

Inspection of 1st Steps Preschool

St. Barnabas Parish Hall, 3 De Trafford Street, HUDDERSFIELD HD4 5DR

Inspection date: 19 January 2022

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 enter happily and settle quickly on arrival. They have strong emotional attachments to the caring staff, who cuddle and comfort them as and when needed. This helps children to feel safe and secure, as do the consistent and well-organised daily routines that children are clearly familiar with. Staff kept in close contact with families during the COVID-19 pandemic, which helped to support children's learning and well-being. For example, staff made daily calls to offer support and advice and provided home-learning resources, activity ideas and food parcels.

Children make good progress because staff have high expectations of what they can achieve. This includes children who receive additional funding, those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Two-year-old children enjoy listening to stories and exploring the soft, squishy dough. They delight in staff's positive interactions. Older children develop essential skills in readiness for school. They are keen and motivated learners, who focus extremely well as they play alongside enthusiastic staff. For example, they delight in playing creatively in the excitingly resourced exploratory kitchen. They behave well and build firm friendships, for example, as they play collaboratively in role-play areas. They enjoy taking turns to be the 'helper of the day'.

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

- Staff tailor settling-in arrangements for each child to support their emotional well-being. The provider has recently reintroduced home visits to enhance effective settling-in programmes.
- When the national COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, staff noted some delay in children's development. Consequently, they successfully focused on helping children to catch up in their communication, self-care and social skills to eliminate any long-term developmental delay.
- Staff continually observe and assess children's development and plan an effective curriculum, overall. This includes interesting tactile resources to encourage children's sensory exploration. However, staff do not always precisely target two-year-old children's key next steps in learning.
- In order to minimise the continuing risk of transmitting COVID-19, parents are not routinely entering the building. Staff continue to exchange information verbally, electronically and through progress summaries. They share home-learning activities and information about how parents can support key foundations for future learning, such as children's speech and language and hand-to-eye coordination.

- Staff swiftly identify children who are working below expectations. This leads to timely first-class support programmes and exceptional partnership working with other professionals. Consequently, children with SEND are integrated superbly.
- Where language barriers exist, staff use visual aids to support children's early communication skills and understanding of daily routines. This includes children who speak English as an additional language. For example, staff use pictures of familiar everyday items.
- Older children show great imagination. They excitedly transport water from the water station to make 'potions' in cauldrons. They use a concoction of feathers, straw, potpourri, soil and stones. Indoors, children wet the sand in the toy cement mixer and stack foam bricks. Staff encourage children to count and ask them if they are as tall as the tower. Children play cooperatively and demonstrate positive behaviours, such as being kind, sharing and taking turns.
- Staff provide a variety of challenging equipment to support children's small physical skills in readiness for early writing. For example, younger children practise using large plastic tweezers when serving their own snacks and older children use resources such as pipettes and tongs with scissor handles.
- Staff effectively promote children's good health. Children confidently use physical apparatus, access nose-wiping stations, and brush their teeth. Staff use handheld mirrors and visual aids, such as a giant model mouth and sand timer, to support this aspect of the daily routine.
- Overall, improvement plans, staff's qualifications, and continued professional development have a very positive impact. For example, following mental health and well-being training, staff are developing an exciting sensory garden.
- Staff plan a wealth of activities that ignite older children's love of learning, and they create innovative resources to support children's interests. However, staff's teaching and organisation of resources do not always fully support the learning intentions of certain activities, such as creating self-portraits using craft materials.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff undertake robust risk assessments to promote children's health and safety. They reduce hazards to minimise accidents, closely supervise children, and ensure the premises are secure. Staff have a strong knowledge of child protection issues. They understand how to report their concerns internally and externally and work closely with other agencies. Staff undertake regular training. Senior staff, designated to take the lead for safeguarding children, undertake advanced training. Staff develop children's awareness of staying safe, for example, by providing opportunities to use real tools. They also plan activities such as road safety role play. Staff share information with parents about car safety and safety in the home.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- monitor staff's practice more closely to ensure their provision consistently focuses on two-year-old children's most significant next steps in learning
- strengthen planning of adult-planned activities for older children in order to focus teaching more precisely on the targeted learning intentions.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY473386
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10075662
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	66
Number of children on roll	63
Name of registered person	1st Steps Pre-School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP533359
Telephone number	07968238922
Date of previous inspection	11 April 2016

Information about this early years setting

1st Steps Preschool registered in 2014. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff, seven of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is qualified at level 2, three at level 3, one at level 4, one at level 5, and one at level 6. The pre-school operates Monday to Friday from 8.15am to 3.45pm. It is open during term time only. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Rachel Ayo

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 their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector held discussions with the provider and manager and carried out a learning walk with them. This helped the inspector to understand how they organise the early years provision and the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact of this on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity.
- The inspector spoke with children, parents and staff during the inspection. She also gained feedback from a visiting professional.
- The inspector held regular meetings with the manager and provider throughout the inspection to keep them updated. She also looked at various policies and documents, including those related to the suitability and qualifications of staff, self-improvement plans, and records of learning.

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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