

Inspection of First Steps Playgroup Limited

Heston Village Hall, New Heston Road, Hounslow TW5 0LW

Inspection date: 22 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

This playgroup is a wonderful place for children to learn, play and grow. Children flourish due to the standard of education and care that they receive. Leaders are ambitious for their community and have high expectations for what children can achieve. Staff are committed to inclusion. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly. Staff use every opportunity to develop children's speech, language and communication by engaging them in quality conversations.

Children are safe and happy. Staff know the children and their families well and build positive relationships with them. This helps children to be safe and confident at the playgroup. Children show high levels of independence and resilience. They know where to find resources to support their learning and will readily ask for help if needed. Children demonstrate their self-confidence through exploration. For example, they excitedly use the role-play area with props to dress up and play imaginatively with each other.

Staff have high expectations for children's learning and the way that they behave with one another. Children's behaviour is good. Staff support children to be kind, caring and respectful. Children play happily with their friends. Any minor disagreements are quickly resolved by staff, who model the expected behaviour, such as sharing and taking turns.

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

- Leaders and staff have an ambitious and comprehensive curriculum in place for all areas of learning. Each area is broken down into specific next steps that reflect where children are in their learning journey. The whole curriculum is well planned and tailored to meet children's interests. Assessments are used well. Leaders ensure that children's next steps in learning are identified through observations, tracking individual needs and parents' feedback.
- Staff feel very well supported by leaders. They value the high-quality professional development they receive, which has enabled them to become effective practitioners. Many staff have worked at the playgroup for a long time and have progressed their careers there. However, at times, systems to mentor less-experienced staff are not utilised to their full potential. Therefore, on occasion, not all staff utilise every opportunity to deepen children's knowledge and understanding while they play.
- Developing children's vocabulary is a priority. Staff build children's language through talking about what they are doing. For example, while making play dough, staff use simple instructions alongside pictures to support children's understanding of instructions and new words. Staff use actions and pictures as

children mix the ingredients.

- Children have many opportunities to develop their independence. Children prepare snack independently while staff ensure that they are well supervised. They cut their own fruit with safety knives and use the electric toaster. At times, opportunities for children to further extend their independence are not fully extended into all areas of the children's routines. For instance, some staff do things for children, such as putting their coats on for them. This does not fully extend opportunities for children to develop their self-help skills.
- Children's early communication and language skills are given high priority. For example, staff share stories and rhymes with children each day. These are chosen carefully for their rich content and repetitive phrases, which children learn and readily join in with.
- Staff have high expectations for children's personal development. Lots of opportunities are provided to embody the values of the playgroup, including being kind and respectful. Children learn about different faiths and cultures. They enjoy exploring the various important festivals from each other's faiths, including Diwali, Eid and Christmas.
- Staff support children who speak English as an additional language. Leaders ensure that staff who share the same home language as children use this in the playgroup. Leaders extend these opportunities to share information with parents in their home language. This helps children and families to develop a sense of belonging.
- Partnerships with parents and the local community are a strength of the playgroup. Parents say that they feel supported in their child's learning and development. Leaders hold regular workshops to support families, including 'communication' and 'oral health' workshops.

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:

- strengthen support for less-experienced staff to develop their knowledge and skills to ensure more consistency in practice and fully support children's learning
- provide even more opportunities for children to do things for themselves and extend their independence and self-help skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY473132
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	10311999
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	47
Number of children on roll	61
Name of registered person	First Step Playgroup Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP902545
Telephone number	0208 5776639
Date of previous inspection	17 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Playgroup Limited re-registered in 2013. The playgroup operates from the village hall in Heston, in the London Borough of Hounslow. The playgroup is open from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am to 3pm. Children can attend a variety of sessions. The playgroup employs 20 members of staff. Of these, 10 hold relevant qualifications at level 2 or above. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Megan McClellan

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the playgroup received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the playgroup.
- The manager and the inspector had a learning walk together of all areas of the playgroup and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff and interacted with children.
- Parents shared their views about the playgroup with the inspector.
- The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.

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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