

First Steps St Matthews

St. Matthews Neighbourhood Centre, 10 Malabar Road, LEICESTER, LE1 2PD

Inspection date

01/05/2013

Previous inspection date

08/02/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The thoughtfully planned playrooms create enabling environments for all ages of children to promote independence and to engage children in purposeful play. Children benefit from a wide range of play materials to support their learning and development.
- Children feel safe and secure in their relationships with staff and the implementation of an appropriate key person system improves relationships with the children and their families supporting the children's well-being.
- Children are supported to acquire the skills and capacity to develop and learn effectively, and be ready for the next stages in their learning.
- There is a strong commitment to improve the pre-school provision through setting ambitious targets and action plans.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Occasionally some staff interrupt children's play by offering too much direction or unnecessary repetition of directions already given by other staff. This means children are not always supported to develop their motivation or have sufficient time to act themselves.
- There is further scope to support parents to share information about their child's learning at home.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities throughout the nursery in both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- The inspector spoke to staff and interacted with children throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents through discussion and from written questionnaires sent out by the pre-school.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of practitioners' suitability, and a range of policies and record keeping procedures.

Inspector

Patricia Bowler

Full Report

Information about the setting

First Steps, St Matthews was registered in 2004 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is a pre-school run by Action for Children and is linked to a Sure Start Children's Centre in the St Matthews area of Leicester and serves the local community. It is situated in a self-contained room with associated facilities on the ground floor in the St Matthews Neighbourhood Centre. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play which is situated a short distance from the centre.

The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 5 and 3. They are supported by a staff member who holds Early Years Professional Status, based at the Sure Start centre.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during term time, from 9am until 4pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 42 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- strengthen the opportunities for children to become fully engaged in active learning, for example, by providing uninterrupted time and freedom to become deeply involved in their play and learning
- promote an ongoing dialogue or sharing of regular two-way observations on learning with parents and use this shared knowledge and understanding to plan together and think through ideas of how to move the child forward.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children make good progress because the staff are knowledgeable and understanding of how children develop and learn. Children settle eagerly to well-planned and presented activities, confidently making choices and steering their own play. Carefully segregated areas in the large room focus on specific play activities providing security for quieter

children. They access the home play area through a gate in the low-level fencing and sit comfortably at the computer making notes in diaries to practice early writing skills. Messy play is provided in an area with low-level easels for free painting and a range of resources to promote children's creativity. They stand at a tray with sand, glitter and dried spaghetti. Children use mathematical terms to identify long, short, big and little strands. When asked to find a tiny piece they break this off a long piece showing quick thinking in problem solving. Additional resources are stored on low-level units and children choose funnels to pass spaghetti through, bowls to catch it and various cutlery items to scoop and stir it.

Although most children have English as an additional language they engage confidently in discussions, sometimes supported by multilingual staff, as they develop their speaking skills. Lots of opportunities in small groups help children to build their confidence and self-esteem to share their thoughts. Staff are sensitive in organising groups so children at similar developmental stages are not over-awed by more able children. For example, during 'Fun Time', a small group enjoy time with a staff member in the quiet area, use books and story aids to help with communication and language development. Children are challenged effectively to ensure that they reach the next steps in their learning. However, sometimes staff intervene with children's play and interrupt their concentration too often. For example, during some group activities, directions are sometimes unnecessarily repeated by other staff and sometimes picture cue cards are not needed for children to understand verbal requests.

Key persons know their children well. Planning is tailored to their individual needs and interests. Children respond to gentle reminders to consider others and develop positive behaviour. Staff acknowledge children's efforts offering praise for their acknowledgement and helpfulness.

Teaching is effective because staff use learning experiences well. Children join in a baking activity using all required ingredients to make cakes. Children have individual bowls to mix butter and sugar and add eggs and flour. They scrape their mixture into a large bowl which is taken into the kitchen. Staff are aware that children succumb to temptation, lick utensils and dip their fingers to taste the mixture, so they thoughtfully prepare another mixture for baking. Children are unaware of this, but gain knowledge and experience about baking processes and enjoy decorating individual cakes which they eat during snack time.

Staff communicate with parents to obtain information, when children start, about what children already know and can do. Parents' views are valued and there are regular opportunities to share information especially when they arrive and collect their children. However, staff do not encourage sharing of regular two-way observations on learning with parents. This means that shared knowledge is not used to plan together and think through ideas of how to move the child forward.

Staff have experience of working in partnership with other early years providers in order to ensure consistency of care and learning. Children grow in independence as they learn to do things for themselves. They learn how to express their feelings, use good manners and make decisions about their play. Consequently, they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning and for the move into school. Strong links are established with local

schools. Reception teachers visit the pre-school to share information and meet the children before they visit the school. Good links are maintained with the local Sure Start centre, that provides the pre-school with regular support from a staff member with Early Years Professional Status.

Staff observe and assess children systematically and maintain detailed written and photographic records of individual achievements. Their next steps in learning are precisely identified and purposefully incorporated into activities. Consequently, children make good progress in their learning.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Staff ensure that children's health and safety is protected well. They have attended training in safeguarding and are aware of their responsibility to protect children from harm and abuse. Parents are aware of the safeguarding policy and the Leicester Safeguarding Children's Board procedures are accessible to them.

Children are supported well in the transition from home to the pre-school in a manner sensitive to their different needs and those of parents. Settling periods are flexible, in order that parents are secure in their knowledge that children are happy, because for most, it is their first step away from home. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority by staff. Consequently, the relationship between each child, their key person and other members of the staff team is very good. Children are settled, happy and confident. Staff encourage children to play cooperatively with others, share and take turns. Children demonstrate this during outdoor play as they wait patiently for their turn on wheeled toys. Staff skilfully engage them in other activities until their turn arrives.

Children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning and transitions to other settings and school because staff liaise closely to ensure consistency in children's learning. Staff consistently meet the care needs of each child in the group and respond sensitively to them as individuals. Behaviour is consistently managed with positive reinforcement in order to boost children's self-esteem. Good practice encourages children to gain an understanding of difference. They take part in a wide range of activities which reflect the traditional celebrations of the vibrant and diverse area where they live.

Children manage their own hygiene and personal needs. They enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks including fresh fruit, and engage in activities to make foods to eat during snack time. The environment is safe, warm and welcoming and children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they form a 'walking bus' to access the outdoor area. They know to hold their handle on the rope and to sit on the bench whilst staff check the area for any hazardous debris. Staff are vigilant in supervising children at all times especially during arrival and departure. Robust procedures ensure that children do not leave with any adult whom parents have not identified on detailed records. Children's well-being is addressed well and parents are provided with clear detail on staff practice in policies on safety, illness and accidents.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Comprehensive policies and procedures work effectively to maintain effective working in line with current legislation. Children's health and safety is protected well. Required ratios are maintained at all times because staff are deployed effectively to maintain safe levels of care both indoors and outdoors, especially as this is a short distance from the setting. Children are never left unsupervised with a person who has not been vetted. Procedures for recruitment, selection and induction are good. However, this is a stable staff team who have worked together for a sustained period of time and value each other's attributes and skills. Robust vetting procedures are established and staff are required to declare any issues which may affect their suitability at six monthly intervals. Processes for staff supervision, performance management, training and ongoing professional development are strong.

Staff use their experience and skills effectively to ensure children receive high levels of care and reach the best in their abilities in learning in relation to their starting points. The educational programmes are successfully monitored and the choice of resources, books and toys meet children's needs at their different stages of development.

The partnership with parents is effective as communication between staff and parents is good. This ensures that they work well together to meet children's different needs. However, there is scope to support all parents to share information about their child's learning at home.

Staff liaise with other early years providers where children attend to ensure consistency for each child's care and learning and in preparation for their transition to school. The pre-school strives for quality through systematic and inclusive self-evaluation. The views of children, parents and staff serve to identify strengths and drive improvement.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY289609
Local authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	910143
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	42
Name of provider	Action for Children
Date of previous inspection	08/02/2011
Telephone number	01162426370

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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