

Inspection of First Steps Day Nursery

First Steps Day Nursery, 75 Oakdale Road, POOLE, Dorset BH15 3LD

Inspection date: 27 August 2021

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 are happy and enjoy their time in the nursery. Staff put children's emotional well-being at the heart of what they do. They are caring and form strong bonds with children. Children go to staff for reassurance and comfort when they are feeling upset. Staff use phrases such as 'good job' to praise the children for their efforts and achievements. This helps to develop children's self-esteem and resilience.

Children behave well. Staff give children clear expectations for their behaviour and children respond promptly to adult requests. Children tell visitors what is expected. For example, children state, 'It's time to tidy up and then you have to go in and wash your hands.'

Staff plan focused activities to support children's developing skills. They teach older children how to improve their scissor control as they cut out pictures. Babies and younger children are encouraged to make marks as they play, to support their early writing skills. Children have daily opportunities to be physically active in the outdoor play areas. They learn how to use equipment safely and staff teach them new skills, such as climbing and spinning a hula hoop.

The nursery remained open to key workers and vulnerable children during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Staff maintained regular contact with families and offered children daily online activities that they could complete at home. This helped children to settle quickly when the nursery reopened.

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

- Leaders are clear on the knowledge and skills they want children to learn. Babies learn to repeat short phrases and enjoy exploring push-button toys. Older children learn to form letters and can follow simple instructions, to help prepare them for school. Staff encourage younger children to talk about people they know, such as their own family, to extend their vocabulary further.
- Staff interact well with children. They support their self-care skills and encourage children to develop an understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Babies are gently encouraged to try and feed themselves. Younger children learn how to use a potty and know when they need a drink of water. Older children can use cutlery and talk about the benefits of healthy food.
- Children are encouraged and supported by staff to develop a love of rhymes and stories. Older children listen intently as staff read their favourite stories and they confidently join in with repeated phrases. Younger children identify nursery rhymes and join in with the actions and words. Staff teach babies simple rhymes while they change their nappies.

- Leaders and staff share a strong commitment in supporting each other to help provide children with the very best learning experiences. Staff have regular staff meetings and appraisals with the leadership team and access to online training. However, arrangements for leaders to observe staff and provide feedback on their practice is not yet embedded. As a result, staff are not fully supported in how to improve the quality of their teaching to benefit children.
- Staff help children to develop a good understanding of mathematics. Babies learn simple number rhymes and younger children can say some numbers in the correct sequence. Older children understand positional language, such as 'under' and 'on top'. Staff are good role models and show children how to use a number name for each item to enable them to count larger groups of objects.
- Leaders and staff provide good-quality care and learning experiences for all children, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They identify any gaps in children's learning and seek advice from other agencies to support their individual needs. This ensures that all children are fully included and have every opportunity to succeed.
- Parents speak very highly of the nursery and the staff. They praise the strong relationships that leaders and staff have built with their families and the support they have received during difficult times. Parents receive daily feedback on their children's learning and care. 'Take-home bags' containing books, toys and 'interest cards' that are tailored to children's individual learning needs effectively support children's progress at home.
- Older children concentrate well as they play a game with staff. Children enjoy guessing which object is missing and develop good attention skills. However, sometimes, staff do not always use open-ended questions with children in order to extend their thinking skills even further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to recognise the signs that a child might be at risk of harm. They receive regular training and updates and know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare. Staff are aware of wider safeguarding issues, such as protecting children from extreme views. Leaders work in partnership with other professionals to assure children's safety and well-being. The nursery is secure and the good deployment of staff ensures children's safety. The leadership team follow effective recruitment procedures to ensure ongoing staff suitability.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop staff's use of questioning to help extend older children's vocabulary

even more

- further develop the arrangements to monitor the effectiveness of staff teaching to benefit children's overall learning and development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY405332
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10071820
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 9
Total number of places	92
Number of children on roll	144
Name of registered person	First Steps Childcare Services Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP529515
Telephone number	01202675009
Date of previous inspection	29 October 2015

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Day Nursery registered in 2010. The nursery is located within a converted church premises in Oakdale on the outskirts of Poole, Dorset. The nursery is open from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round, except bank holidays and the Christmas period. The nursery also offers a holiday club for children aged five to 12 years, between 7.30am to 6pm during school holidays. The nursery provides free early education funding for children aged two, three and four years. There are 23 members of staff. The manager has early years professional status and two staff are qualified to level 6. There are 19 staff qualified at level 3 and one member of staff is an apprentice.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Nicki Bland

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the setting.
- A learning walk was completed with leaders to discuss the organisation of the setting and how they decide what they want children to learn.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with a member of the leadership team and discussed the quality of teaching.
- A meeting was held between the leaders and the inspector. The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including samples of policies, first-aid certificates and staff records.
- Leaders described how children with SEND are identified and supported.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- Parents and grandparents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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