

Inspection of First Steps Children's Nursery

First Steps Nursery, Stonehouse Farm, Birmingham B32 3DX

Inspection date: 12 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are very settled. They are happy and build positive relationships with staff and their peers. Pre-school children comment that they like coming to nursery. All children behave well. Staff promote the nursery golden rules consistently throughout. Children are polite and cooperative, and they learn to play nicely with others from a young age.

Managers have prioritised children's health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have implemented extra measures to prevent and reduce the spread of infection. This includes daily cleaning, rigorous handwashing routines, social distancing and mask wearing for all adults on site, which is current practice.

Children display positive attitudes and have fun. They enjoy varied activities that promote their interests. Babies enjoy investigating sensory materials, such as sand, and making small towers with stacking cups. Toddlers delight in creative painting and playing with pretend dinosaurs. Pre-school children like making gingerbread play dough and playing with construction bricks. All children enjoy practising their physical skills outside, including playing with balls, negotiating see-saws and riding on trikes and bikes.

All children make good progress in learning. Managers place a strong focus on closing attainment gaps. They make effective use of funding, and the nursery special educational needs coordinator is knowledgeable. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported.

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

- The manager is an ambitious and experienced leader. She reflects accurately on the quality of the nursery and has some good ideas for further development. However, staff do not routinely contribute their views to the overall nursery self-evaluation, and are not entirely clear about the manager's priorities for the future. There is room to strengthen reflective practice so that the management and staff teams share one vision for the nursery.
- The manager and the majority of the staff are well qualified. The manager routinely supervises staff and oversees their practice. She is highly supportive of the staff and she prioritises their well-being and adopts a positive leadership approach. This encourages them to build on and enhance their own knowledge and skills.
- The curriculum is good. Staff know children well and they use children's interests and observed next steps in learning to plan interesting activities. All children develop the skills they need for future learning. However, there is scope to refine the curriculum. Staff do not always sequence the educational programmes

as well as possible to provide children with the highest levels of challenge.

Occasionally, during play interactions or the activities planned, staff miss opportunities to extend and build on what children know, remember and can do.

- Communication, language and literacy is well promoted. Staff consistently talk to children and encourage back and forth conversations. Babies name farm animals and learn about the sounds they make through familiar rhymes. Toddlers listen during circle time and use simple language to talk about emotions with staff, using pictures. Pre-school children enjoy giving meaning to marks as they choose what they want for Christmas in preparation for letters to Santa Claus.
- Healthy lifestyles are exceptionally well promoted at this nursery. Children learn about the importance of keeping themselves healthy and also the impact their lifestyles have on the environment. Managers and staff utilise strong initiatives to teach children about their role in taking care of the world and being healthy. This includes implementing an 'eco-school' ethos and a health and well-being project.
- Children are very independent. Young children cooperate with care routines and are beginning to serve themselves food at mealtimes. Pre-school children are confident with the nursery routines and they manage their own self-care needs, including using the bathroom, serving their lunch and dressing themselves. They enjoy having responsibilities and helping their teachers, including clearing away after lunch.
- Partnerships with parents are really strong. Staff share information with parents about their children's time at nursery. They provide parents with home activities, including resources and ideas for their children. Parents say their children love coming, they would highly recommend the nursery and are very happy with the service.
- Managers and staff have established good links with a range of relevant professionals. Two-way information is shared about children's care and education. These links are used well to support children and their families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff are suitably vetted. The manager is a confident designated safeguarding lead who provides strong support to the staff team. Managers and staff are clear about the signs and symptoms of child abuse or neglect. They are confident about their role in managing child protection concerns. The environment is suitable, safe and secure. Managers ensure that effective risk assessments are in place and daily safety checks are embedded, including monitoring attendance. Staff-to-child ratios are maintained and staff are well deployed throughout so children are well supervised. Managers and all staff partake in routine child protection, first-aid and food hygiene training. This helps promote children's welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- refine the curriculum so that the educational programmes are securely well sequenced to help provide children with the highest levels of challenge and promote best possible progress
- strengthen reflective practice and include the views of all staff in nursery self-evaluation so that they are clear about the priorities for the future.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY539602
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10203434
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	69
Name of registered person	The Midcounties Co-Operative Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP900862
Telephone number	0121 427 9056
Date of previous inspection	17 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Children's Nursery is one of several settings owned by The Midcounties Co-Operative Limited. The nursery re-registered in 2016. The nursery employs 24 members of childcare staff. Of these, 20 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round, closed for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Josephine Heath
Dale Ramsey

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspectors toured the nursery premises with the manager and conducted learning walk discussions to review the curriculum, educational resources and activities provided.
- The inspectors observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outside. They assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspectors completed two joint observations with the manager of the nursery.
- The inspectors spoke to staff and held a meeting with the nursery management team.
- The inspectors looked at relevant documentation and checked evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspectors spoke to children and parents 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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