

Inspection of First Steps St Matthews

St Matthews Neighbourhood Centre, 10 Malabar Road, Leicester LE1 2PD

Inspection date: 25 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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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

Children demonstrate positive attitudes to their play and learning. They arrive at pre-school happy, enthusiastic and keen to join their friends. Children's well-being is given the highest priority. Staff are skilled in working with children and value their individual needs. Children feel safe and secure. Staff know the children well and have high expectations for their achievements and their continued future success.

The pre-school is a valued asset to the local community. Staff promote the languages spoken by children at home. They frequently provide parents and children with bilingual support. Staff engage children in conversations using their home language alongside English. They recognise the uniqueness of each child. Staff support children's awareness of the wider community and cultural events that take place.

Children behave well. They learn about taking turns and the importance of sharing toys and resources. Children are polite and play cooperatively with their peers. Staff act as positive role models. They are kind and thoughtful in their interactions with the children. As a result, children show kindness towards the staff and their peers. Children use language, such as 'you're welcome' and 'thank you' spontaneously in their conversations.

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

- Staff build strong bonds with the children. These support children to feel emotionally secure and help them to settle quickly into the pre-school routine.
- Staff provide children with experiences and opportunities that they do not receive elsewhere. For example, children thoroughly enjoy spending time outdoors each day. They learn about the importance of being physically active. Staff take children for walks in the local community. They provide equipment and resources, such as wheeled toys, bicycles and big paintbrushes to help strengthen children's large-muscle skills and build their stamina.
- The manager and staff take pride in the pre-school and ensure that children play in a well-maintained environment. They are ambitious and strive to provide children with high-quality play experiences. Staff help children to learn about their own safety. Good arrangements are in place for when children move between the indoor and outdoor play areas. For example, children understand the importance of holding onto the walking rope as they walk together to the pre-school garden.
- Staff provide children with lots of praise and encouragement. They reward children for their good behaviours and acts of kindness. For example, children are excited to receive a sticker for their 'good sitting' and 'good listening skills'.

They tell the other children, 'Look! My sticker is pink and it's a dog.' Children listen to staff as they commentate on their play and use what they learn to develop their own play ideas. However, during some adult-led activities, staff do not provide children with the opportunity to express their own ideas and thoughts.

- Staff provide a stimulating curriculum based on what children need to learn next. Children make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. A strong focus on children's language development is significant to this success. Additional funding is used well to provide extra resources and one-to-one support to ensure all children thrive.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Staff regularly share information with parents to provide them with a clear picture of their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to continue their children's learning at home and share their child's achievements. Parents comment on the good progress their children have made since starting, in particular their growing language and social skills.
- Children demonstrate good levels of confidence and independence. For example, they know to wash their hands prior to eating to remove any germs. Staff provide children with nutritious snacks. They sit with the children and engage them in conversations about the benefits of eating a well-balanced and healthy diet.
- The manager has a good understanding of the pre-school's strengths and weaknesses. She works closely with her deputy manager to gain feedback from parents and staff to help identify areas they can further improve on. Staff have regular opportunities to meet with the manager or deputy manager to review their practice and discuss any concerns. They are encouraged to undertake core training. However, arrangements to further their knowledge and skills through targeted training are not fully embedded.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. They are confident in recognising and reporting any signs that may indicate a child is at risk of harm or neglect. Staff are familiar with wider safeguarding matters and know how to identify and respond to these. They keep their knowledge and skills up to date through regular safeguarding training. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff ensure all areas of the pre-school and the garden are safe and secure at all times.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide children with more opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas, in particular during adult-led activities
- strengthen ongoing professional development opportunities to build on staff's knowledge and skills and to raise the quality of teaching to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY473327
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10075659
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	17
Name of registered person	Pre-School Learning Alliance
Registered person unique reference number	RP900844
Telephone number	0116 222 1068
Date of previous inspection	9 March 2016

Information about this early years setting

First Steps St Matthews registered in 2014. It is located in the St Matthews area of Leicester. The pre-school employs seven staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, one at level 5 and one at level 6. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm and 12.45pm until 3.45pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Linda Newcombe

Inspection activities

- The inspector completed a learning walk of the areas used by children with the manager and discussed how the early years curriculum is organised.
- The inspector held discussions with staff and spoke with children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint evaluation of an activity with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager, deputy manager and area manager. She looked at relevant documents, including evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school, supervision records and staff's qualifications.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection, with the support of a translator, and took account of their views.

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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