

Inspection of First Steps Moorlands Children's Centre

Moorfields Road, Bath, Avon BA2 2DQ

Inspection date: 18 July 2023

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

Children settle well in the nursery and form close bonds with staff, who they seek out for comfort and reassurance, when needed. Staff caring for babies meet their care routines consistently. Babies investigate sensory materials and enjoy looking at books and hearing staff sing to them. Toddlers and older children move freely between the indoor and outdoor play areas, where they choose and lead their play and create their own ideas. However, staff do not all have high expectations of what children can achieve. They do not all use the activities to help children fulfil their learning potential. As a result, some children miss out on learning opportunities.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities to support their physical development. Babies develop their core strength and balance in readiness for walking and climb on the apparatus in their playroom. Toddlers and older children take on physical challenges to develop their confidence. For example, they learn how to jump from a safe height and how to scale a climbing wall, which they repeat excitedly as their confidence grows. Children make friends and learn to develop positive attitudes and good behaviour.

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

- At times, staff do not supervise younger children appropriately when they are indoors to ensure that they do not hurt themselves. For example, the very busy toddler room becomes extremely noisy at lunchtime, when some children bang and wave cutlery around the faces of others without staff noticing. Staff do not always supervise toddlers closely in the bathroom, and babies walk around while eating cereal from their sensory play. The manager is already taking action to address these weaknesses to assure children's safety.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Staff join in children's play with enthusiasm, but do not all consistently challenge toddlers and pre-school children well. They do not all adapt activities to ensure that the voices of quieter children are heard. This does not help to build further on what these children already know and can do.
- The more skilled staff use questioning techniques to encourage children to think and motivate them to learn more. For example, they ask children to consider where the bugs they search for might live, providing hints to help them reach a conclusion. They provide maths challenges to help children learn more about shape, size and length.
- Staff are sensitive to the gestures and babbles babies make to communicate their needs and choices, and they model language to help the babies form their first words. Some staff caring for older children introduce new words, such as when they use books and toys to find out what 'antennae' are. They provide

some target activities to encourage children's focus and language development. However, staff do not help children to use their home languages in the setting to support their well-being and language development further.

- Older children benefit from activities to help prepare them for starting school. For example, they practise putting on school uniform, look at photos of their teachers and develop the confidence and independence to manage tasks for themselves. Children develop healthy lifestyles. They learn to wash their hands regularly and enjoy healthy meals and snacks that support their individual dietary needs.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Staff keep parents informed about their children's care routines, daily activities and progress. The special education needs coordinator and key persons meet the additional needs of children well. They work closely with parents and other professionals to include and support children's needs and development. This includes helping parents find strategies to overcome practical issues at home.
- The management team provides some supervision to help staff develop their knowledge and skills and training to support their key roles. However, this is not sufficient to quickly target weaker practice and ensure consistently good quality of teaching. The management team values and nurtures staff well-being and provides support for staff when needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a clear understanding of their child protection roles and responsibilities and the risks to children from different types of abuse and neglect. They know what procedures to follow in the event of a concern about a child or a member of staff. The management team follows robust vetting procedures to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff maintain a secure premises and outdoor play areas are safe. However, staff caring for the younger children sometimes miss potential hazards when children are eating or in the bathroom.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
ensure staff supervise younger children appropriately at all times when indoors to keep them safe	24/07/2023
improve staff supervision and coaching to help raise the quality of teaching to a consistently good standard.	28/08/2023

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

- support all children who speak English as an additional language to use their home languages in the setting.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY287532
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10303314
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 6
Total number of places	70
Number of children on roll	146
Name of registered person	First Steps (Bath)
Registered person unique reference number	RP902756
Telephone number	01225 317 123
Date of previous inspection	25 November 2021

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Moorlands Children's Centre registered in 2004. The group operates each weekday, from 8am to 6pm, all year round. The group receives funding to provide free early years education for children aged two, three and four years. The group employs 21 regular staff and seven bank staff, of whom 20 hold appropriate qualifications at levels 2 to 6 and one has qualified teacher status.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Bridget Copson

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The deputy manager completed a learning walk around the premises with the inspector and explained how they are used to meet children's needs and deliver the curriculum.
- The inspector observed activities and the quality of staff's interactions with the children. She discussed the effectiveness of an activity with the manager.
- The inspector sampled the setting's documentation and discussed the manager's knowledge of the requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The inspector took account of parents' views.

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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