

# First Steps (Rocester)

Rochester Community Centre, High Street, Rocester, UTTOXETER, Staffordshire, ST14 5JU

<b>Inspection date</b>	08/12/2014
Previous inspection date	18/09/2009

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	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 make good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is good and staff plan stimulating activities which interest them. The assessment and monitoring of children's progress is effective and supports their continual development well.
- Parents are actively involved in children's learning, as staff encourage them to share detailed information about their needs and achievements and support their learning at home.
- Staff have warm interactions with children in this friendly pre-school. They sensitively help children to settle easily, form strong bonds with their key persons and develop their confidence and independence.
- The leadership and management of the pre-school are good, children are safeguarded well and a culture of continuous improvement is fostered. Management have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-school and involve practitioners, children and parents in the pre-school's self-evaluation process.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Boys on occasion lack focus and motivation as staff do not actively encourage them to become involved in a meaningful range of activities.
- Staff do not always maximise opportunities to develop children's understanding of good hygiene practices and social skills within snack time sessions.

## **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 main playroom and outside play area.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the setting and undertook a joint observation with her.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation and a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector reviewed the suitability checks and qualifications for staff working with the children.
- The inspector took account of the pre-school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

## **Inspector**

Julie Preston

## Full report

### Information about the setting

First Steps (Rocester) was registered in 1992 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a community centre in the Rocester area of Staffordshire, and is managed by a voluntary committee. The pre-school operates from one main playroom and there are enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 6 and two hold level 3. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 32 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports 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:

- enhance children's awareness of good hygiene practices and social skills at snack time so that they continue to learn good eating habits, for example, by reinforcing hand washing before food and providing plates or bowls when they eat finger foods, such as pieces of fruit
- enhance opportunities for boys to be consistently involved and motivated within a meaningful range of activities.

## Inspection judgements

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

The quality of teaching is good and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Educational programmes are planned to cover the seven areas of learning. Staff are purposeful in confirming to children that their ideas and contributions are valued during discussions and activities. As a result, children's personal, social and emotional skills are well promoted. Staff have high expectations of children; they skilfully use open-ended questions to encourage children to express their thoughts and help extend learning opportunities as they play. They are aware of children's individual needs, characters and interests, and plan well for their future learning, including children attending with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff provide a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities that support children's interests and provide challenging play to support children's progress and development well in most instances. However, at times some boys within the group are less focused because staff do not consistently motivate them and engage them in activities. This reduces opportunities for them to learn.

Staff know children well and all children benefit from engaging in enjoyable activities based on their own development and learning styles. There is a busy atmosphere in the pre-school and the good interaction from staff engages children in play activities, supporting and enhancing their learning well. Children's active learning is valued and supported effectively by staff, who talk to them and ask skilful questions about what they are doing. For example, staff listen and help children to engage in snow play, identifying the types of animals they find and what snow feels like. Children's concept of mathematics is developing well. They are confident in using numbers in their play and staff encourage them to count throughout the day. For example, they count and recognise numbers up to seven, identifying that seven geese were laying in the Christmas song they are learning. Children show enthusiasm and excitement while outdoors. They take part in a good range of activities and experiences to practise their physical development including riding on bikes and in cars. Children develop good communication and language skills as they chat and converse with adults and other children; for example, within free choice sessions. Their listening and attention skills are promoted as they participate in group activities, such as circle times. Children's early literacy skills develop as they begin to link sounds to letters and recognise their own names. Early writing skills are supported because staff understand the need to provide opportunities for children to develop the hand and finger muscles that will be needed for writing. They encourage children to paint, draw and make marks with a variety of materials. For instance, children use their hands to draw marks in the snow. Staff encourage children to explore colour and texture by providing a range of materials, resources and sensory experiences to support this. For example, children become absorbed using scissors, glue and colourful materials, including glitter to make Christmas baubles. Staff place a high value on children's creations by praising them and thanking them for their efforts. Staff also plan experiences for children to learn about the wider world through inviting visitors into setting, such as the local police, the nurse and the fire brigade.

Before children start attending the pre-school, parents are asked to provide information about what their child likes and is interested in by completing an 'all about me' record. Staff use this information, and their own observations of what children know and can do, to identify children's starting points and next steps for learning. Key persons plan suitably challenging and enjoyable experiences and tailor activities to meet the needs of individual children. Staff complete ongoing assessments and track children's progress throughout the year. This includes the required progress check for children between the ages of two and three years, which documents children's ongoing achievements and areas where they need support. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported because key persons work in partnership with parents. They liaise well with other professionals to secure any additional support that may be needed. Consequently, all children make good progress in relation to their starting points. Each child has a learning journal with lots of photographs of activities they engage in and examples of their own creative work. Parents contribute to their children's progress records by sharing information about their learning at home. They know who their child's key person is and attend parents' open events and hold daily discussions with staff about their child's development and what they are learning. Parents also enjoy sharing specific events with their children, such as stay and play sessions, the Christmas nativity and fundraising events. Children also have homework books suggesting activities for them to complete

with parents at home. This helps parents to support their children's learning at home and involves them in their supporting progress towards the early learning goals in preparation for school.

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

Staff provide a warm, welcoming and caring environment, where children settle quickly and their emotional needs are well met. Procedures for settling in are tailored to meet the individual needs of children and families. The established key-person approach helps to promote children's well-being and independence. Staff know the children and their individual routines well and are kind, caring and supportive. This helps children to form secure attachments. Throughout the session, staff give reassurance to children if they have an accident and offer praise and encouragement for achievements. This promotes children's emotional well-being and enables them to feel comfortable. Toys and equipment are easily accessible to all children, which ensures they are confident to initiate their own play and learning. This means that they are in charge of making their own decisions and have the time and freedom to explore and become deeply involved in their own choice of activities. The staff team are good role models for the children. They teach children to communicate positively and provide clear guidelines and boundaries to help support their behaviour. As a result, children behave well and are supported to share toys positively. Staff are passionate about giving value to children's interests, suggestions and ideas. They actively encourage children to join in and contribute during small and large group times. For example, children enthusiastically volunteer to tell everyone about something that they have done at home, or to talk about their families. As a result, children feel valued and develop confidence, which raises their self-esteem. Children help to pack away toys when they have finished playing, which develops their good understanding of caring for their environment.

Staff encourage children to adopt a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating habits. For example, they provide healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit, provide a range of healthy options within meals and encourage parents to provide healthy lunch boxes. There are opportunities throughout the day to drink fresh water or milk. Children are encouraged to develop their independence and self-care skills. For instance, they know that they must wash their hands after visiting the toilet and attempt to put on their coats before outdoor play. However, due to changes in the routine to accommodate practising the nativity play, staff do not always reinforce good hand washing practices and good eating habits at snack time. This means germs could easily be passed on and good eating habits are not embedded within practice. Staff teach children about different aspects of safety, for example, how to use scissors and sewing needles appropriately, how to evacuate the building and how to use large equipment safely. Children have opportunities to experience fresh air and to exercise. For example, they regularly participate in music and movement sessions and access the outside spaces where they can use resources and develop physical skills; this promotes their good health.

Parents report that their children are prepared well for school because of close links between the pre-school and school staff. Children from the pre-school attend regular events at the school throughout the year, including visiting with parents and children to

share in the initial playground routine, take a tour of the school, participate in activities and meet school staff. School staff visit the pre-school and, consequently, children get to know trusted adults for the next stage in their learning. With parents' consent, pre-school staff share records of development and learning with the school in the summer term. This enables school staff to plan appropriately, based on sound knowledge of children's abilities and their interests before they start school.

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

The management team and all staff demonstrate good knowledge of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are effective arrangements in place to ensure that children are safeguarded well. All required policies and procedures are in place. For example, there are clear policies concerning the use of mobile phones in the pre-school. These are clearly reinforced with staff, parents and visitors, which ensures that children's safety is uncompromised. Staff conduct risk assessments and daily checks of areas used by the children to ensure all areas are safe and suitable for use. All staff attend safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities to protect children. Staff follow procedures when they have concerns about a child. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. The manager routinely observes staff informally and carries out regular appraisals as part of supervision processes. This helps to identify strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring that staff practice is of good quality. The manager maintains a secure overview of staff's continuous professional development to make sure that required training, such as paediatric first aid, food hygiene and safeguarding is undertaken and kept up to date. In addition, staff have opportunities to attend training in relation to the needs of the setting and the children in their care, and to support their own professional development.

The manager and committee have a strong drive to secure continued improvement for the pre-school in order to continually enhance the lives of children in their community. Self-evaluation processes are updated annually in liaison with parents, children, staff and others in order to provide a targeted plan for improvement. This means they all have the opportunity to suggest ideas of how the pre-school can develop the good practice already on offer to children and families. The manager ensures that the pre-school provides a full educational programme in line with the learning and development requirements. She effectively oversees the delivery of the educational programmes, monitors staff's teaching practice and tracks the individual progress children make. For example, she creates graphs of children's achievements to identify any gaps in their learning and holds weekly meetings with staff. This ensures staff deployment is effective so that they can meet the individual needs of the children and keep them safe at all times. Staff meetings provide opportunities to share new information, share children's next steps in learning, discuss consistency and support the planning process. This means that staff have the knowledge and understanding to plan effectively for all children and provide additional support to ensure any gaps in children's learning are narrowing.

Relationships between parents and staff are well established. Ongoing communication

between parents and staff is supported effectively through the use of a home to pre-school communication book. Parents use this book on a daily basis to read what their child has done at pre-school and to record their observations and to inform staff of children's achievements at home. There is also regular dialogue between staff and parents as they pick up from pre-school. Parents comment positively about the pre-school, such as how happy their children are. There is a clear procedure in place for any parent who wishes to make a complaint so that any issues are efficiently addressed. Staff develop good partnerships with other professionals and agencies to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, the implementing of specific care practices and sharing their observations of children. This promotes a positive working partnership and provides continuity for children and their families. There is also a parent management committee for the pre-school, with key members providing regular contact and liaison with staff.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	218145
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	864187
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	30
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	32
<b>Name of provider</b>	First Steps Pre-School (Rocester) Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18/09/2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	07815 660041

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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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