

Inspection of Little Steps Pre-school

Village Hall, Church Road, North Newton, BRIDGWATER, Somerset TA7 0BG

Inspection date: 18 July 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 settle very quickly and are eager to see what activities are available on their arrival. The curriculum planning enables them to develop a positive attitude to leading their learning as they explore. Children are confident to make choices and decide where they prefer to learn. For example, as children engage in creating bugs from craft materials, they decide to take a box outside to search for real bugs. They use magnifying glasses and mathematical language as they gently place a tiny spider in their small box. Then they return indoors, setting about making their own spider, solving problems through trial and error, such as what works best to stick on pipe cleaner legs. Children soon become confident in the environment and develop new skills through perseverance. For example, young children eventually manage to use stilts. They work out that, by supporting themselves by a table, they can balance easier and are incredibly pleased with their achievements.

Staff provide good support so that all children feel secure to learn. For example, children who prefer to engage in role play use good language skills. Even shy children contribute. Staff help them to narrate what they are doing and suggest what happens next, checking their understanding.

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

- The manager ensures a good curriculum. She intends for staff to focus on children's prime areas, particularly for those who entered below expected levels after the COVID-19 pandemic. She has a good understanding of how she wants staff to sequence children's development to help them achieve. For example, children use play dough and scissors to strengthen their hands ready for writing. Then they practise their early writing skills in their play.
- The manager and staff provide a fully inclusive provision. They spend funding appropriately to help children have the additional support and/or experiences they need. Parents confirm how proactive they are in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know the children well through their observations and discussions with parents. They share effective information to enable parents to support their children's learning at home.
- Children are confident communicators. Staff narrate children's actions, using sign language to support understanding for all. They help children to recall previous learning and extend their vocabulary. For example, staff inform them a creature in a book is a chameleon. Older children remember that camouflage means it can change colour to hide.
- Snack time is a social occasion. Children choose when to have it so as not to interrupt their learning. Staff meet children's needs well and know their dietary requirements. Children clean their hands and have some friendly discussions.

They collect a cup and plate, take them to the table and pour their drinks. However, staff are not consistent in extending children's independence or using snack time as a greater learning opportunity.

- Children behave well and staff intervene effectively in children's minor arguments, helping them to think how to resolve them. Children agree to share and happily give others the resources when they have finished with them. Children help take care of the environment and work together well to tidy up.
- Staff encourage children to use books in activities and learn they are for information. They engage children successfully in acting out stories, and children eagerly join in with actions and familiar words. Outside, children access books independently. However, indoors, staff have not planned as well for children to want to access the book area. It is near the door to go out, which does not provide an inviting environment where they can concentrate fully.
- The manager and deputy work directly with staff and children, providing good role models for effective practice. They conduct regular supervisions of staff, enabling them time to discuss their well-being and development needs. The manager recognises the strengths of her staff, especially the new deputy who has adapted the planning to successfully meet the needs of the increased numbers of two-year-old children this year. The manager and staff regularly evaluate practice and staff have good opportunities for training to keep extending their skills and knowledge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff attend regular training to keep up to date in safeguarding children. They have a good understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They know what to be aware of and the procedures to follow should they have a concern children may be at risk of harm. Staff know to report any concerns about colleagues, including who to go to outside of the organisation. Staff conduct good risk assessments and take appropriate action to minimise risks. They support children well in keeping themselves safe while taking appropriate risks for their development, such as when using scissors, balancing and climbing.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- improve the planning of the indoor environment to provide a cosy, quiet area that encourages children to use books independently
- focus staff development in ensuring they consistently extend children's learning during routines, such as snack time.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY219553
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10299908
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	36
Name of registered person	Little Steps Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP903923
Telephone number	07745 229438
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2018

Information about this early years setting

Little Steps Pre-school registered in 1978 and is run by a parents' committee. It operates from North Newton Village Hall in North Newton, Somerset. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm with a breakfast club offered from 7.30am, term time only. It receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are six members of staff. The manager holds an early years qualification at level 4. There are three staff who hold an appropriate childcare qualification at level 3 and one at level 2. One member of staff is an apprentice.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Elaine Douglas

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 provider.
- The manager led the inspector on a learning walk to discuss their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector talked to the staff, parents and children during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and inspector conducted a joint observation on children's play and discussed the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector observed the quality of education, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector held a leadership and management meeting and the inspector checked relevant 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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