

Inspection of Footsteps Nursery & Forest school

Sandy Hill Farm, Fradley Junction, Alrewas, Staffordshire DE13 7DW

Inspection date: 3 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Good
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
--	------

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children happily enter this inviting nursery and quickly settle into the routines of the day. Children approach staff for cuddles and reassurance. Staff show awareness of the emotional well-being of children. This helps children to feel safe and secure in the nursery.

Children are inquisitive and eager to learn as they explore the outdoor areas and forest school. All the children enjoy daily access to the outdoors. Older children practise their fine motor skills as they thread cereal onto string to make bird feeders. They enjoy hanging them in the trees with support from staff. Children build their physical strength and coordination pedalling trikes and manoeuvring around each other. Young babies enjoy rolling balls and crawling up and down the different gradients in the garden. This helps them to develop the core strength needed to progress to walking.

Children delight in filling pans and containers with water in the outdoor kitchen. They stir pots with sticks as they pretend to make breakfast for the birds. This ignites children's imagination and helps to develop friendships and their language as they chat to each other. Children are learning vital skills like taking turns and waiting patiently for others to turn the tap on the water butt.

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

- The newly returned manager is passionate and keen to continue to implement improvements within the nursery. She can identify areas of weakness and quickly puts strategies in place to resolve them. She has worked hard to improve parent partnership and taken on board their feedback about communication. She has started communication boards, daily diaries, a parent forum, and feedback forms. Parents comment that the home learning bags have given them ideas to continue learning at home. This means children have more opportunities to expand their knowledge.
- Leaders strongly focus on staff well-being. They have recently appointed a staff welfare champion to act as a voice for staff. Regular supervisions and peer reviews help leaders to assess and improve the quality of teaching. This means leaders can quickly help staff and enhance learning for children. Staff comment they feel valued, this builds team spirit and staff morale.
- Leaders have designed an exciting and structured curriculum that builds on what children know and can do. Staff know the children well and gather valuable information when children start. There is scope for staff to enhance the planning of routine activities, so that they run more efficiently. For example, children wait while one bowl of food is passed round and served onto their plates. Children become fed up and food starts to get cold.

- Children's ideas are listened to and valued. The older children contribute to committee meetings, where they vote and choose what they would like to learn about. This helps children to understand about democracy and teaches them to respect each other's opinion.
- Children learn how to take appropriate risks. They negotiate obstacles and balance beams. They skilfully use rakes and spades to dig in the mud. This is teaching them to explore their boundaries in a controlled manner. It builds confidence and self-esteem. Staff use the outdoor fire pit to cook pancakes. Children learn important rules about fire safety.
- Children are becoming confident, independent learners. They learn to feed themselves with cutlery, serve their food and clean up after lunch. These skills prepare them well for their next stage of learning, like their eventual move on to school. However, sometimes, quieter children do not always get the same level of interaction with staff as the confident communicators. This means these quieter children get less opportunities to practise these skills.
- Staff nurture a love of books. Even the youngest children reach independently for books and turn the pages. Staff are fun and engaging and make good use of songs to encourage language. Children pretend to fly round the room as superheroes as they act out the songs. The good use of props and actions means all the children are eager to take part and practise their speaking skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff fully understand their role and responsibility to keep children safe. They have a good understanding of procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child's welfare. Leaders follow the correct procedure if there are allegations made against staff. The environment is risk assessed throughout the day and the premises are safe and secure. Staff count children in and out of the rooms, so they remain safely accounted for. There are robust recruitment procedures in place and ongoing checks mean staff working with children remain suitable.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen the monitoring of teaching, so that all children's needs are met with equal support and interactions from staff
- enhance the planning of routine activities, so that they run more efficiently and maximises learning time for children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2588109
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10281611
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	114
Number of children on roll	123
Name of registered person	Footsteps Day Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP520741
Telephone number	01283 791030
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2022

Information about this early years setting

Footsteps Nursery & Forest school registered in 2020. The nursery employs 19 members of childcare staff. Of these, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2, 3, 5 or 6. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Katie Rudge

Inspection activities

- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- 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 to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- 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, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023