

First Steps Pre-School

21 Biscot Road, LUTON, LU3 1AH

Inspection date	08/01/2014
Previous inspection date	14/06/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
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 play happily; they have many interesting and varied opportunities to learn new skills. They are supported by staff that has a good understanding of how children learn through play. The pre-school plans a broad programme of activities that builds on the developing skills of all children.
- Children form close bonds with their key person and the whole staff team. As a result, they are motivated and confident learners. Good links with parent's ensure the individual care and learning needs of each child is effectively planned for.
- The leadership of the pre-school is strong. Effective management of staff and ongoing training ensures they have the skills they need to promote children learning and progress to a good level.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Parents are not always fully informed about the planned themes and topics to enable them to fully support and extend their children's learning and interests 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 compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector talked to staff and watched children take part in planned activities in the two-year-old room. The inspector talked to children in pre-school, she watched them play and use the outside area.
- The inspector spoke to staff and parents about the children's care, development and the daily routines. She observed snack and lunchtime.
- The inspector looked at a selection of learning folders, assessment records and documents for the well-being of the children and the safe management of the pre-school.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Tina Kelly

Full report

Information about the setting

First Steps Pre-school was registered in 2011 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is a privately owned pre-school and a sister site to 'First Steps in Limbery Field' in Luton. The pre-school operates from a two-storey building in the residential area of Biscot in Luton, Bedfordshire. Children are cared for in two age-related groups. The two- to three-year-old children are cared for upstairs, access is via a staircase. Children have access to an enclosed outside play area.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 9am to 12noon and 12.30pm to 3.30pm term time only. Children are able to stay all day or attend for a variety of sessions. There are a total of 95 children on roll; the pre-school is in receipt of funding for two-, three- and four-year-old children. There are currently 33 children on roll, in the early years age range, at the time of the inspection. The pre-school provides care for children who speak English as an additional language.

First Steps Pre-school employs 11 members of staff including the manager who holds a degree in early years education and Early Years Professional Status. Of the other staff, six hold early years qualifications at level 3, two at level 2 and other staff are working towards early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- review how information is shared with parents about their children's developing interests linked to the planned topics to support parents and carers in extending children's learning at home.

Inspection judgements

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

The pre-school plans a broad and diverse programme of activities and learning opportunities to promote and extend children's learning through play. The Luton Cohort Progress Tracker record and termly assessments are used to monitor children's achievements and assess their learning needs. There is a comprehensive settling in process, the information gained from parents as children join the pre-school is recorded on the 'transition from home' form and used as the basis for the first steps in their learning. The interests of each child are used to plan for their individual learning so children make good progress in relation to their starting points. The progress check at age

two is shared with parents, they are made aware of young children's recently acquired skills and how they can extend these at home. However, parents are not always sufficiently well informed about the planned themes and topics for the following weeks and term to support and extend older children's learning at home. This reduces the opportunity for making stronger links with their children's learning at the pre-school. It also means they are not always able to further support their children's involvement by bringing in items of interest from home that are more specifically linked to the planned activities. All children take part in rich and varied learning experiences, which ensure they are well prepared to move on to other settings, such as nursery and reception class with confidence. Children are developing the skills they need to ensure they are capable of taking part in new learning experiences to support their future learning.

Children aged between two and three years have their learning needs met, they are cared for in a dedicated room with age-appropriate toys and resources. Staff know the children well, they plan effectively to meet the developing needs of the children in their care. Children are keen to join in adult-led group time. They sit down with great anticipation and respond quickly to staff who ask them if they would like to sing songs. Children become familiar with numbers as staff teach them to count through every day activities, songs and action rhymes. Staff hand out large printed, laminated coins and current buns counting each one to reinforce children's learning. Children enjoy being part of the small group, they are gaining in confidence as they sing the popular rhyme and count the pennies and current buns. Children learn good social skills as simple activities encourage them to be willing to have a go. Children's communication and language skills are developing well. Staff present children with a cloth bag and ask them to talk about the items they find. The soft squidgy snakes are handed to the children to pass on to their friends. Staff extend children's language by teaching them descriptive words linked to the objects in the bag. Children call out their ideas; staff praise their efforts, using simple sign language actions to thank children for listening and for sitting nicely. This benefits those who speak English as an additional language and young children who need language support.

The pre-school room provides older children with a challenging and interesting learning environment. The seven areas of learning are planned into the lay out of the room to support children developing needs. Staff teach children to recognise letters and sounds based on the phonics system that is used in the local schools. They build on this skill by asking them to look for their name cards when they come into the pre-school so they can register themselves. The games on the computers and large white screen provide children with a wide range of learning experiences. Children learn about letters, numbers and shapes, matching and simple mathematical patterns. Planned activities as well as signs and symbols around the pre-school teach children to recognise familiar letters as the beginning of the literacy skills they will need to start to read as they move on to school. The designated play areas enable children to make independent choices about their play. Routines are flexible so children have time to explore and concentrate on their chosen activity. They are encouraged to lift the storage containers on to the floor and to set out the large threading beads. Staff monitor children's play. They ask appropriate questions to teach children to look at the different colour and sized beads. Children learn to manipulate the thread and beads to make long links in their chosen pattern. Consequently, their finer physical skills are developing well. The planning includes the outside area, which means

the seven areas of learning are supported well. Some resources such as, art materials, books, and construction toys are always available in the covered area leading from the pre-school room. Children clearly enjoy sitting with books, drawing and painting in the outside environment. They can also choose from storage so their individual interests are well met.

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

Children and their extended families build strong bonds and relationships with their key person and the whole staff team. An effective settling-in process, home visits and regular meetings, enable parents to share important personal information with their children's key person. This means children feel secure and ready to take part in new play and learning experiences. Staff are good role models and at group time they teach children simple rules that support and extend their personal and social skills. Kind actions, good behaviour and completing tasks are rewarded with stickers. These are highly valued by the children as if they are lost on the way home, parents come back to the office for children to be given a new sticker. Staff work with families who use the sticker system at home to ensure a consistent approach to behaviour management. Staff are sensitive to the needs of children, offering support when needed, especially for younger children and those new to the pre-school.

The well-being and safety of the children is high priority. Staff are deployed well across the pre-school to support and monitor children at all times. Children learn about a healthy lifestyle as the pre-school provides nutritious snacks, staff talk to children about what they like and ask them to try new fruits and different textured crackers. Staff have all attended food hygiene training, they use disposable aprons, gloves and hats to maintain a clean environment. Helpful dietary tips are given to parents so they can plan healthy food in the children's lunch boxes.

Staff teach children about good personal care through every day activities. Children are learning to be independent as they put on their coats and hats to play outside. Access to the outside area is managed well, children can ask to go outside and planned times are an important aspect of the daily routines. Written planning for the outside includes games and activities that teach children about how their bodies react to the weather and physical exercise. Staff are fully involved in the action games, they show children how to reach, stretch, jump and twist around. Staff teach children to be aware of those playing nearby, and ask them to find space to use their chosen game. They are reminded to wait, to share and take turns and simple rules are in place to ensure all children enjoy the play and learning opportunities. Children are gaining the personal and social skills they need to ensure they move onto nursery and school with confidence.

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

The management of the pre-school is strong, the staff team are highly motivated and strive to deliver high quality care and learning for all children. The manager provides clear leadership and works hard to support the well-established staff team. They work with the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and supporting documents as well as guidance from Luton Borough Council early years team. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met because robust recruitment, training and the management and appraisals of staff ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so. The pre-school works closely with the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure any concerns about children's well-being are referred to the appropriate agencies. There is a designated member of staff for safeguarding and all staff attend regular safeguarding training. Robust risk assessments and effective daily routines ensure children are cared for in a well-managed environment. Emergency evacuation procedures are practised regularly and staff know how to use the fire extinguishers in an emergency. The pre-school uses a risk assessment logbook provided by Bedfordshire Fire Service to ensure swift evacuation and emergency procedures are in place and maintained to monitor all areas of the building. The management of the nursery has taken appropriate actions to meet the recommendations of the fire officer at a recent visit. Most of the recommendations have been completed, there are action plans in place with work booked at times when children are not on site.

Reflective practice is an integral part of the daily routine. Staff consistently review and improve the play and learning opportunities for children. Team meetings at the end of each session gives staff time to talk about children's progress, how they are planning for their continued learning and to share any aspects of the session they can improve or adapt. The pre-school is proactive in evaluating their practice; they use the Luton Early Years audit documents to review and plan to ensure all children are making progress in their learning. The pre-school works closely with other early year's agencies and professionals. They are part of the outreach service of the local children centre, providing support for families using the pre-school and those in the local community. Teachers visit the pre-school to meet the children and key persons to ensure children's care and learning needs are met as they move on to nursery and reception class.

Partnership with parents is very strong. The pre-school has well established links with families which enables them to consistently meet the children's individual needs. The staff team speak the home languages of all families so they can support children's learning and share the information with parents. Contact books are used for children aged two to three years; parents have opportunity to respond to the key persons notes on children's achievements to acknowledge the progress children are making. All children have a 'book bag' to take home. This is for their artwork and information about their progress and next steps. When children need additional support the pre-school may send home specific tasks to extend skills, such as pencil and scissor control. 'Teddy Bear weekends' are an effective way for children to share events from home. Teddy joins in different activities and parents are asked to write a short explanation, children then talk about their adventures at key group time. Children gain in confidence and self-esteem as they talk about events they have enjoyed with Teddy and their families. Parents are involved in fund raising events, walks to local parks and planned outings to farms and zoos in the summer. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection said they could easily talk to staff and find out

about their child's time at the pre-school. A comprehensive newsletter keeps them updated about the pre-school curriculum, staff and future events.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory 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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY440284
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	949502
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	52
Number of children on roll	95
Name of provider	First Steps Learning Limited
Date of previous inspection	14/06/2012
Telephone number	01582733030

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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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