allow children to make their own choices with regard to healthy foods and dental hygiene. A commitment to the process of self-evaluation process reflects the desire for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- consider how to further develop children's awareness of healthy lifestyle choices with regard to diet and dental hygiene
- consider ways of enhancing indoor and outdoor activities to encourage problem solving and cooperation.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are extremely well safeguarded. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the adults within the setting at all levels. This is achieved through training, team meetings and activities planned by management to monitor staff's understanding. The safeguarding procedure clearly details collaborative working with other key agencies to protect children from harm. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures, along with successful induction programs for new staff further ensure that children are fully safeguarded. Thorough risk assessments are carried out annually and additional assessments are completed if new resources arrive or if there are changes to the building or procedures. Daily visual safety checks by the staff ensure that children can continue to play in a safe and secure environment.

The staff team are well motivated and roles and responsibilities are clearly established. Consequently staff work effectively as a team because they feel valued, supported and involved within the setting. Staff provide care and create an environment where uniqueness and diversity is valued. The focus is always upon helping all children to make good progress and promoting their welfare. A strong commitment to continuous improvement is in evidence. The recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed including the establishment of a very high-quality outdoor environment. Each child has their own key-person who works closely with parents. They keep ongoing records of children's progress and tracking systems are in place to effectively identify children's learning priorities. However, a few inconsistencies in maintaining these records are identified.

All the learning environments demonstrate a thoughtful and well-planned approach. Each area contains appropriate, well-maintained resources that are fully accessible and enhanced to meet the learning and development requirements of individual children. This means that the children have every opportunity to make good progress in their learning and development across all areas. Children's interests and influences are reflected in the resources on offer. A clear focus on new babies is evident in response to the current number of pregnancies involving parents and staff that are an important part of the children's lives.

Partnerships with parents are excellent as staff discuss every aspect of their child's learning and development with them. Displayed information, children's artwork and 'learning journals' clearly demonstrate the quality care and learning that is offered. Parents are engaged in their child's assessment as soon as they start at the nursery. For example, the sharing of information about what they already know and can do. This level of involvement in their child's learning is continued. For instance, being encouraged to complete the home diaries and attending regular parents' evenings. Parents speak very highly of the partnership with the setting. They respect and trust the manager and staff and appreciate the support they provide. Parents' comments include 'the nursery came highly recommended and we are more than happy with our choice'. Highly effective systems are in place to identify the particular needs of children and to then work closely with other agencies, such as speech and language services to ensure the child progresses well.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The children feel safe and secure at the setting because they have good relationships with the staff. For example, children are taught how to be safe by staff giving gentle prompts of not to run inside the setting and walk slowly when using the steps. Good quality interactions and well-organised routines help babies and very young children to become secure and confident in the setting. All adults are extremely well deployed to support each child's learning and welfare. They are skilled at promoting highly positive attitudes to learning, instilling a keenness to learn. They recognise when to involve themselves in children's play to extend thinking or play ideas or when to leave children playing independently. For example, when making play dough fairy cakes, the brief involvement of staff to help children create an imaginary oven extends this activity to cover the concepts of heat, time and patience.

Children behave well and begin to show an awareness of responsibility within the setting. For example, they take turns and when serving the food at lunch time. Children develop a respect for themselves and others and learn about other cultures and beliefs. This is because staff provide a wide range of activities and experiences, which help them to value diversity. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn. They are actively involved in children's play and ask a good range of open-ended questions. This supports children's learning and encourages them to be active, critical thinkers. Staff know the children well and they have a good understanding of their abilities. This means they effectively challenge and support children's on going progression. However, children have fewer opportunities to become more independent and solve problems through everyday situations in play.

Staff make good use of observation, assessment and planning to ensure they provide a good range of activities across all areas of learning to meet individual children's needs. This includes making changes to their planning and observation arrangements to ensure they incorporate children's next steps and interests. Children have good opportunities to develop their language skills, because staff are skilful at engaging the children in telling stories. Learning is extended by moving those stories on to role play activities outdoors. Children also have many opportunities for mark making. For example, they experiment with traditional pens and paint indoors and with rollers, large brushes, buckets and water outdoors.

Babies enjoy a range of sensory activities, such as playing with the sensory bottles and watching the glitter move when they shake it. They use their hands to explore sand and water to make marks and respond to their own reflections in a variety of well-placed mirrors. Children take an active part in meal times. These times are sociable occasions and children sit in small groups. They serve themselves and pour their own drinks, but there is limited opportunity to choose a healthier alternative. There is discussion about healthy foods and the concept of "five a day" does take place. Children engage in a wide range of physical activities. For example, when playing outdoors children manoeuvre their bikes around objects

with skill, climb on the climbing frame with confidence and enthusiastically explore a delightful nature trail.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met