

First Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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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 was registered in 2011 and operates from renovated premises in the Biscot area of Luton, Bedfordshire. Children have access to a range of open plan playrooms and a secure, enclosed outside play area.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 52 children may attend the pre-school at any one time, of whom 52 may be on the Early Years Register. There are currently 24 children on roll. The pre-school is open from 9am to 12 noon and 12.30pm to 3.30pm term time only. Children have the option of staying for the whole day from 9am to 3.30pm and for a variety of sessions across the week. The pre-school offers care to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four members of staff and two long term volunteers. All of the staff hold early years qualifications and the manager holds Early Years Practitioner Status. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is an extremely friendly, exceptionally well-managed and highly inclusive pre-school setting which genuinely strives to achieve high standards. The qualified staff team work conscientiously to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage, sustaining good quality interaction with children and promoting positive attitudes to learning. Resources are continually being developed and there is further scope to develop the outdoor area. Children make good progress in their learning and development and observation and assessment systems track and secure progress. All aspects of children's welfare are promoted well and there are good partnerships with parents and carers. Strong leadership and established reflective practice secures the pre-school's good capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend the use of the outdoor area as a stimulating learning environment that children can access easily.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children clearly feel secure and happy in this happy and positive environment created by staff who hold appropriate levels of qualification and work very well together as a team. Children's welfare is promoted well as the pre-school has

extremely effective safeguarding procedures. The owner has substantial knowledge and experience of such issues and gives meticulous attention to every aspect of safeguarding practices. Risk assessment is comprehensive and appropriate action is taken to minimise hazards to secure a safe environment for children. Particular attention has been given to the management of arrival and departure procedures to secure children's safety.

Reflective practice is an integral part of daily practice and the staff gather together at the end of every session to discuss what went well and what needs to improve. Formal self-evaluation is in the early stages but provides a very comprehensive account of the pre-school's strengths and has been completed in consultation with the staff, section by section. The staff work collaboratively with the advisory services and openly welcome their input and support. Staff respond well to the praise and encouragement provided by the owner who models how she wants activities delivered. She then works alongside her staff on a daily basis, monitoring the quality of provision at first hand, ensuring consistently good quality of provision and securing good capacity for continuous improvement.

Staff have a clear understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement appropriate policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. They work with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's individual needs, background and culture and are therefore able to meet their needs and promote children's awareness of individuality. Several different languages are represented by the children attending and many signs are annotated in additional languages. Bi-lingual staff support parents in their communication with staff and are always available to translate if necessary. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified, benefit from individual education plans, and are referred to other professionals when necessary, so that they receive the help they need.

The pre-school makes every effort to work in partnership with others to secure smooth transitions and continuity of care for children. Staff arrange home visits and the pre-school liaises with the local schools and community, inviting visits from the local community police officers, the Bookstart programme and a music franchise group. Parents receive thorough information about the setting and their children's progress, for example, through letters, daily talks with staff and parent consultation meetings. Lovely compliments are written by parents, for example, 'I am really impressed with the changes I have seen in my child's learning - I can't thank all the staff at First Steps Nursery enough because you really are doing a great job - her interactive learning and behaviour has really improved...!'

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

Children experience a highly enjoyable programme of learning and development. They are very well-supported by the friendly and caring staff who work hard to meet their individual needs and go about their work in an extremely calm and purposeful manner. Available resources are used well and the staff create a bright, stimulating indoor environment for children in this newly established pre-school.

The doors to the outside area are open throughout the sessions, enabling children to enjoy free flow access to outdoor play in the fresh air. Toys and equipment reflect the six areas of learning, although there is further scope to improve this area to support children's outdoor learning. In the garden, any disputes are managed effectively by staff through the use of a sand timer to promote turn-taking and the development of social skills. Outdoor activities cover the six areas of learning and children are beginning to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

The space inside the premises is bright and thoughtfully set out, with distinct play areas which reflect the six areas of learning. Children engage in role play together and staff have provided dolls' nappies and potties in the role play area because many of the children are learning to use the toilet. Children attempt to write their names on their Father's Day cards and demonstrate high levels of independence at the snack table as they pour their own drinks and help themselves to noodles and fruit. Staff engage children in discussion about healthy eating at snack and at lunch time.

Children become enchanted at 'Story time', where skilled staff tell the story of 'Goldilocks and the three bears' using gestures, intonations and puppets to involve all children, including those with English as an additional language. Children's understanding of mathematical language is reinforced as they respond with gestures to indicate 'big; medium and small'. Staff add a lovely touch at the end of the story with the comment that 'We must all remember to lock our doors when we go out because Goldilocks was a stranger' and reminding the children about the ways to stay safe. When the children sing rhymes, such as, 'Humpty dumpty', again they are reminded of safety when staff point out that he got hurt because he was not being careful on the wall.

Children learn to count as they roll giant dice, count the dots and jump to the correct number card, matching the numeral to the quantity. Building on children's interest is of paramount importance to the staff and a wide range of activities extend the current theme of 'Families', expanding children's knowledge of the world around them. Children make finger puppets of family members, look at their baby photographs and compare and discuss the changes from then and now. All around the pre-school, signs and information are presented Bengali, Urdu, English and Polish and picture cards enable non-verbal children to show the staff what they want to do.

Planning and assessment are closely linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage and plans demonstrate that staff identify clear intentions for learning. This secures purposeful teaching and learning and good quality provision. For example, staff have turned off the interactive whiteboard, directing children to the computers so that they are able to assess information technology skills. Each child has a developmental progress file and they are completed by their key persons. During child-initiated play, staffs take turns to observe children and make notes accordingly. At adult-led play the child's key person carries out observations. Stickers put into children's files, areas are highlighted and dated when the strands are met. From each observation a next step is produced and carried out to enhance children's learning. Progress trackers are then completed at the end of each term to show the progression in children's learning effectively.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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