

# Inspection of First Steps Nursery

Stoke-on-Trent College, Cauldon Campus, Stoke Road, STOKE-ON-TRENT ST4 2DG

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Inspection date: 15 October 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is good

Staff plan a rich and varied curriculum that reflects children's individual interests. Children demonstrate that they are happy, confident and feel secure at the nursery. They approach activities and resources with curiosity. For example, children eagerly investigate the carved pumpkins, exploring the contents, smells and textures. Children play together enjoyably under the warm and nurturing supervision of staff. They engage in familiar routines well, which help them feel secure. For instance, children know that they need to be on the carpet to engage in singing and story activities. They know that when they hear the tambourines it is time to listen to staff's instructions. Children know what is expected from them and they behave well. Physical development features highly in the educational programmes and is promoted well. For instance, staff provide daily opportunities for children to be active indoors and outside. Children experience safe risks and challenge as they climb, balance and negotiate the raised crate walkway, ladders and large tyres. Throughout the nursery all staff plan a curriculum that provides a variety of experiences that help children to learn about people, families and communities beyond their own. Staff help children to understand similarities and differences of their friends and staff. They look at artefacts and costumes from different countries.

### What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- On the whole, partnerships with parents are effective. The management team and staff encourage parents' engagement in their child's learning. For example, they invite parents to join special events and stay-and-play sessions. Staff support children's emotional well-being well at the start of placement. However, information-sharing with parents at this time can be strengthened to enable staff to gain an even better understanding of children's starting points on entry.
- Staff use songs, rhymes and stories well to help develop children's communication and language skills. Staff in the toddler room spontaneously sing familiar songs with children when they find the tambourine, engaging with them in 'shake, shake and stop'. Staff model animated singing very well and children enthusiastically participate, repeating the phrases and movements.
- Babies enjoy frequent trips to the local nature park where they explore flowers and herbs. Staff in the baby room have adapted the learning environment to help support babies' exploration and free movement. Babies explore natural materials, such as wooden and metal items. Staff excitedly demonstrate how to shake and bang these together to make different sounds. Babies show excitement as staff sing to them and sway in time to the song.
- Staff are experienced in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work in partnership with external professionals to ensure children and parents are supported quickly to address children's individual

needs. There are good systems in place to ensure that staff offer children appropriate food alternatives to support their special dietary needs. Children who require alternative feeding techniques are supported by trained and competent staff.

- There are good systems in place to monitor children's progress and to quickly identify any gaps in their learning. Children's learning programmes are planned to build on what each child knows and can do. Children move freely around activities, engaging and playing at their own pace, which helps them to discover new experiences and challenges.
- Children learn to predict and solve problems. For example, they eagerly engage in the magic potion kitchen where they add colours, divide and mix potions and excitedly guess what might happen next.
- The dedicated and committed manager works well with her team to evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery. For example, the manager in consultation with staff has introduced new approaches to maximise children's opportunities to make choices and lead their own play. Managers encourage all staff to continuously develop their professional knowledge through relevant training.
- Overall, language development features highly in the educational programme. Older children develop their knowledge of phonics as they explore sounds and letters. However, staff at times miss opportunities to ask meaningful questions to test children's understanding. They do not always use new words to build on children's current vocabulary and extend their understanding.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff ensure that children are able to play in a safe and secure environment, utilising detailed risk assessments and following stringent policies and procedures. Managers and staff demonstrate a secure understanding of their responsibility with regard to protecting children. All staff have attended relevant training and have a secure understanding of what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a member of staff. Managers use robust recruitment and induction arrangements to ensure staff are suitable for their roles.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- find out more from parents about what their children know, can do and their experiences on entry and use this information to plan even more meaningful experiences from the start
- strengthen the monitoring of staff's practice, including teaching, to extend children's communication and language to the highest level.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	511369
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10066122
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	55
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	90
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Stoke On Trent College
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP520085
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 603507
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 January 2016

## Information about this early years setting

First Steps Nursery registered in 1999. The nursery employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 4 and 12 at level 3. The nursery opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8am until 5.30pm on Monday to Thursday, and from 8am until 4.30pm on Friday. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Beverley Devlin

## Inspection activities

- The inspector observed staff's interactions, as children played throughout the nursery and outside, and discussed children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager and they discussed the quality of teaching.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk and tour of the premises.
- The inspector held a number of discussions with the manager and staff. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working at the setting.
- The inspector spoke to children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took account of the written views of parents and from those spoken to during the inspection.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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