

Inspection of Footsteps Nursery & Forest school

Sandy Hill Farm, Fradley Junction, Alrewas, Staffordshire DE13 7DW

Inspection date: 31 January 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are making good progress across the seven areas of learning. Children in the pre-school are involved in fun activities that inspire their engagement and support their understanding of all aspects of mathematics. They learn about space and create 'number aliens' using a varied range of creative materials. At times, they are encouraged to work together with their peers.

Babies are cared for in a safe, calm and stimulating environment and, as a result, they are very settled. Their needs for sleep, comfort and interaction with staff are immediately met.

Children of all ages have extensive opportunities to practise their developing physical skills and play outdoors. They enjoy looking for bugs in their natural habitats and watching the robins that frequently visit. Children have access to huge amounts of space. They participate in obstacle courses that challenge them to jump, balance and weave in and out of a line of cones.

Children who arrive at the nursery with limited skills in their speech and language flourish into becoming strong communicators. They frequently engage in conversations with staff, including at mealtimes which are considered social occasions.

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

- The management team successfully reflect on their practice and identify aspects of the service they aim to improve. Although a variety of strategies were introduced during the pandemic to communicate with parents, they identify and value the importance of face-to-face parents' evenings. The management team are currently planning how to resume this practice. This supports the wishes expressed by the parents.
- The manager has a highly accurate view of her team's individual strengths and areas they need to improve. She directly deals with identified weaknesses in staff practice at the earliest opportunity, to ensure the quality of the provision is good. Staff's well-being is supported. Their individual strengths are valued. Along with the other settings in the organisation, management celebrate staff's achievements, such as best newcomer. Consequently, staff feel valued and are inspired to do the best they can.
- The quality of teaching is good. Older children are extensively supported to have a good opinion of themselves. Staff give them the confidence to express their views and feelings. Children are frequently praised by staff for their achievements. Staff understand the importance of helping children to work together, in order to be ready for school. That said, there are occasions when

staff do not fully utilise these opportunities during some adult-led activities.

- Staff working with the babies capture their attention as they create moments of awe and wonder. For example, staff post a ball through a tube and show excitement as it reappears at the other end.
- Children aged between 21 to 38 months develop a strong love of books. They listen to fun rhyming words in a story about a 'wonky donkey'. Children participate in singing songs and rhymes and frequently listen to music as they play and rest. Staff, generally, model language well, however, there are times when they do not pronounce some words correctly when they speak and give directions to the children.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported by staff to make as much progress as they can, in relation to their starting points. The special educational needs leader is very confident and knowledgeable about the children's needs. She ensures firm working relationships with parents and other professionals involved in the children's care.
- Resources are plentiful, both indoors and outside. Role-play resources capture the children's interests. These include fresh vegetables, such as a swede. Children explore the difference in texture and appearance of the swede and carrots.
- Parents and grandparents express how happy they are with everything the nursery has to offer. They describe the staff as 'lovely'. Parents compliment the staff on their welcoming and friendly approach and how they support their children to make strong progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Management and staff are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Staff access training on the 'Prevent' duty. Newly recruited staff are supported during their induction to understand all of the nursery's risk assessments, policies and procedures. Notices are prominently displayed to remind staff to consider if they need to leave their base rooms. This helps to ensure supervision is good and ratios of staff to children are maintained. Security is good, fences around the perimeter of all outdoor areas ensure the children cannot leave unsupervised.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- make sure that staff use clear pronunciation of the words they frequently use, when they speak and give instructions to the children
- utilise opportunities to extend children's understanding of working together and supporting one another even further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2588109
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10214793
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	116
Number of children on roll	133
Name of registered person	Footsteps Day Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP520741
Telephone number	01283 791030
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Footsteps Nursery & Forest school registered in 2020. The nursery employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2, 3, 5 or 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Hayley Lapworth

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 completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as the evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.
- The inspector spoke to a selection of parents and grandparents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector toured the nursery and completed a learning walk with the manager. The manager described how the environment and the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's 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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