

First Steps Nursery Collegiate Academy Trust

Shireland Collegiate Academy, Waterloo Road, SMETHWICK, West Midlands, B66 4ND

Inspection date

08/01/2015

Previous inspection date

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

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

- Leaders and managers are highly motivated and strive for excellence. They have a good overview of children's needs through effective monitoring of practice and strong systems for evidencing assessments of children's development. As a result, the nursery provides high standards of care and learning for children.
- Children and their parents are at the centre of the nursery's philosophy. There are robust systems in place to ensure that important information is shared to promote continuity in children's care and learning and development.
- Children make good progress in their learning and development. This is because staff use observation effectively to reflect on what arouses children's curiosity and interests. As a result, children are supported to learn through purposeful play.
- Children are protected from harm because all staff follow good safeguarding practices and have a good understanding of their responsibilities with regards to child protection.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Some staff are not yet skilled in consistently supporting babies' communication and language development through meaningful interactions in every situation.
- Staff have not yet considered how to make the most of mealtimes, so that children's health and self-care skills are enhanced as part of a sociable experience.

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 carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning activities and spoke to children at appropriate times while they played.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector held meetings with the provider, the director of finance and the deputy manager, and she had discussions with other staff members about their roles and responsibilities, including safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at evidence of self-evaluation, including the views of parents from contributions made in documentation and those spoken to on the day.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including the safeguarding policy, children's learning and assessment records, and the planning of activities.

Inspector

Kim Barker

Full report

Information about the setting

First Steps Nursery Collegiate Academy Trust was registered in 2004 on the Early Years Register. It is situated on the campus of Shireland Collegiate Academy in Smethwick, Birmingham and is managed by the Collegiate Academy Trust. The nursery is accessible to all children and serves the local area. It operates from two separate children's areas, one with an adjoining sleep room, toilets and nappy changing area. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications, including six at level 3, one at level 4 and one with a foundation degree in Early Childhood Studies. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, from 7.30am until 5.45pm, all year round and children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 36 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-year-old children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance staff's practice to promote and encourage babies' communication and language development through even more meaningful and purposeful interactions in every situation, so that they are always supported to develop their thinking skills
- make the most of mealtimes to promote children's understanding of independent choice and develop their social skills as part of the daily routine.

Inspection judgements

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

The management team have a very good understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, they have devised effective and clear systems for evidencing and assessing children's learning. This ensures that staff gain a clear understanding of how they can help children to learn more. The findings are shared with children's parents through regular sharing of the development records in written summaries of their progress. Parents commonly share with nursery their current learning focus at home. Staff are highly skilled in guiding parents with realistic expectations, ensuring that this focus supports appropriate next steps in their children's learning and development. The nursery manager has developed robust systems for tracking children's progress. As a result, staff have a good understanding of individual children's learning needs and how to identify any gaps in their learning. Staff liaise with other practitioners in the linked pre-school to promote smooth transitions for children moving on to the next stage in their learning. As a result, children benefit from high levels of consistency in their learning and development.

Staff use their knowledge about how children learn to plan activities to support individual children's progress. They take time to collect valuable information about children's interests, likes and dislikes from parents before children start in the nursery. Parents continue to provide staff with their child's current progress targets through ongoing effective exchanging of important information. Staff are skilled in using this information, alongside their own good observations, to provide a wide range of activities. This means that children are able to learn through play as staff provide a realistic level of challenge in activities that are linked to next steps in their development. For example, toddlers investigating shaving foam are encouraged to explore and have a go. As toddlers begin to develop their own ideas, they are encouraged to explore these ideas further and begin to make marks that represent their ideas. Staff make very good use of descriptive language to help toddlers to understand this sensory and physical exploration. They provide a narrative for what toddlers are doing and help them make sense of their ideas. Occasionally, staff in the baby room are more focused on offering babies different toys and activities, than they are in engaging babies in meaningful and purposeful interactions in every instance. This means that babies are not always supported to remain engaged in order to develop their thinking skills.

Staff ensure that children have easy access to a broad range of resources that cover all seven areas of learning. This motivates children to initiate their own play in the well-organised environment provided for them. For example, toddlers engaged in sand play benefit from strong modelling of language from staff. They make good use of questioning and recall to help toddlers name their actions as they tip, fill and pour, promoting their physical and communication and language development. Toddlers learn about caring for their friends as staff skilfully support their understanding of why they need to keep the sand in the tray. As a result, children play cooperatively, sharing and taking turns, promoting their personal, social and emotional development in managing feelings and behaviour. Staff ensure that there is plenty of space for babies to develop their physical skills and opportunities for them to pull themselves up to stand. Babies are confident to move around the space available to them, investigating and making sense of their world. For example, babies explore different textures as they crawl across synthetic grass to reach toys and resources. Overall, children gain the necessary skills to support their future learning.

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

Management place a high focus on forming effective relationships with parents before children start at the nursery. They have established good settling-in procedures, which means that staff make sure they find out about children's interests and preferences from parents. Parents comment favourably that the move between home and nursery is a positive experience. For example, staff in the baby room have developed a parents' pack. This document includes useful information about nursery routines and how staff will continue to engage parents throughout the child's time in the nursery. Relationships with parents are supported through daily handovers and daily sheet that includes information about what their child has done during their day. Children's emotional well-being is

promoted through a key-person system, which helps them develop appropriate attachments with familiar adults. Parents describe how the nursery has provided family consistency by ensuring that babies currently settling in have the same key person as their older sibling. As a result, children's sense of belonging is reinforced, they feel secure to explore and investigate their surroundings and make good progress. For example, children who are almost ready to move onto pre-school, explore using construction materials. They build a model that represents a familiar story, this links to a current nursery theme. They then check back in with their key person to share what they already know and describe how their model represents their understanding of the story. Children benefit from receiving praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements and their self-confidence and self-awareness is reinforced.

Staff promote children's understanding of good hygiene habits. Toddlers begin to learn how to independently manage their personal care needs. For example, staff help them to recognise when they need to wipe their noses, wash their hands and put their rubbish in the bin. Children are encouraged to behave well, as staff provide them with clear and consistent boundaries and routines. However, recent changes to how lunch is provided in the nursery, means that children have longer to wait for their meal and they are not able to serve themselves. Babies and staff sit together around the table, but staff have not yet considered how they can make this a rich social occasion. As a result, there are fewer opportunities to support children's self-confidence in speaking and listening in every situation and to help them to make independent choices about what they eat.

Children are taught about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. At times during the day, they have access to the well-organised outdoor area. Space for quieter activities and younger babies is clearly defined from areas for larger physical activities. As a result, children get fresh air and exercise and develop their physical skills. Staff recognise that babies and toddlers require developmentally appropriate support and guidance so that they are confident when they begin to climb and explore further. There is strong evidence of reasonable steps taken to ensure children's safety through effective risk assessments. Staff make daily checks to ensure good steps are taken to remove or minimise any potential risk. For example, staff actively support children in changing their shoes before going outdoors to ensure that they do not slip on decked surfaces.

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

Leaders and managers place the utmost priority on meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, all staff attend relevant safeguarding training to ensure that they fully understand and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to child protection. The manager has designated safeguarding responsibility and there are clear lines of responsibility within the academy trust, to ensure that there is always someone available, should a member of staff need support. As a result, staff have a very good understanding of how to respond to a safeguarding concern about a child in their care or an allegation being made against a member of staff. All required documentation and records are clear and well written, including robust risk assessments

and children's attendance records. A detailed folder of policies and procedures are appropriately kept and available for parents at all times. There is very good evidence of effective vetting and recruitment procedures that ensure all persons employed are suitable to work with children, including procedures for employing temporary agency staff. The building's boundaries are very secure. At each locked gate, there is a closed circuit television camera and entry is managed by an intercom system. The identity of visitors is checked and there are clear boundaries around the use of mobile telephones, cameras and computer access. As a result, the nursery's practice is exemplary in underpinning children's safety and welfare.

The manager and her deputy have excellent knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are very well supported by the academy trust's management system and this is reinforced through a passionate and committed attitude towards their work with children and the importance of supporting their welfare and development. The monitoring of children's progress is enhanced by the use of regular tracking of assessment by key people. Management ensure that staff's assessments are rigorous through the monitoring of various groups. They have devised an effective system that tracks areas of learning on which the nursery needs to focus their practice. The management team and the academy's principal is currently developing a system to bring the nursery assessment processes in line with that of the school. Leaders and managers use very good processes to monitor practice through weekly meetings. Staff performance is monitored further through regular appraisal and supervision meetings. Staff feel well supported in their professional development and show commitment and enthusiasm as they have opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. For example, leaders and managers have established a training schedule to reflect on current staff's professional development needs.

Self-evaluation is used to critically reflect on the service the nursery provides for children and their families and they seek the opinions of parents through regular questionnaires. Staff ensure that parents are kept up to date with the outcomes of their suggestions in a display, entitled; 'you said, we listened'. Partnerships with parents are outstanding and there is good evidence of parents' active contributions to their children's learning, which staff actively collect to provide continuity with regard to children's progress. Staff's detailed reviews of children's good progress are shared with parents in regular progress updates. There are very good procedures in place to provide parents with a written summary of the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. Staff complete and share this where necessary in order to highlight any gaps in children's development and to seek any necessary early intervention. Parents are extremely happy with the nursery and comment positively, 'staff have gone an extra mile to ensure smooth settling in'. Parents go on to say that, before staff had shared their partnership expectations with them they had not really understood the importance of effective communication, with regards to the strong contribution it makes to their children's learning and development.

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	EY280454
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	999229
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	36
Name of provider	Collegiate Academy Trust
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	0121 558 8086

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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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