

Inspection of First Steps Kindergarten

42 Arlington Avenue, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5UD

Inspection date: 27 February 2025

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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive at the setting with smiles, and are greeted by warm and caring staff. Staff's friendly interactions with children create a supportive and nurturing environment. They show genuine interest in conversations, listening attentively, offering encouragement, and providing comfort when needed. These nurturing interactions help children feel safe and supported. Children often offer cuddles to their peers and hold hands with their friends.

Staff encourage children to express themselves freely, ask questions confidently, and explore the different learning environments prepared for them. They focus on fostering children's independence and building confidence during routine activities. For example, in each room, staff involve children in tidying up and setting up the tables for their snacks. Children show pride and great satisfaction when their achievements are recognised by staff.

Children actively engage in hands-on experiences that promote social and emotional skills, creativity, and problem-solving. For example, they engage in a treasure hunt in a sand tray, act out 'emotion monsters' and draw colourful rainbows with chalks. Staff use sophisticated and new vocabulary to extend children's language and communication skills. As a result, children become skilled communicators. For example, they act out a café in the role-play area, and staff engage them in conversations about the prices of decaf coffee and eclairs and their cheaper alternatives. These discussions allow children to practise those new words and concepts in context.

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

- Leaders have developed a comprehensive curriculum, which is designed to offer children learning experiences that enhance their understanding of their community. This includes adapting activities to align with children's individual learning styles and providing additional support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff observe children's interests and discuss their observations with each other weekly to keep the curriculum aligned with children's current passions.
- Staff introduce children to simple mathematical concepts in a playful way. Children enjoy guessing shapes staff have drawn on a messy tray and discussing their characteristics. However, staff sometimes do not adequately challenge children to extend their understanding and advance their learning about shapes.
- Staff skilfully promote a love of books within the setting. They conduct interactive storytelling sessions that incorporate physical activities, such as wiggling hands and feet. This engages children and encourages their full participation. Children listen to a story that demonstrates feelings associated

with different colours. After the story, children discuss how to identify and articulate their feelings in their groups. This approach helps children to recognise and manage their emotions and promotes positive behaviour.

- Staff's dedication to planning physical development activities is commendable. Children are physically active as they happily play in the mud, jump in puddles, and climb on climbing frames. They exclaim, 'I am the king of the castle' while playfully overcoming obstacles in the garden. Children stretch their bodies and pretend to move like different animals to enhance their dexterity and strengthen their core muscles.
- Staff effectively encourage positive behaviour in children. They actively involve children in becoming independent and prepare them for the next stage of their education. Younger children excitedly count cups while setting up tables, and older children line up to serve themselves food. Fostering independence helps build children's character, instils a sense of achievement and promotes a feeling of belonging.
- Children enjoy nutritious meals and learn about the benefits of food on their bodies. Staff encourage all children to use cutlery during mealtimes, and foster an atmosphere that resembles a social gathering among friends.
- Partnership with parents is effective. Staff work well with leaders, parents and other professionals to ensure that children receive the support they need. Parents value the staff's daily updates, emphasising good communication between the setting, staff and families. These daily updates, newsletters and other social channels keep parents engaged and informed, enabling them to participate actively in their children's learning.
- Leaders and staff participate in regular training sessions, which include safeguarding and safety protocols. This training ensures that all staff members are well prepared to address safety issues and respond effectively to potential risks. Leaders are dedicated to enhancing the professional development of the staff, to maintain high standards of teaching and ensure that all children make significant progress in their learning.

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 recognise and effectively utilise opportunities to extend and challenge children's learning even more.

Setting details

Unique reference number	200593
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10375876
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 4
Total number of places	46
Number of children on roll	50
Name of registered person	First Steps Kindergarten Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP909946
Telephone number	01926 332122
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2019

Information about this early years setting

First Steps Kindergarten registered in 1997. The setting employs 16 members of childcare staff and 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The provider is qualified at level 6, the manager is qualified at level 5, one staff holds a qualification at level 5, one at level 4, five staff hold qualifications at level 3 and four staff are qualified to level 2. The setting opens Monday to Friday from 7.30am until 6pm all year round, except for bank holidays and a week over the Christmas period. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anna Makowska

Inspection activities

- The manager and the deputy 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 spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 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 inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager showed the inspector 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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