

Inspection of First Steps Nursery

Robson Way, Lowton, Nr. Warrington, Cheshire WA3 2RD

Inspection date: 2 September 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 separate from their parents with ease. They appear happy and eager to start their day in the safe and secure environment. Staff give children clear instructions and guidance. They speak to children with respect and allow children to make their own choices throughout the day. As a result, children are confident, take turns and play well together. Children's behaviour is good.

Children are curious and show excitement as they explore activities that have been carefully set up to spark their interest. For example, children use scissors to cut herbs. They explore with water as they make marks on the floor and carefully add it to mixtures to make potions. This results in children showing an eagerness to learn more as they keenly explore the rich and stimulating environment, both inside and outside.

The nursery closed for a short period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then the impact on children's development has been closely monitored. As a result, a greater emphasis has been put on children's social and emotional development for those who have had fewer opportunities to socialise. More flexibility with settling-in sessions is now given to support children's individual needs.

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

- The leadership team and staff work well together. They share their knowledge and skills to support children's development and have a clear vision for improvements that are needed. Staff report that they feel valued and supported. They complete additional training and share ideas to develop the nursery further. For example, they have focused on supporting and extending children's curiosity, imagination and exploration of more natural materials. This has resulted in children being engaged and extremely engrossed in their chosen activity.
- The special educational needs coordinator and staff monitor children's development and identify any areas that may need additional support. They work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that children's needs are recognised. This helps ensure that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making the best possible progress.
- A well-sequenced curriculum is in place. Staff have a clear understanding of what children can do and overall provide great learning opportunities to help support their future learning. However, at times, staff are too quick to offer solutions to problems that children encounter. On these occasions, children are not challenged sufficiently to encourage them to fully develop their play and think critically.
- Communication with parents is good. Managers and staff use a range of

methods to provide updates, such as verbal discussion, online posts and notice boards. Furthermore, parents are encouraged to be involved and are provided with resource packs for home-learning opportunities to take place. This helps further support children's development and continuous learning.

- Generally, staff support children's communication and language well. They interact with children introducing them to new words. In addition to this, staff repeat words and use recall to assess and reinforce children's understanding. However, some staff do not consistently use skilful questioning techniques. They ask too many questions and do not always give children sufficient time to think and respond.
- Children's independence is promoted well. For instance, younger children are encouraged to wipe their face and older children carry out their own toileting needs. Good hygiene practices are in place. Children understand the importance of washing their hands. Furthermore, children learn about oral hygiene and healthy food choices. This helps support children with the skills they will need in readiness for school and raises their awareness of leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Children develop a love of books and reading from a young age. Staff use annotation and read with enthusiasm, capturing children's attention. Younger children are encouraged to make sounds and join in. Older children repeat words and talk about what is happening. This is further supported with additional props and real objects to help extend children's imagination.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to safeguard children. They confidently discuss the policies and procedures to follow in the event of them having any concerns. Effective staff deployment means that all children are well supervised and cared for. The premises are safe and secure. Regular risk assessments are carried out and any minor hazards or risks identified are quickly removed. Ongoing suitability checks are regularly carried out. This ensures that all staff working with children are safe to do so.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to further enhance children's play, to ensure that they encourage them to think critically and solve problems as they encounter them
- build on the already good use of questioning and allow children more time to process their own thoughts and ideas.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY101522
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10234611
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	226
Number of children on roll	172
Name of registered person	First Steps Private Day Nursery (Lowton) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP517068
Telephone number	01942 678 803
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2016

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Nursery was registered in 2002 and is situated in the Lowton area of Warrington, Cheshire. The nursery employs 45 members of childcare staff. Of these, 38 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. The nursery opens each weekday from 7.15am until 6.30pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Kellie Lever
Joanne Valek

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 managers and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The managers and inspectors completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Staff spoke to the inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of a group activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspectors.
- The inspectors looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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