

Inspection of Our Lady's First Steps Pre-School

Clincton View, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 8JN

Inspection date: 18 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

The nursery has been through a period of unsettlement that has had an impact on staffing arrangements. Consequently, managers and leaders have been less focused on staff supervision and monitoring of practice. This has impacted their ability to self-evaluate the provision and staff practice effectively and make any necessary improvements.

Children generally behave well but are often unsure of what is expected of them. For example, children are led indoors to sing their lunchtime song before they sit down to eat. However, staff do not talk to children about what is happening and what is going to happen. This leads to children becoming disengaged. On the whole, children are happy and settled at this friendly nursery. Babies greet the inspector with warm smiles as she enters the baby room. They are confident to show off the resources and point to their artwork on display. Children in the pre-school room enjoy singing and dancing on their outdoor stage. They proudly show off their talents, welcoming the praise and encouragement they receive from staff.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Staff work with other professionals to monitor their progress and put interventions in place where appropriate. Leaders and staff use additional funding to buy resources that are specific to support each child's development.

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

- The manager has a clear vision of what she wants children to learn while attending this nursery. She can discuss the curriculum intent for each of the nursery rooms. For example, younger children are focusing on building relationships and managing emotions. In the pre-school room, staff focus on children's interests and adapt these to plan around the educational programmes. However, the curriculum is not consistently embedded across all the nursery rooms. Therefore, not all children are making the progress they are capable of.
- Staff access training to support their development and improve their knowledge. However, the manager's monitoring of staff practice and teaching is not fully effective. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the quality of education being delivered.
- Staff do not always support children to self-regulate or reinforce behavioural boundaries. For example, they do not support children with their turn-taking skills. In addition, older children often shout at each other and struggle to solve disagreements without adult intervention. Therefore, children do not always develop an understanding of right and wrong.
- Opportunities for children to be active are plentiful. Babies and toddlers enjoy climbing on a range of soft-play equipment. Older children have access to a

climbing frame in the garden. However, the nursery does not promote oral health well. For example, some children regularly drink juice. Staff do not always support children to fully learn how to live healthy lifestyles.

- Partnerships with parents are effective. Staff share information on children's progress along with ways of supporting this at home. Parents are encouraged to share children's 'wow' moments from home with the staff. Staff then celebrate these at nursery with the children. Parents are happy with the care provided at the nursery and feel staff are 'nurturing'.
- The key-person system is effective. Children build bonds with staff during their settling-in period and throughout their first weeks of nursery. This supports children's emotional well-being.
- The quality of teaching skills across the setting is variable. That said, some staff provide good quality interactions. For example, children excitedly join in a story session about the current season. Staff extend this further by providing leaves with children's names on for them to recognise. This supports older children to develop their literacy skills.
- Overall, the nursery provides opportunities to develop children's communication and language. Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes. However, on occasions, children walk around with dummies in their mouths when they do not need them. This prevents children from expressing themselves freely.
- Staff working with babies are qualified to do so. However, the required number of staff have not received training that specifically addresses the care of babies. That said, there is no impact on the quality of care babies receive. The nursery manager has plans to ensure sufficient staff working with babies attend the necessary training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to protect children from harm. They have awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and understand their internal procedures to raise concerns. Staff have knowledge of wider safeguarding issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty. Staff ensure children are accounted for when moving between rooms and into the nursery garden. Leaders ensure staff with a paediatric first-aid qualification are always available. The nursery environment is safe and secure, and equipment is kept in a good state of repair.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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ensure sufficient staff working with children aged under two have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies	01/12/2022
ensure that the arrangements for the supervision of staff working with children are effective in coaching and supporting them to promote the interests of children.	01/12/2022

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

- support staff to consistently implement the nursery curriculum and offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improve
- strengthen the curriculum to support children to learn about the importance of oral health and how to live healthy lifestyles
- support staff to be consistent with their expectations for behaviour and help children have a clear understanding of rules and boundaries.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY244150
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10233618
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	105
Number of children on roll	116
Name of registered person	Our Lady's First Steps Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP907239
Telephone number	0151 424 5500
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2017

Information about this early years setting

Our Lady's First Steps Pre-School was registered in 2004 and is located in the Widnes area of Cheshire. The nursery employs 32 members of childcare staff. Of these, 29 hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from level 2 to level 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jade Patten

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 manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector spoke to the staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with parents and took into account their views of 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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