

Inspection of First Steps Pre-School

21 Biscot Road, LUTON LU3 1AH

Inspection date:

16 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children are not provided with a curriculum that challenges and extends their learning. The quality of interactions between the staff and children is variable. Staff do not consistently extend children's interests and build on what they already know and can do. Older children, sometimes, wander between resources with no purpose to their play. Furthermore, their attention is not always sustained during large group activities. Children independently select their choice of activity. However, rigid routines, sometimes, interrupts children's involvement and learning in these.

Nevertheless, children demonstrate that they enjoy their time at the pre-school. Younger children enjoy using the sponges to wash the dolls in the water and are introduced to words, such as 'splash', as they play. Older children are developing the confidence to talk about what they are doing. For example, children handling the building blocks talk about their robot and car creations. Older children develop their hand-to-eye coordination skills as they learn how to handle and cut with the scissors. They persevere and are praised for their achievements, which successfully develops children's self-confidence. Younger children are encouraged to complete puzzles and learn to fit the train track together. They are encouraged to say, 'choo, choo' as they push the trains on the track.

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

- Staff do not consistently structure the curriculum to support and build on what children already know. When children become interested in their play, staff do not always use this opportunity to challenge children's thinking and ask probing questions. Furthermore, rigid routines, sometime, interrupts children's involvement in the activities they are enjoying.
- The manager ensures staff receive regular supervision meetings and seeks guidance and support from the local authority. Staff complete mandatory training and the manager is beginning to broaden the range of additional training available to staff. However, this requires further evaluation to ensure staff have the knowledge, skills and practice to raise the quality of the curriculum and learning activities provided for children.
- The manager and staff have adapted routines, in view of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, to ensure the good health of children attending. Staff take the children's temperature on arrival and children are required to sanitise their hands. Currently, parents are not allowed in the building during drop off and collection times. Staff kept in touch with parents during the coronavirus lockdowns and provided learning packs to support children's ongoing learning at home.
- A welcoming and friendly atmosphere greets all children and their families. New children are supported to settle into their new surroundings. Staff offer them

comfort and reassurance if they are upset. This helps to ease the transition from home to the pre-school and supports their emotional development. Staff develop an appropriate partnership with parents and other professionals to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Staff support children's language and communication skills, including children who speak English as an additional language. They successfully introduce songs with actions, such as 'head, shoulder, knees and toes' and 'wake up sleeping bunnies'. This allows all children to participate in the rhyme without using the spoken word. Children are encouraged to listen to stories. Older children are beginning to anticipate what happens next during familiar stories, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'.
- Children are gaining an understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy playing outside in the fresh air. They learn to manoeuvre wheeled toys, climb on the apparatus and smile as they slide down the slide. Children wash their hands at appropriate times and are supported to understand the importance of good oral health. Information is shared with parents about how to access local dentists and top tips to maintain healthy teeth.
- Staff have high expectations for the children's behaviour. They reinforce rules and boundaries, such as the importance of not running indoors and the importance of being kind and considerate towards one another. Children were adequately supervised by staff during the inspection.
- Staff support children to appreciate and respect the diversity of others. For example, children make cards in celebration of Eid and enjoy taking part in Eid parade celebrations in traditional Muslim clothing. Children also participate in Diwali, Hanukkah and Christian celebrations. They decorate the tree and receive a visit from Santa.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse, including wider aspects of safeguarding, such as racialisation. They understand how to make a referral if they are concerned about a child in their care. This keeps children safe and supports their well-being. A range of written policies and procedures are in place to support staff practice. The manager follows appropriate recruitment and induction procedures. She ensures suitability checks are carried out on all adults and staff connected to the pre-school.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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improve staff interactions with the children to ensure all children receive meaningful and challenging learning experiences that builds on what they already know and can do.	22/10/2021
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- review the organisation of planned routines to enable children to develop and complete activities to their satisfaction
- improve professional development to identify gaps in knowledge, skills and practice that will help raise the quality of the curriculum and learning activities provided for children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY440284
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10207062
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 at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	80
Name of registered person	First Steps Learning Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP531281
Telephone number	01582733030
Date of previous inspection	21 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Pre-School registered in 2011 and is located in Luton. The pre-school employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and the manager and a further member of staff have early years professional status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until midday and from 12.45pm to 3.45pm, with the option of a lunch club from midday to 12.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Ann Austen

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 their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk across all areas of the nursery to understand how the early years curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed staff's interactions with the children during indoor and outdoor activities, and assessed the impact this has on the children's progress and achievements.
- The manager, staff and children engaged in discussions with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out their joint observation with the manager and discussed the children's progress and achievements.
- A sample of the nursery documents was reviewed by the inspector. This included evidence of staff suitability and training.
- Parents spoke to the inspector, who took account of the views 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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