

Inspection of Footsteps Nursery & Pre-School

Foster Road, Boxmoor, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, Hertfordshire HP1 1EL

Inspection date: 31 March 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 demonstrate secure attachments with staff. They confidently leave their parents at the door and settle quickly in their activities. Children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are motivated to join in with planned activities. For example, babies take part in a planned sensory activity to promote self-feeding and independence skills. Staff know children well and know what they enjoy. They make good use of their interests to engage them in learning. For example, children practise counting skills as they play with a dinosaur small-world scenario. Children increase their confidence as they explore the environment and make choices for themselves. All children show that they feel safe and secure.

The nursery places high value on building children's literacy skills. In each age range, children have free access to age-appropriate books. Staff read them to children enthusiastically. Children show high levels of engagement during story sessions. Older children are well prepared for school. They listen attentively at group time and learn to do things independently. For example, they recognise their own names for self-registration and put on their coats and shoes.

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

- Staff's relationships with children are strong and supportive. Children are happy and confident in their care and actively seek them out to share conversations. Staff are skilled at supporting children's development. They know the children well, recognising their strengths and identifying their next steps in learning. Staff use their knowledge of children's interests to plan relevant activities that engage children in learning.
- The curriculum is carefully considered to ensure a progression of skills throughout the different areas and age ranges. For example, in the baby room, staff are teaching babies to feed themselves with a spoon. Pre-school children use a knife and fork to eat their meals and pour their own drinks.
- Throughout the nursery, staff support children's communication and language development well. Staff actively listen to children's views and are genuinely interested in their thoughts and opinions. Staff model new vocabulary to children and encourage them to take turns and listen to one another. For example, during a planned activity, young children talk about how they feed their dolls during imaginative role play. Staff identify children that need support with communication and language. They work with parents to deliver extra activities to develop these skills.
- At times, children are encouraged to be physically active in the outside area. Older children can talk about the effects exercise has on their bodies. Children also visit the nearby moor regularly to access a larger outdoor space. However, staff do not make the best use of the outside area to support the learning and

development of children who prefer to learn outdoors.

- The nursery offers children a range of healthy meals and snacks. Children discuss why it is important to eat foods that are good for them. This helps them to develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Older children take part thoughtfully in a yoga session, promoting mindfulness as well as exercise.
- Children's behaviour is consistently good across the whole nursery. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, and act as good role models when speaking to them. Staff praise children when they make good choices and give them lots of encouragement. Children have good manners. For example, they politely wait at the table for their friends before starting to eat their food.
- Parents state that they feel well informed about their children's learning and development. They praise the strong communication between the nursery and home. Parents value the regular updates online as well as daily oral feedback. Parents praise the staff. They say that 'staff balance knowledge and professionalism with a huge amount of care, dedication and energy.'
- Staff feel valued and supported. However, they have not benefited from regular training or supervision meetings with the management team, to help strengthen their knowledge and improve their individual performance even further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have received training for safeguarding and understand how to keep children safe. They can identify signs and symptoms of abuse and understand the importance of reporting concerns. Staff have a basic understanding of wider safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty. They understand how to keep children safe such as children who have allergies. Staff ensure the setting is safe and secure.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- use the outdoor area more fully, to ensure that children who learn better outdoors have more opportunities to do so, to support development across all areas of learning
- develop systems for staff training and supervision, to ensure they happen more frequently and staff receive feedback to improve their performance further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY485480
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10219446
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	46
Name of registered person	Footsteps Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP904527
Telephone number	01442 244 565
Date of previous inspection	12 August 2016

Information about this early years setting

Footsteps Nursery & Pre-School was registered in 2015. The nursery employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Emma Barton

Inspection activities

- This was the first 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.
- Discussions were held with parents and written feedback from parents were reviewed in order to obtain their views on the service provided.
- The inspector observed the quality of the teaching and learning and completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector and the manager completed a learning walk discussing the curriculum the setting provides for children and how they organise their early years provision.
- The inspector made observations throughout the inspection of children's experiences in the setting.

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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