

# Inspection of Footsteps Pre-School

The Annexe, Maple Cross J M I & Nursery School, Denham Way, Maple Cross,  
Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 9SS

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Inspection date: 13 October 2021

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children settle quickly and demonstrate they feel happy at the pre-school. They are greeted warmly by their key person and they respond positively to their nurturing attention. Children have lots of opportunities to choose where they want to play and especially enjoy being outside. They use magnifying glasses to search for bugs under logs. Children use a tick chart to record what bugs they have found. They show they are beginning to understand numbers as they compare the amount of ticks against each picture. Children enjoy being creative using paint, glue and collage materials. They show great determination to succeed at tasks, such as using scissors to carefully snip, and are beginning to learn how to cut out pictures.

Children are learning how to develop healthy lifestyles, such as the importance of exercise. They have many opportunities for physical activity in the school grounds. Staff help children to feel safe, such as on walks as they stay close to their key children. They encourage children to explore and talk to them about the autumn leaves they have found. Children are learning how to make friends; they share toys and resources very well. Children's behaviour is good.

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

- During the first national lockdown, the pre-school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions. The manager helped to support children's learning, for instance by providing packs for children to complete at home with their parents. This helped children to continue to make progress. Staff thought hard about how they could support children's well-being through the pandemic. One way they did this was by writing and teaching children a song. Children have taken this to heart and sing positive, affirming words with great enthusiasm.
- All children make good progress in their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff make accurate assessments of children's learning and this helps them to identify any delay in children's development. Staff have taught themselves how to use the Makaton version of signing. This has had a positive effect on the communication and language development of children who have speech delay.
- Staff gain in-depth information from parents about children's early experiences, and what they can already do, when they start to attend the pre-school. They quickly identify children's starting points in learning and look for ways to build on children's skills and experiences. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of information shared about children's ongoing development. Some parents report they do not always receive enough information to help them to support their children's learning at home.
- Children have lots of opportunities to use books. Staff place books in many areas

of the pre-school. This helps children to know how to gain information on topics that interest them. Children enjoy sharing books with adults. Staff use clear questioning to help children to think about what might happen next and to recall the sequence of events.

- The staff team is strong and turnover is very low. Despite this, the provider has robust recruitment procedures in place. This helps to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff receive regular coaching and supervision from the managers. They access many different training courses and undertake qualifications. Staff talk positively of the impact these professional development opportunities have on their practice.
- Overall, parents and carers speak positively about the pre-school and staff. They say their children settle quickly and have a close attachment to their key person. Parents say their children enjoy attending and are safe.
- Many children share their funded early education hours between the pre-school and the school nursery. Pre-school staff collect the children at lunchtime and they arrive confident and happy. Staff have a brief discussion with the school nursery teachers each day. However, they do not yet discuss children's development or consult on what children need to learn next. Consequently, continuity in learning is not optimised.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff regularly complete safeguarding training and understand how to recognise concerns about children's safety and welfare. They also know how to swiftly make referrals, both within the setting and to relevant agencies. There are identified designated safeguarding leads, to ensure that any concerns are appropriately reported. The provider and manager place the highest priority in ensuring safeguarding and health and safety procedures are securely embedded in induction procedures for new staff. All staff demonstrate a good understanding of wider safeguarding concerns, such as around radicalisation and extremist behaviour.

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

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

- further develop the sharing of information between children's key person and parents, to enable parents to continue their children's learning at home
- strengthen information-sharing with other settings children attend, to promote more continuity in their learning and development.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2506857
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10194509
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 7
<b>Total number of places</b>	32
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	45
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Footsteps Day Nursery And Pre-School Partnership
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP901320
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 710818
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Footsteps Pre-School registered in 2018. The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold early years qualifications at level 3. The setting operates Monday to Friday, during school term time. The breakfast club opens from 7.30am until 8.50am, the pre-school from 9am until 3pm, and the after-school club from 3.15pm until 6pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Jill Hardaker

## 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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk across all areas of the pre-school to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- A joint observation was carried out and discussed between the inspector and the manager.
- Staff, children and parents spoke with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the pre-school's documentation during a meeting with the leadership team. This included reviewing information about staff suitability and training.

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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