

# Inspection of Footsteps Nursery & Forest school

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

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Inspection date: 2 May 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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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 form strong bonds with staff. They feel safe and secure. Staff support children's emotional well-being by being kind and attentive. Lots of cuddles and reassurance is given to children who may take longer to settle. The setting is a hive of activity. Staff plan and deliver activities which cover a wide and ambitious curriculum, this ignites children's curiosity. Children enjoy being independent explorers. They are interested in what happens next and why. Children scoop and pour water onto the ground and watch as it runs away. They add more water and watch to see if it runs in the same direction.

Overall children behave well. Staff support them to recognise and follow the nursery rules. Children sing songs about kind hands and feet. Young babies are encouraged to explore their environment. Sensory play, such as paint is provided and babies squish this through their fingers. Staff help young children to practise their developing physical skills as they climb up apparatus and slide down. Pre-school children write letters to the nursery guinea pigs. They talk about the food which the animals eat and how some of their friends can't eat some of the food as they are allergic to it. Staff are good role models and skilfully play alongside children enhancing their play by introducing new rich vocabulary of words and ideas. Children gain confidence to express themselves freely.

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

- Leadership is strong. The manager has a clear vision and plan for the nursery as it expands and grows. Any weaknesses are identified by effective supervisions and appropriate support, training and mentoring is put into place for staff. This ensures swift improvements are made in the quality of teaching.
- The nursery curriculum is designed to continually build on the skills children need to be successful learners. Staff understand the intent of the curriculum. However, at times this is not always delivered in a way which meets all the needs of the children, especially during larger group activities. Occasionally, these do not provide sufficient challenge for those children who are more able.
- Staff report high levels of morale. They have access to continued professional development. This supports them to fully understand how children develop and learn. Detailed information gathered from parents, and staff knowing their key children well and their interests, allows them to plan precisely for their next steps in learning. Consequently, children sustain high levels of engagement in their chosen activity. They make good progress in their learning and acquire the skills needed for transition through the nursery and eventual move to school.
- Parent partnerships are excellent. The manager and staff team strive to build good relationships with parents to ensure they are happy and know their children are safe. Regular meetings and information shared with parents helps

them to support their child's learning at home. Parents say staff are amazing. They say the nursery has excellent facilities and their children are thriving.

- Support for children who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is good. Thorough assessments are completed on all children. Where gaps are identified a plan of support is put in place. Staff have high expectations for children's learning. Consequently, all children, including those with SEND, make progress.
- Children develop a deep love for literacy. They listen to stories which teaches them about friendships, feelings, and positive attitudes. Children independently look through books or sit with staff to listen to their chosen story.
- Excellent outdoor facilities enable children to freely explore and be independent in their play. Children have forest school sessions outdoors where they learn to take risks and manage these safely. For example, they know the rules to follow when a campfire is burning. Children enjoy climbing trees and rolling down grassy banks. All children enjoy time outdoors. However, this is not always organised well enough to provide children who prefer to learn outdoors, even more opportunities to access the curriculum in an environment better suited to their needs.
- Independence is promoted throughout the nursery. Children are encouraged to find their own coats and put these on. Self-care skills are taught as children find tissues and wipe their own noses and wash their hands. Children self-serve their own lunches. They enjoy having responsibilities, such as drink monitors, to make sure their friends have their drinking cups. This gives them a sense of pride and boosts self-esteem.

## 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 implement the curriculum so it meets the needs of all children and provides sufficient challenge for those children who are more able
- review the organisation within the rooms to provide even more opportunities for children who prefer to learn outdoors to access the curriculum in an environment better suited to their needs.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2588109
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10338039
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	114
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	200
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Footsteps Day Nurseries Limited
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP520741
<b>Telephone number</b>	01283 791030
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 March 2023

## 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**  
Johanna Holt

## Inspection activities

- 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.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation.
- Parents and carers shared their views of the setting directly with the inspector and via phone calls and emails.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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