

First Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Hayley Marshall

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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 Steps Pre-School opened in these premises in 1995. It operates from a large main hall and enclosed outside area of The Scout and Guide Centre in the town of Princes Risborough.

The pre-school is open from 9am until 12pm Monday to Friday and operates a lunch club each day until 1pm. On a Monday and Wednesday the pre-school is open in the afternoons from 12pm until 3pm. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas.

A maximum of 24 children under eight years may attend at any one time. Currently there are 32 children on roll aged between two and four years of age. Children aged three and four years are funded for free early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with English as an additional language.

There are seven members of staff who work with the children, three of whom have a level three qualification and four who currently hold a level two qualification. The pre-school is managed by an elected parent committee. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and 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.

Children are settled and happy at the pre-school because they share warm and affectionate relationships with staff and there are highly effective partnerships with parents. As a result, children are making good progress. Partnerships with other professionals are generally effective. Documentation and resources are mostly well organised to meet children's individual needs. Children have an exceptional understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles because members of staff support their independence and help them to make good choices. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been effectively addressed and along with well-developed evaluation systems demonstrate that the pre-school has a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- maintain a two-way flow of information with other settings who provide care

- for children
- encourage children who are active and energetic when playing inside by organising lively games
- review staff records on a regular basis to ensure they kept are up to date.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements to safeguard children are robust, reviewed on a regular basis and fully understood by staff. Comprehensive recruitment and induction procedures are in place for new members of staff in order to check their suitability to work with children. Risk assessments and daily checklists minimise risk in the pre-school, whilst staff perform regular safety checks to maintain a safe environment inside and out for children. Children's records are well maintained and updated, but staff records do not always hold all relevant, required information in an easily accessible manner.

The manager communicates clear expectations for securing further improvement to the staff team and committee. A staff training plan identifies areas for development within the team and the staff work well together in the supportive environment. Action planning is realistic given the limitations of funding and accommodation, and concentrates on strengths such as further developing the use of the outside area. Progress is effectively monitored using self-evaluation with all staff involved in identifying strengths and weaknesses within the pre-school. Regular reviews mean that the pre-school is effective in sustaining significant improvement in the future.

The pre-school has good resources that provide children with a variety of engaging activities in all areas of learning. Children are very responsive to staff who know them and their individual interests well. The outside area is well planned and allows children to engage in boisterous, challenging play that meets the needs of some children, particularly older boys, very well. However, the same opportunities are limited when the children play inside and as a result their play can sometimes lead to other children feeling unsettled. Careful planning of the layout of the room means that younger children can access activities at floor and table level. Puppets and soft toys provide children with comfort and introduce them to differing cultures. The pre-school has recently purchased books that support children's understanding of the diverse world in which they live. When new children start the pre-school, their key person takes time to gather a wide range of information from parents. This helps to identify their individual needs, interests and starting points. As a result, children are making good progress in their learning and development.

The pre-school has exceptional partnerships with parents. Parents are encouraged to maintain information sharing with the pre-school by completing a daily entry in the home/pre-school book. Innovative use of technology supports parents who are unable to attend the pre-school themselves and so parents feel highly involved in their children's care. The parent run committee enables parents to be involved in decision-making on key matters and a rota system means they see how the pre-school operates. Parents are highly complimentary of the care that their children

receive and the way in which the pre-school accommodates their needs. Wider relationships with other professionals, such as local schools are strong and contribute towards children's achievement and well-being, particularly when children move on from the pre-school. However, the pre-school has yet to establish good links with other settings that provide care for children in order to share information about children's progress and development.

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

Children enjoy their time at pre-school and make good progress because there are opportunities for them to make choices about what they want to play with and how they want to play. Staff listen to children through discussions and make observations of them at play in order to plan activities that they know will engage and excite them. Younger children can select activities that suit their developing skills whilst older children choose more complicated activities that match their capabilities. Children practise early writing in different areas of the pre-school and take resources into different areas of the room and outside area to further their play experiences. For example taking play dough into the home corner to make dinner.

Children have opportunities to use technology such as tape players to play listening games. They operate technology by pressing buttons and controlling volume. They are inquisitive and active in their play and ask questions about how things happen and why. This helps to develop good wider skills essential for future learning. Children share resources well and work cooperatively together such as when tidying up at the end of the session. Children have good relationships with staff and their peers and demonstrate high levels of self-esteem because they perform small tasks. Such as, writing the number of children present on a chalkboard. Behaviour is generally good because there are clear rules and children know what is expected of them. Older children demonstrate these expectations to younger children who copy their behaviour.

Children have an outstanding understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. They manage their own personal hygiene very effectively and model behaviour such as disposing of soiled tissues in the bin for others. Children independently wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack time. Staff allow children to choose what healthy snack they will have each day and as a result, children are keen to have their choice. When playing outside children are able to explain the benefit of regular exercise and the effect it has upon their bodies. Children also tell adults how to keep the environment clean such as wiping the table over before they sit down to eat their lunch.

Staff develop warm and trusting relationships with children, which means that children are very responsive and affectionate towards them. In turn, this means that the children feel safe and secure in the setting and seek out favourite staff to share their experiences with. Consistent routines are in place so children know

what to expect and what they must do next. When using tools such as scissors, children do so safely and calmly. Staff gently remind children of expectations, such as not playing too roughly. If children do become unsettled, staff respond quickly to offer them comfort and as a result, children settle again very quickly.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	1
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