

First Steps Pre-School

Methodist Central Hall, Eastlake Street, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 1BA

Inspection date

24/09/2014

Previous inspection date

26/04/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

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 happy, secure and explore confidently. They have good relationships with staff and each other, which helps them to engage in their learning and make good progress towards the early learning goals.
- Staff form strong relationships with parents and other early years settings children attend. These partnerships securely promote children's individual needs through the joined up approach to sharing information.
- Children develop a good awareness of safety during their play, where they take safe risks, such as climbing and balancing.
- Children are eager to learn and access a good range of resources and toys, which positively support their interests and learning needs.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always successfully organise some adult-led activities so that younger children remain engaged and focused.
- There are fewer opportunities for children to engage in energetic physical play outdoors.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor areas.
- The inspector held meetings at appropriate times with the manager and invited her to carry out a joint observation.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documents and a sample of documentation relating to children's welfare.
- The inspector checked evidence of staff suitability and qualifications.
- The inspector took account of parents' views and of the provider's self-evaluation.

Inspector

Dawn Biggers

Full report

Information about the setting

First Steps Pre-school opened in 1992 and is run by the Plymouth Methodist Church. It operates from the Plymouth Methodist Central Hall in the city centre. The pre-school is open each weekday during term time from 9.30am to 12.30pm. A lunch-club runs on Wednesdays from 12.30pm to 1pm. The pre-school occupies two interconnecting rooms on the first floor and has access to a large hall on the ground floor and outside play area. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 16 early years age children on roll. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. The pre-school employs a team of six staff who all hold a recognised childcare qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the organisation of group activities to further support younger children's attention and engagement
- increase the range of physical activities outdoors so children have more opportunities to enjoy energetic physical play in the fresh air.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of how children learn and make progress. Therefore, planning is purposeful, effectively monitors the children's achievements in all areas of their learning and identifies activities to support their next steps. The quality of teaching is effective because the assessment processes robustly track children's strong progress using observations, photographs and examples of their work. There is a good focus on parent's involvement and engagement in their children's learning. This has resulted in an effective process where they regularly contribute to their children's learning and to the required progress check for two-years-olds. Consequently, these supportive relationships encourage parents to share in their children's achievements and to identify goals to specifically continue the learning at home. For instance, the self-chosen book bag system means that parents share with children the joy of language and literacy. This means children make good progress in these areas of learning.

Children are confident and eager learners and use language well to communicate and

express their wishes. For example, they approached an adult and asked to play with the balls in the hall. Staff challenge children's learning well and skilfully extend their play as they encourage them to take risks and to experiment with their body movements on the climbing and balancing equipment indoors. This allows children to gain increasing control and coordination of their bodies. Staff asked children open questions to help them solve problems by thinking about ways to pass the ball through the tunnel. Children are sociable, and practise and learn new skills such as throwing, kicking and rolling the ball to an adult or each other. This helps children to develop control of their large movements and hand eye coordination. Children engage well in some group activities. Overall, they show an interest in books, songs and rhymes. They take turns to choose the props associated with the choice of song. However, at times, staff do not help all of the younger children to remain engaged and focussed in the activity, meaning these groups of children occasionally lose interest and become restless.

Staff used number and colour names during their daily interaction with children and as part of the daily routine, which motivated children's interest in mathematics. Children confidently demonstrated their awareness of number use by counting how many children were in the group. Staff skilfully asked questions and challenged children to think about and recognise patterns and shapes. As a result, children engaged and used language well as they matched the vehicle sizes and colours during a tabletop activity. Children practise new skills as staff provide age appropriate resources to meet their individual needs well, such as trainer and left-handed scissors. This positively promotes their inclusion, as all children learn to use scissors and demonstrate increasing control by attempting and succeeding to cut out shapes. Staff encourage children to hear and practise the initial sounds of their name, which positively supports their literacy, and language and communication. This helps to prepare children well for the next stage in their learning and eventual move to school.

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

Staff build warm, caring relationships with the children. This helps children to be sociable, happy and secure. Staff gather good information from parents about their children's individual needs when children first start through the 'my current interests and achievements' form. This allows parents to share what they know about their children's care and learning needs, promoting positive settling-in periods, which take account of children's individual needs. Therefore, children are emotionally secure, which prepares them for the next stage in their learning. Staff provide good support to meet all children's individual needs. They use resources, such as picture cards and written words, to help those children who learn English as an additional language to communicate and understand routines. A welcoming, well-planned environment enables children to make choices from a good variety of stimulating resources. Children develop good independence, for instance, they collect their own cup before snack time and take on special responsibilities throughout the session, such as to hold the door open for the other children to go through. This develops their self-esteem.

Children are well behaved. They demonstrate good levels of confidence because staff

recognise their achievements, and give praise and encouragement. Children engage in daily routine tasks, such as helping to tidy away. They are cooperative and respond to rules positively, for instance, when they hear the sound of the whistle, they line up to leave the room quickly, which prepares them for emergencies, such as leaving the building in the event of a fire.

Children's health and well-being features strongly throughout the daily routines. This helps children develop a good awareness of their own needs. They receive support to pour their drinks when they are thirsty. Children make healthy choices from the nutritious snacks provided. They develop a good awareness of their own self-care skills, washing their hands after using the toilet and they are encouraged to wipe their own nose. Staff plan activities that promote children's healthy lifestyle so they enjoy frequent exercise to move and use their body indoors. This results in fun activities, such as engaging in games to identify parts of their body. However, there are fewer daily experiences in the new outdoor play area for children to be physically energetic in their play in the fresh air. Children develop a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They learn about potential hazards and consequences, for example, staff teach and remind them how to use the stairs safely with clear guidance and support. Staff are particularly vigilant while on outings. They discuss stranger danger and practise road safety procedures with the children, who also wear high visibility jackets. This teaches them how to keep themselves and others safe.

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

The strong leadership and management of the pre-school means systems to monitor the education programmes are good. The manager has a robust understanding of her roles and responsibilities. She is clear about the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She ensures staff clearly understand safeguarding practices and procedures, so they know what to do if a child protection concern arises. The manager follows robust staff recruitment processes. Her on-going assessment of staff suitability supports her well to review staff skills, qualifications and suitability to work with children. This helps to protect children's welfare. The staff's good teamwork, motivation and commitment to the pre-school is supported well as there is a clear emphasis on professional development through induction, supervision, appraisals and training. Consequently, a skilled and qualified staff team use their effective teaching abilities and knowledge to plan targeted activities. This helps children to make good progress overall, in their learning and development. Staff give high regard to children's safety and security. They complete daily checks of the environment, undertake robust risk assessments and supervise children well using areas of the premises, and on outings. This contributes to the effective organisation and smooth operation of the pre-school.

There is a clear commitment to driving improvements and monitoring and evaluating the pre-school's practice. This has resulted in the pre-school focusing strongly on developing their planning and assessment procedures. This means there are effective systems that clearly track and review children's good progress to identify and close any gaps in their

learning. The strong relationships with parents have been enhanced by improved communication and sharing of information, and events planned, such as sponsored walks. Consequently, parents engage very well with the pre-school. They report positively about the good support and progress their children make, and feel fully involved in their welfare and learning. This shows the pre-school are able to identify and address areas for improvement.

The pre-school have been proactive in making links with other early years settings children attend. They have good links with the local schools, which supports the children's future learning needs as they move onto the next stage of their development. This effective sharing of information provides children with continuity in their learning and development, thus promoting positive outcomes.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	117187
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	842716
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	8
Name of provider	Plymouth Methodist Central Hall
Date of previous inspection	26/04/2011
Telephone number	0759 6015740

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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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