

# Inspection of Footsteps Nursery School

Biddenham Turn, Biddenham, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK40 4AZ

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Inspection date: 31 January 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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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 thoroughly enjoy the time they spend in this friendly nursery. Older children are excited to arrive and rush to meet the enthusiastic, energetic staff. Babies hold their arms out and giggle with delight at seeing their nurturing carers. Children of all ages show great confidence in new situations. They interact well with visitors, engaging them in conversation and inviting them into their play.

Children demonstrate high levels of independence. They freely explore the vast array of activities indoors and in the inspirational garden area. For example, children investigate various tools in the woodwork area. They confidently use hammers and other construction equipment safely, developing a good understanding of how to identify and manage risks in their play.

Children of all ages display high levels of curiosity. Staff encourage this by engaging well with children in activities. They allow children plenty of time to explore their own ideas and respond to staff members' thought-provoking questions. For example, children learn about objects that sink and float. They discuss how they think that the heavier objects will sink. Staff encourage them to experiment, offering lots of praise when they guess correctly.

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

- Leaders and managers are highly reflective on all aspects of the nursery. They seek feedback from parents and other professionals and use this information to make well-informed changes to their practice. For example, managers have recently adopted a new electronic journal system. This supports staff and parents to communicate information about children's daily routines and progress effectively.
- Staff skilfully extend children's learning during activities. For example, children discuss how many cakes they need to create for all their friends to have one. Staff encourage children to count how many they have, before calculating how many more they must make.
- Relationships between families and staff are strong. Parents speak highly of the managers and staff and the high-quality care they provide. They comment on the comprehensive information they receive about children's progress. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities particularly value the close bonds their children have with staff. They comment on the continuous communication and support they receive, and how this supports their children's progress.
- Staff use their knowledge of children's prior learning and development well. They regularly revisit past activities to measure children's progress. For example, babies have previously been exploring their features using mirrors. During story

time, staff encourage them to identify the facial features of the animals they read about. They then support babies to point to the same features on their own faces.

- Children behave well in the nursery. They are aware of the rules and support one another to adhere to them. For example, children remind one another to use their 'walking feet' when indoors. Children are kind and considerate towards one another. They offer to make their friends cupcakes in a modelling dough activity. Children chat affectionately to one another, discussing what flavoured icing and toppings they would like. Staff are excellent role models. They consistently demonstrate polite and respectful behaviour to children and adults.
- Managers work hard to create an environment where staff feel valued. They provide regular opportunities to reward and recognise high-quality teaching. For example, during morning briefing sessions, staff are encouraged to identify and celebrate strengths in each other's practice.
- Staff monitor children's progress well. They complete regular, high-quality assessments to gather comprehensive information about children's abilities, interests and future learning goals. However, staff do not consistently use this robust knowledge when engaging with children during activities. On occasion, activities are not adapted to support the specific interests and learning needs of individual children. Some activities can be too challenging, and children do not fully engage in them.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe. They have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms that could indicate a child is at risk of harm. Staff clearly explain the correct process to follow when reporting concerns. Managers and staff complete daily, comprehensive risk assessments of all areas of the setting and supervise children extremely well during activities. Managers have robust recruitment and induction processes to ensure 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:**

- ensure staff consistently meet the learning needs of individual children during group activities
- enhance methods of coaching to support staff to raise the quality of their teaching to a consistently high level.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY415737
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10265115
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	40
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	59
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Footsteps Nursery School Partnership
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP904780
<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 262743 / 07984136097
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 May 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Footsteps Nursery School registered in 2010. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, during school term times. Sessions are from 7.40am to 5pm. The nursery employs 15 members of childcare staff, 11 of whom hold appropriate qualifications at level 3 or above. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Antonia Campbell

## 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 inspector considered the views of parents by speaking to several parents during the inspection and reviewing feedback letters.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including evidence of the suitability of all staff.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children during activities.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching to assess the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector and the manager completed a joint observation of an activity to assess the quality of teaching.
- The inspector held discussions with staff about the monitoring of learning and development in the setting and tracked the progress of several children.

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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