

Footsteps Nursery School

Biddenham Upper School, Biddenham Turn, Biddenham, BEDFORD, MK40 4AZ

Inspection date	18/10/2013
Previous inspection date	04/07/2011

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

- Children are motivated to explore because staff provide an inviting outdoor space where they may experiment with natural materials. As a result, children learn to take safe risks and develop good health.
- Children form good relationships and develop a caring attitude towards others because they have opportunities, and are encouraged by staff, to care for younger children and each other.
- The nursery uses successful strategies to engage all parents in their children's progress and, as a result, learning is extended into, and from, the children's own homes.
- The nursery works closely with other agencies providing support, information and individual care and learning plans that help to support every child to make good progress.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Children are, on occasion, not provided with sufficient time to solve problems, make decisions, and be independent because staff are sometimes over eager to support them as they play.
- Some staff do not consistently use all opportunities to extend children's language and understanding as they play or take part in planned activities.

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 in both rooms and the outside area, and spoke with the managers, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a selection of policies, procedures and information provided by the nursery.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with both managers.
- The inspector reviewed a selection of children's observation and assessment development files with key persons.
- The inspector reviewed the self-evaluation form online as well as the action and development plans held by the nursery.
- The inspector spoke with parents to obtain their views of the nursery.

Inspector

Lynne Talbot

Full Report

Information about the setting

Footsteps Nursery School was registered in 2010 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from a self-contained unit set within the grounds of Biddenham Upper School, Biddenham, Bedfordshire. The building is accessible to all children with a ramp to the front of the building. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play wherein there are steps to the lower section. The nursery is managed by a private partnership and serves the local and wider area.

The nursery employs seven members of childcare staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 7.45am to 5pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 41 children attending of whom all are in the early years age group.

The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consolidate children's problem solving skills and independence by allowing them more time and spontaneous opportunities to organise themselves, think through solutions and use their emergent skills and knowledge
- help children to broaden their vocabulary and their understanding, by consistently describing what they are doing and talking with children to help them to make links between their actions and words.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are happy and motivated in the nursery and, consequently, make good progress in their learning and development given their starting points. Staff offer resources and experiences that support children to learn, and provide opportunities for them to practise their emergent skills and knowledge. This ensures that they are well-prepared for a move to school. For example, following a story and discussion, children show curiosity about

where they live and places that they know about in other parts of the world. Staff use these teaching opportunities to introduce a globe and the laptop computer, with which they help children to find countries, such as Sweden and South Africa. They ask probing questions that help children to think about how things work extending their curiosity in everyday technology. The same group then lead the play on to a different story and, again, staff maximise the learning by introducing the concept of an author and reflecting on aspects of the story such as the difference between day and night. As a result, children are motivated learners who eagerly investigate what they see and hear. This prepares them for future learning and school.

Observation and ongoing assessment, tracking children's progress, is focused and builds from an initial assessment that parents also contribute to. Each child has a learning journey, provided to parents for agreement or comment, which shows next steps in development. This is monitored closely by the managers, and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, and, as a result, progression for all children, given their starting points, is good. The daily planning identifies every child's current interest to optimise the progress made. Face-to-face contact with parents plays a key part in the communication about children's learning and development. This is supplemented by parental contributions to the 'parent page' in the children's personal files which are reviewed at parent evenings. In this way the nursery ensure that they are using the information that they have to help children to make the most progress possible at home and in the nursery. A 'progress check at age two' is completed and shared with parents. Children with English as an additional language receive well-planned support to ensure that they make good progress. Signing, daily timelines, key words and resources, in addition to using the 'circle time' to introduce activities and information about religious celebrations and cultures, all help to include and support children. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully supported because staff develop individual plans for them that foster learning in all areas. Hence, all children make good progress given their starting points and individual needs.

All children work with materials that help them to make choices and use their senses. For instance, babies transport items, such as shells, in metal buckets, of different sizes, exploring the textures and sounds that they make. Children hunt in the herb garden to find snails and slugs which they examine using magnifying glasses. Staff skilfully introduce, during such activities, associated language that encourages children to describe what they see, to think about why the snail may come out of the shell, and begin to compare size and shape. One child decides that the shell may be too small for the snail and thinks about where else he may live! However, on occasion some staff do not always maximise the opportunities for developing children's communication within play, such as, the role play areas, by talking with children to help them to make links between their actions and words. This means that they do not always receive encouragement to fully explore talk to clarify their thinking. Children make decisions and lead their own learning. For example, staff provide creative materials for children to make pictures of owls, and read a poem about an owl to the group, to build on two children's interest in owls, which they both have on their jumper. They plan and provide materials for children who demonstrate an interest in writing and producing their own books. These activities enhance both expressive arts and literacy. Children develop games outdoors where they roll balls down the guttering. Staff are seen to build on this by introducing simple

mathematics and talking about 'one more' and asking children to estimate how many will fit on the gutter. However, during this activity, and others, such as preparation for snack time or during song time, staff do not always make the most of opportunities to support independent problem solving because they are sometimes over eager to support children as they play. This means that children sometimes do not have sufficient time to think problems through and reach decisions themselves. Children in this nursery show that they are well-motivated and eager to join in; they demonstrate good characteristics of effective learning. Staff are supportive and, as a result, the children confidently engage in activities and seek new experiences. This means that they are practising in preparation for new learning within any new setting, such as school.

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

The key persons in this nursery are attentive and form very good relationships with children and families and, as a result, children form close bonds and attachment with them. The nursery involve parents in the preparation of a 'settling in' plan for each child that helps them to settle into the nursery and reinforces their stability. Babies have a detailed care plan that is closely followed to enhance their security. Each child has a base room, under two-year-olds and over two-year-olds, but the younger children are often included in the play within the older age group, with a one-to-one staff member. Those children requiring a sleep have their rest in the younger children's room. The family grouping in the nursery supports children's personal, social and emotional development, and is seen to enhance both their confidence and sense of security, leading to motivated and engaged children. The managers monitor the nursery throughout the day to make sure that the deployment of staff is managed in the best possible manner to meet the needs of all children. Staff are enthusiastic, model good social behaviour for children and offer them frequent praise throughout the day. The 'circle time' is used to review the basic rules of the nursery. Children frequently demonstrate that they are kind and caring for others. For example, they bring toys and sit alongside other children when they have woken from their sleep offering to 'cheer them up' if they are sad. Children share easily and enjoy involving other children in their games showing good social awareness. As a result, children are well-prepared for school or the move from one room to another in the nursery.

Children develop good physical health. The garden areas offer inviting facilities for natural and exploratory play, and offer this same quality of play in inclement weather. This is due to a soft surface, a covered area, and the provision of clothing for wet weather. Comprehensive risk assessments mean that children are safe and the deployment of staff, and their vigilant supervision, means that children may explore freely with risks minimised. Half of the outdoor area is set above a soft bark surface with natural materials for children to build obstacles, climb through, and investigate growing materials. This means that children learn to take risks within a safe environment. Children are encouraged to carry out simple tasks, such as putting their own coats on, and this helps them to meet their own needs. They enjoy a range of healthy foods for snacks and cooked meals. The staff work closely with parents, and other professionals, to meet individual dietary needs. They support children to enjoy a sociable meal time and become competent with managing their own needs. Children freely access a range of good quality resources, indoors and

outdoors, leading their own learning. The environment is stimulating, yet calm, meaning that children feel secure.

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

The managers have high expectations for the quality of care that is offered to children and families. Regular and robust reviews of all paperwork and procedures take place to ensure that all requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Arrangements to safeguard children within the nursery are robust. All staff have safeguarding training and team meetings, as well as supervision meetings, are used to review practice and procedures. There are clearly mapped procedures for monitoring any safeguarding concern within the nursery. The managers are fully aware of their role and responsibilities with regard to referral to the appropriate authorities, and subsequent actions, and carry these out when necessary. The nursery has set in place procedures to check and record details of who has parental responsibility for children which strengthens their safeguarding procedures to protect children. As part of the safeguarding procedures there are thorough recruitment and suitability checks, which include a detailed induction and probationary period, of six months, for new staff. As a result, the nursery ensures that children are completely protected.

Staff create an environment that is stimulating, where children make choices to direct and initiate their own learning. The environment is very safe. Comprehensive risk assessments, applied by the managers and the staff group, ensure that risks to children are minimised. All exterior areas are secure and no person may enter the premises without being authorised because of the intercom and internal door release system. Staff have clearly defined areas of responsibility during the day and this means that they are always monitoring the ratios of children in any area and adjusting staff numbers accordingly. Managers have a clear overview of what is taking place in all areas, at all times, through constant monitoring of the free movement by children, throughout the day. Hence, children's welfare and well-being is shown to be of the utmost priority.

Professional supervision is provided in the form of regular supervision by the managers, which feeds into appraisals. The ongoing supervision is well-used and results in guidance, advice and training plans for staff. This provides very clear guidance to staff to help their understanding of good practice and all staff have a clearly outlined professional progression path developed. Thorough reflective practice includes input from all members of the staff, parents and carers, and children. For example, an overall self-evaluation form is produced using information gathered through methods that track children's use of the environment, identify future improvement areas, and review an ongoing action plan. The nursery has addressed all previous actions and recommendations showing a commitment to improvement. The staff team engage in planning and reviewing overall improvement targets for the nursery by judging the progress that has been made in identified areas. As a result of these clearly embedded procedures, the information helps to drive the continuous methods that maintain the good levels of achievement.

The nursery works closely with other professionals involved with children to identify and

fully support individual needs. They build firm partnerships with parents to support children and families. The staff provide care, which adapts to, and closely meets, the individual needs of children to support and foster well-being, learning and development. The nursery works closely with other settings, including childminders, to promote continuity in learning. Teachers are invited to visit children at the nursery and development files are prepared to pass to them when children leave the nursery. Childminders are invited to provide information that helps the nursery to work with them to ensure continuity of care. The dedication seen in reflecting on practice and continuing to improve all aspects of the nursery shows that there is a strong drive to maintain the good levels of achievement seen and evidenced in all documents inspected. Children are secure and confident, and clearly enjoy their play and learning. Consequently, they embark on their learning career ready to seek out new experiences and learn.

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	EY415737
Local authority	Bedford Borough
Inspection number	939133
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	41
Name of provider	Footsteps Pre-School Partnership
Date of previous inspection	04/07/2011
Telephone number	01234 860570

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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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