

Inspection of First Steps Pre-School

21 Biscot Road, LUTON LU3 1AH

Inspection date: 12 July 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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children come in happily to this pre-school, clearly recognising that they are valued as individuals. They are becoming confident, independent learners and respond to the positive example and high expectations of staff. Children work cooperatively. For example, they join magnetic construction pieces to make a tall tower, remembering the Great Wall of China they recently talked about. Children are kind and often help their friends, for example in finding the correct card when playing a game. Children put their work on the display boards, showing pride in their achievements. They gain a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Ongoing discussions help them to learn about good oral hygiene.

Children are building a good understanding of their emotions. Staff support them in relating these to everyday life. For example, children release butterflies and relate this to themselves leaving the nursery. When some of the butterflies come back, they link this to perhaps feeling that they want to come back to nursery. They go on to talk about how much they have grown and can move on to more learning in school. Staff have a sensitive understanding of the possible effects of the COVID-19 lockdowns. They provide additional support for children to aid them in developing skills in communication, enjoying books and writing.

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

- The manager and senior staff have worked hard to raise the quality of teaching since the last inspection. All staff are clear about the setting's curriculum and what children need to learn next. They plan interesting activities that link to children's interests and help them take the next steps in their learning. Staff receive frequent supervision sessions and report that they feel very well supported.
- The manager monitors children's progress well, helping to ensure that all children make good progress. She uses additional funding well to provide resources and opportunities that support children in gaining the skills and knowledge to support their future learning.
- Children learn new skills, such as how to use scissors. Staff make sure children have time to practise these skills. For example, children collect leaves and twigs and use scissors to cut the leaves, noting that this is different from cutting paper.
- Staff recognise the importance of helping children to develop their communication skills. They quickly recognise any delay in speech and offer support. Staff talk clearly and make good use of pictures, prompts and singing to reinforce language skills. For instance, children learning a new song look at pictures and learn words such as 'violin' and 'saxophone'. This support particularly helps children who speak English as an additional language.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive pertinent support. Staff adapt routines and the environment in response to children's needs. They work very well with other professionals, helping to ensure that children make good progress.
- Staff build good relationships with parents. For instance, they organise events that parents can attend, helping them to feel part of their children's learning. Parents speak highly of the setting and praise staff for their caring approach. Parents particularly highlight how confident their children have become.
- Staff note children's interests and use these to extend children's learning. Children interested in transport use tally charts to record the different vehicles passing the setting, helping to develop their evolving mathematical knowledge. Staff use children's interest in holidays to initiate discussions about different countries, helping children to appreciate different cultures and ways of life.
- Children develop a love of books. They talk confidently about a favourite book and act this out, politely asking their friends 'would you like more tea?'
- Children enjoy participating in activities, and staff generally adapt these well to suit each child's needs. However, on occasion, staff answer questions for children and solve problems for them, rather than encouraging them to do this themselves and extend their critical thinking skills.
- Children enjoy outdoor play. For example, they join in energetically with action rhymes in the garden. However, staff do not consistently offer as many outdoor opportunities to fully build on the development of children who prefer to learn in an outdoor environment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate a very clear understanding of safeguarding and their role in ensuring that children's welfare is consistently promoted. They understand how to recognise possible concerns in a child's life. They complete regular training so that they understand the most recent procedures for reporting concerns to the relevant professional. Staff understand safeguarding issues, such as the dangers associated with exposure to extreme views and the possible risks relating to use of the internet. They take appropriate action to protect children's welfare at all times.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff in extending the opportunities that aid children in exploring further and developing their skills in thinking critically and solving problems
- enhance the use of outdoor areas to offer children who prefer to learn outside further play and learning opportunities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY440284
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10209054
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	69
Number of children on roll	79
Name of registered person	First Steps Learning Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP531281
Telephone number	01582733030
Date of previous inspection	16 September 2021

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Pre-School registered in 2011. The pre-school employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with early years professional status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until midday and from 12.45pm to 3.45pm, with the option of a lunch club from midday to 12.45pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kelly Eyre

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed staff's interactions with children during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- Meetings were held between the inspector, the manager (who is also the nominated individual) and the setting's administrator. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and saw evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents 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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