

Inspection of Footsteps Pre-School

Watermead Village Hall, The Piazza, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 0FU

Inspection date: 21 October 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 settle quickly at this inclusive and welcoming pre-school. They are warmly greeted by the friendly and caring staff team. Staff reassure and encourage children to play and explore when they arrive. Outdoors, children confidently explore the wormery and share their thoughts about composting. They enjoy the environment and are eager to join in with the group activity involving play dough. Children remain engaged for good periods of time with activities on offer. Staff know children very well and are able to provide additional support at specific times, when children need it. As a result, the key-person approach is well embedded, and children show that they feel secure.

Children's behaviour is good. The atmosphere in the pre-school is exceptionally calm. Mixed ages of children keenly play and learn alongside one another. Children consistently show positive behaviour. They follow routines with great eagerness and use good manners. Staff are strong role models, who are kind and caring in their approach. Staff work very well as a team and routines are seamless. Children know exactly what is expected of them and treat each other with respect and courtesy. For example, children offer to help their friends out during play, where they see there is something that they can do to help. Children are polite and caring. They show concern for one another and confidently and politely ask for help when needed.

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

- Children experience good support to develop their communication and language. Staff help engage children in a range of different conversations to support their skills. For example, children talk about the colours of the cups and plates available for snack time. They learn about matching the plates and cups. To complement children's language development, staff send home a soft toy to encourage child and parent interactions. Children are growing into confident communicators.
- Staff know children well because they effectively observe children to assess their development. Staff know how to promote children's learning through play. They have plans in place for children's next steps in learning. However, occasionally, staff do not actively promote children's critical-thinking skills, when they implement the curriculum to further boost their knowledge.
- Staff support children's mathematical development well. During activities, children learn how to count, recognise shapes and use mathematics purposefully in their play. For instance, staff support children to count the toy cars in order and to recognise shapes in the 'Rangoli' patterns
- Staff plan a curriculum led by children's interests. However, staff do not currently consider how to use opportunities to support children's understanding

of technology and online safety, and to promote positive attitudes towards screen time.

- Parents speak positively about the pre-school. They praise staff's good communication and feel that children develop high levels of confidence. Regular exchanges of information between staff, parents and carers support children in settling in. Parents speak positively about the setting, saying that they feel staff are kind and caring. Children say that 'Footsteps is fun'.
- The methods staff use to communicate with parents are not always effective for all families. This is because they do not always consider how to support all parents to fully understand what it is their children are learning next. Consequently, some children do not benefit from opportunities to continue their good learning at home with their parents
- Staff work very well with other professionals, and this is a key strength of this pre-school. They share appropriate information to promote children's welfare and development and enable their families to receive pertinent support. This particularly supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their role in contributing to children's safety. For example, they conduct risk assessment of the building facilities and have procedures in place to keep children safe. The manager ensures that all staff regularly refresh their knowledge and maintain an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding. They know how to recognise possible signs of abuse or neglect in children and understand how to report any concerns to the relevant professional. Staff are clear about how to report any concerns or allegations against other staff members. Staff are deployed well across the pre-school. Robust recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

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 deliver the curriculum more effectively during group activities, to provide children with consistently appropriate levels of challenge
- enhance the curriculum to help include opportunities for supporting children's understanding of online safety
- strengthen the already good partnerships with parents to support and guide children's individual learning at home.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2595848
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10251390
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	Footsteps Day Nursery And Pre-School Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP901320
Telephone number	07939 881846
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Footsteps Pre-school was registered in 2020. The pre-school is situated in the Watermead area of Aylesbury. It operates Monday to Friday, 7.30am until 2pm each day, except Tuesday when it closes at 12pm. It operates term time only. There are six staff who work at the setting. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The pre-school provides funded early education for children aged two to four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Christine Wilkinson

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school 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 setting.
- 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.
- Children spoke to and communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, both indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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