

Inspection of First Step Pre-School Ltd

Crossways Infants, Knapp Road, Thornbury, BRISTOL BS35 2HQ

Inspection date: 9 December 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 receive a warm welcome by the caring staff team and enjoy attending this nurturing and inclusive pre-school. Children separate from their parents and carers with ease and settle in quickly. They show excitement as they see their friends and familiar adults.

Staff provide a safe and enabling environment for children to freely explore indoors and outside. They listen to children's interests and adapt their planning accordingly to capture the child's voice. Staff have high expectations of all children. They ensure children are very much at the centre of their own learning and encourage them to make decisions, solve problems and develop their thinking skills. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress and gain the necessary skills for their future learning.

The pre-school adopts a creative method of supporting child development. They implement the 'curiosity approach' to learning, where children get to explore a range of everyday items to encourage their natural curiosity. For example, children make connections to real-life situations as they dress up in adult-size clothes, hats and shoes and pull suitcases around the room. These opportunities enable staff to gain a real insight into a child's life and staff use this to help inform their planning and support children's individual needs.

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

- The nursery manager and staff deliver an effective curriculum. They know what children need to learn and ensure they offer a good balance of both planned activities and also those that children initiate themselves.
- There is a strong focus in promoting children's communication and language skills, particularly for children with SEND. For example, children show good concentration and listen attentively as staff read a popular story, 'One Snowy Night'. Staff use open-ended questions to encourage children to discuss the story and to extend their vocabulary. Following the story session, children enthusiastically sing traditional Christmas songs which they have been learning. All children join in and have a go at using sign language to accompany the words to the songs.
- Staff assess children's progress and provide tailored support to address any gaps in their learning. The special educational needs coordinator has a clear overview of each child's needs. She ensures children have access to early intervention and works closely with parents and other professionals to address any concerns. Children attend a weekly language and confidence group, where they benefit from tailored support. The pre-school makes effective use of funding, such as purchasing dolls and pushchairs for children and offering extra top-up sessions

to increase their attendance.

- Children enjoy experimenting with different textures. They use their hands to make patterns in the glittery foam and giggle as it lands on their face. Children explore natural materials and have fun collecting sticks and leaves in a saucepan as they make 'pancakes' in the mud kitchen. Staff provide daily opportunities for baking. During the inspection, children mixed cereal with melted chocolate to create Christmas 'puddings' while using red food colouring for the holly leaf. However, at times, children receive unclear messages about the importance of making healthy food choices, particularly around sugary foods.
- Staff encourage children to be independent and develop good social skills. Upon arrival to the pre-school, children immediately place their belongings on the table before washing their hands. Staff have introduced extra hygiene measures since the COVID-19 pandemic. Children wait patiently for their turn to wash and dry their hands, before collecting their items and putting them away.
- Parents talk positively about their children's experiences and state that staff are supportive. Parents describe the pre-school as having a 'community feel' and how staff go 'above and beyond'. Staff use an online platform to share information with parents about their children's progress. However, not all staff are fully aware of their key-person role, such as to exchange relevant information with others to support children's transition times.
- The manager is highly supportive of the staff team and staff morale is good. They are positive about the help they receive from management, including protected time to complete certain tasks as well as support for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have a secure understanding of their role to safeguard children. They are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect, including the procedures for reporting any welfare concerns about a child. Staff are familiar with the whistle-blowing policy, including the procedures for reporting any allegations made against staff. Staff attend regular training and have a good knowledge of wider safeguarding issues, such as county lines and the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders have undertaken safe recruitment training to ensure they recruit and retain suitable staff.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff further to develop their understanding of the key-person role, particularly to help build their confidence in sharing information with others
- provide children with clear and consistent messages about the importance of making healthy food choices.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY345348
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10213840
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	38
Number of children on roll	61
Name of registered person	First Step Pre School Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP522002
Telephone number	01454 867283
Date of previous inspection	24 February 2017

Information about this early years setting

First Step Pre-School Ltd registered in 2007. It operates from a building in the grounds of Crossways Infants School in Thornbury. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3.15pm Monday to Friday, term time only. The provider offers before- and after-school sessions from 8am to 9am and 3.15pm to 5pm. Children can also attend the school holiday club from 9am to 4pm. There are seven staff who work with the children, of whom, six are qualified from level 3 to level 5. The pre-school is funded to provide free early education to children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Shahnaz Scully

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 her evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk where they talked about the curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation relating to staff's suitability, qualifications and training.
- The inspector talked to staff and children 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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