

Inspection of Little Footsteps Explorers Pre-school

Scout Association, 1st Leighton Buzzard Scout Group, Grovebury Road, Leighton
Buzzard LU7 4SW

Inspection date: 18 March 2024

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 show their enjoyment of being at this setting and respond to the exciting resources and the many opportunities to explore. They settle quickly and build secure, trusting relationships with the staff. They frequently mirror staff's positive, encouraging attitudes. For example, older children show younger ones how to walk across a plank balanced on logs, initially holding their hands, and then standing nearby and offering verbal encouragement. This encourages children to persevere and they quickly grow in confidence.

Staff sensitively support children to understand their own and other people's emotions. For example, children gave out bunches of daffodils in their community, helping them to appreciate the effects of acts of kindness. Children respond to staff's high expectations and their support. They show a mature approach to sharing and independently settling minor disputes. Thoughtful daily practice aids children in gaining a good awareness of safety and how to assess risks. For instance, children use their senses when handling resources, carefully observing and touching them to check the weight and determine whether they are breakable. Activities and discussions support children in gaining a clear understanding of healthy lifestyle practices. For example, children play simple card games that help them to consider which foods are good for their teeth.

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

- The manager is enthusiastic and is committed to the setting's ongoing improvement. She shares her enthusiasm with staff and acts as a good role model, helping them to develop their practice. Staff receive effective supervision sessions, further supporting them in building on their work and supporting all children to make good progress.
- Staff use their assessments of children well to understand what children are learning and plan what they need to learn next. Their good knowledge of the children enables staff to offer them play opportunities that relate to their interests. The manager's robust monitoring means that any weaker areas in children's learning are quickly addressed. Staff understand the roles of other professionals and work well with them to ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive pertinent support.
- Staff are aware of the importance of supporting children to develop their language and communication skills. They offer them interesting activities that spark conversation. For example, children exploring flour, salt and water describe the changing texture of their mixture and use their mathematical skills as they count scoops of flour. Young children bury their hands in the mixture and eagerly exclaim 'Where are my hands?'
- Staff successfully support children to play in mixed-age groups. They are aware

of children's needs and make sure these are met, while supporting children to interact and learn from each other. For example, younger children copy older ones as they make large, circular movements to create circles on an outdoor easel. They develop additional physical skills as they join older children in selecting and moving strips of wood to make a road.

- Children are developing a practical awareness of differences. For instance, they play daily with artefacts and household items from other countries. These frequently spark discussions about different ways of life.
- Staff pay close attention to the provision of resources, ensuring that these can be used in many ways. For instance, children develop their imagination and creativity as they use lengths of material to fashion dressing-up costumes. They refer to nearby associated books to further support this.
- Parents think highly of the setting. They particularly commend the 'caring, loving staff' and note the good progress their children make, including developing their confidence and independence. Parents report that staff communicate well with them. This enables them to share updates about their children's progress at home and understand what children have been learning at the setting and build on this.
- Children thoroughly enjoy their play and interactions. Staff generally support children to build on their learning. However, on occasion, staff do not make the best possible use of opportunities to encourage children to think further and fully extend their knowledge and skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

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 consistently offer children opportunities that aid them in thinking further and building on their learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2645789
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10332907
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	33
Name of registered person	Footsteps Day Nursery And Pre-School Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP901320
Telephone number	07939881846
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little Footsteps Explorers Pre-school registered in 2021. The setting employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The setting opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8am until 4pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Kelly Eyre

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 setting.
- The floor manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed staff interaction with children during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the floor manager.
- Meetings were held between the inspector, the floor manager, the area manager and the registered owner. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and saw evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their 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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