

Inspection of Millennium First Steps Nursery Ltd

Unit-1A, Station Approach, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 9UW

Inspection date: 16 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive happily at nursery and are greeted warmly by staff. Staff support children's emotional well-being effectively. There are a lot of opportunities for children to develop their personal and emotional skills. For example, staff comfort upset babies and encourage older children to look after the tadpoles. Children experiment in their play. They use water in the garden to wash the play equipment, water the herbs and create a beach in the sand tray. Children feed the tadpoles spinach and ask others to be gentle when investigating the water to see if they have grown legs. This helps their growing understanding of the natural world.

Children demonstrate that they are inquisitive in their learning. They eagerly choose colours for an experiment and then watch as the vinegar makes the bicarbonate of soda react. Staff encourage children to think about what they are seeing, and children excitedly use words such as 'fizz' and 'bubble'. Babies push walkers around to help support their balance. Older children use their large muscles as they walk on beams and hit balls with bats while staff support them. This helps children develop their coordination. They also have opportunities to build the strength in their hands and wrists, for example when they are rolling out dough with rolling pins and squeezing liquid in and out of eye droppers.

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

- The management team evaluates the performance of the nursery thoroughly and has a clear plan for further development. There is a strong focus on staff practice and continually improving, to make sure children receive a good learning experience.
- Since the last inspection, the new manager has worked closely with the staff. Robust systems for performance management are in place. Staff undertake professional development opportunities to help them build on their skills and reflect on their practice. They comment that they feel supported and are working better with the children.
- Staff know the children well and regularly observe and assess their learning. Staff provide a balance of adult-led and child-led experiences that focus on children's individual learning needs. However, in some cases, staff who are less experienced do not plan activities effectively. They are not always well prepared and children spend too much time waiting rather than engaging in learning.
- Staff help children to understand ways to keep themselves safe. Older children hold on to handrails when walking up and down stairs. Young children are encouraged to wait their turn before going down the slide. However, while staff help and remind children to behave well, they do not explain the reasons why to older children. This means children do not gain a full understanding of the consequences of their behaviour.

- Staff encourage children to predict what might happen when exploring activities. They extend and build on ideas as they play with children, such as mathematical concepts. For example, when cutting an apple into pieces, staff ask the children what they might find inside. When children discover a star, they talk about the features of the shape.
- Fresh healthy meals are cooked on site. The cook considers all children's dietary needs. Staff make mealtimes a rounded learning experience. Babies and young children can practise cleaning their own hands and mouths with cloths. This helps to promote their personal care skills. Older children sit in groups and speak to staff and each other. They ask their friends to pass the plate so they can have more. These social skills will help them when they move to school.
- Staff are sensitive to the possible effects of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic on children and families. For example, they consider the possible attachment trauma that children may have experienced on their return to nursery. They have stress balls to support children to cope with frustrations.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. If children are not developing within age-related expectations, staff identify this quickly. They work with parents and other professionals to support the child and family. As a result, these children make good progress in their development.
- Parents speak of the noticeable improvements that have been made. They appreciate the increased level of communication about their children's day. Parents are able to extend their child's learning at home because they are told in advance what activities the staff will provide for the week.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leaders have a good oversight of safeguarding issues. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training. They can identify the signs of a wide range of child protection concerns and they know the procedure to report concerns about a child or a member of staff. The manager monitors detailed records so she can act on any concerns, including health and safety issues. The management team has a robust recruitment procedure in place to ensure that only staff who are suitable are employed to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support less experienced staff to plan and deliver adult-led activities more effectively
- help staff to explain the consequences of behaviour to older children so that they have a better understanding of their actions.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY420136
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10143151
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	116
Number of children on roll	68
Name of registered person	Millennium First Steps Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP530293
Telephone number	01462 423 666
Date of previous inspection	3 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Millennium First Steps Nursery Ltd registered in 2004. The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including two who hold qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Elke Rockey

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspector and the nursery manager carried out a tour of the nursery to discuss and understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- The inspector observed activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact these have on children's learning.
- The inspector completed two joint observations with the nursery manager.
- A meeting was held between the inspector, the nursery manager and the area manager. The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including the safeguarding procedures and evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection 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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