

First Steps Pre-School

Unique reference number (URN): 314628

Address: The Drill Hall, 72A Middle Street South, Driffield, YO25 6QF

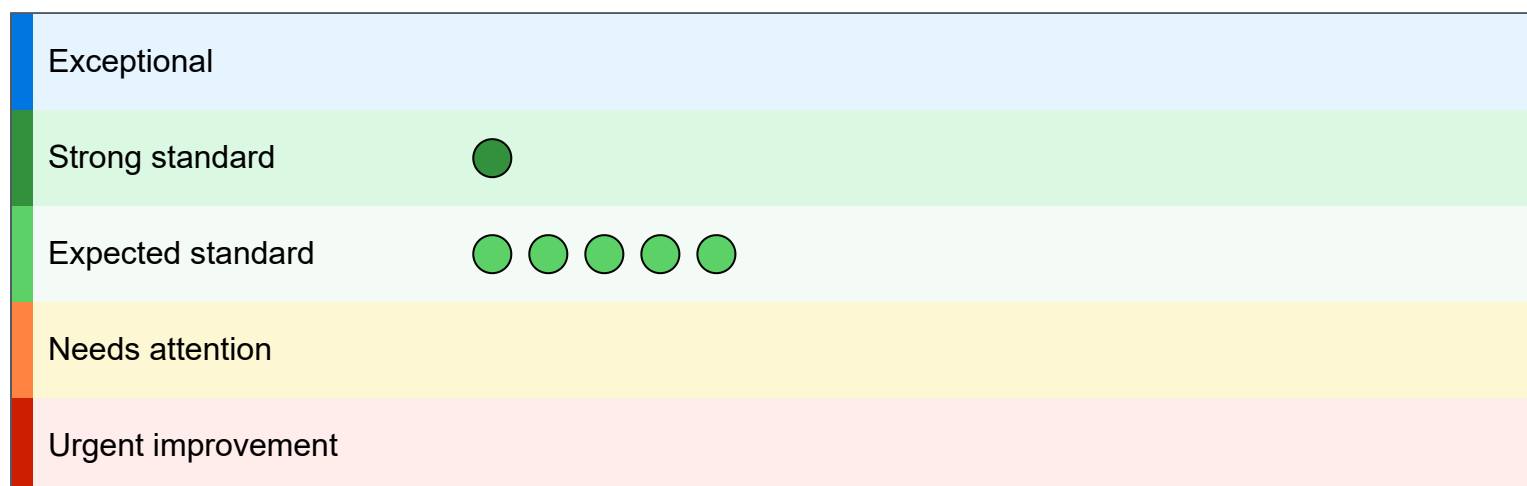
Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 12/04/1999

Registers: EYR

Registered person: First Steps Pre-School (Driffield) Committee

Inspection report: 5 March 2026



✔ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Staff use early and accurate observations and assessments to support children's progress and to identify children who need additional support. They work closely with families to ensure that specific interventions are highly effective in meeting children's identified needs. For example, they implement specific interventions to support communication and language development. Staff regularly monitor and review the impact of their teaching. They skilfully adapt their approach as necessary and work closely with parents and carers to ensure full access to additional support.

Leaders work closely with families and outside agencies to monitor children's progress. They ensure that additional funding is used effectively and regularly review the impact on children who need it most. For example, children benefit from one-to-one support from additional staff. As a result, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those known, or previously known, to children's social care, make rapid and consistent progress from their starting points. They are very well prepared for their next stage of education.

There is a systematic approach to identifying barriers to learning. For example, targeted and outcome-based interventions are introduced, which are informed by the experience and professional guidance of leaders. Outcomes for children with SEND are extremely positive.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Children achieve typically well across all areas of learning. They show confidence in their learning and show staff what they know and can do. They eagerly sing the songs they have learned at pre-school and show the mathematical concepts they have learned, filling in what numbers come next in sequence. Children have learned skills such as collaboration and cooperation and generally show high levels of engagement in focused activities and independent learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making positive progress from their starting points. Generally, children are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Children progress particularly well in their communication and language. They show high levels of listening and attention in large groups before lunch, and they respond quickly to staff's instructions. Parents remark on the progress their children are making. They describe how their children's vocabulary has expanded and how they now speak in more complex sentences.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Expected standard 

Children develop respectful and warm friendships with other children and with the staff who care for them. They are kind and considerate towards each other, which creates a calm and constructive atmosphere in the pre-school. Staff support children quickly and effectively if they are unsettled or anxious, helping them understand and manage their emotions. They set commonly understood expectations for behaviour, which all children follow. For example, older children quickly begin tidying up for lunch when the tambourine is shaken to signal the routine.

Story and small-group activities support children's positive attitudes to learning particularly well. All children with different needs and abilities participate in stimulating and well-planned group activities that help develop their listening and attention skills. However, as leaders have identified, there is scope to develop this to further support children's engagement in learning through the continuous provision.

Leaders and staff work closely with parents to promote good attendance and punctuality. They use effective systems to monitor attendance and respond promptly when children do not arrive. Parents are supported with activities to continue learning in the home environment, and there are effective working partnerships with local primary schools. This promotes positive attitudes towards learning and prepares children for the next stage of education.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff know the children extremely well. They understand what motivates children, and they develop positive relationships with all children and their families. Home visits before children start to attend the pre-school lay the foundations for ongoing collaboration with parents. Leaders and staff continually work closely with parents. For example, they share information on topics such as nutrition and healthy packed lunches to continue supporting the importance of these at home.

The pre-school's key-person approach enables staff to continually meet each child's needs. Secure and responsive relationships are thoroughly embedded throughout the setting. Children's emotions are supported effectively, for example, by teaching through stories. Additionally, staff foster a calm and nurturing learning environment, where children are valued and respected. As a result, all children, including children known, or previously known, to children's social care show very high levels of wellbeing.

Children have opportunities to develop their knowledge of their health and wellbeing and their independence in self-care, for example, through conversations during mealtimes. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported by specific adjustments, such as implementing targeted daily physical exercises to ensure that their health and wellbeing needs are met.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed an ambitious and balanced curriculum for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff carry out accurate assessments and understand the children in their care very well. They have a secure understanding of what they want children to learn across all areas of learning. Staff plan activities that engage children's curiosity and develop their next steps. For example, they use traditional stories to advance children's understanding of mathematical concepts, such as shape, size and measure.

The curriculum for communication and language is particularly well developed. Leaders have used their wealth of experience to enhance provision and to implement effective teaching interventions, delivered in small groups. This helps all children develop their understanding of letters and sounds and prepares them well for their next stage of education.

Typically, staff understand what they want children to learn next, but understanding of how to implement the curriculum through focused teaching is not yet fully embedded and consistent. There are times when some children are not fully engaged in high-quality opportunities, which can limit what they learn. The curriculum for physical development outdoors does not fully support children's health and wellbeing, as children have limited opportunities to move freely and in various ways.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear vision for the pre-school and work continuously to reflect and identify areas for improvement. They have a secure understanding of the setting's strengths and have implemented strategies to develop practice, such as evaluating and modifying the systems for monitoring and supervising staff. Typically, these strategies are helping staff develop their understanding of the curriculum. However, the approach could be developed further to improve the consistency of the quality of teaching across the staff team.

Leaders work collaboratively to ensure that decisions taken are in the best interests of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is positive teamwork in the pre-school, which supports staff's wellbeing and workload. Staff reflect on the support they receive and the positive changes implemented since new management has been in place.

Parents' feedback about the pre-school is extremely positive. There is a high level of engagement with parents from the staff team, which is supporting the ongoing development of the setting. For example, staff use home visits before children start at the pre-school to build effective relationships with families. This provides valuable information, which informs staff practice.

What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children enter this inclusive and welcoming pre-school with enthusiasm and energy. They quickly settle in and access the wide range of activities that are set out for them. They are greeted by the friendly and kind staff and are happy and keen to begin their day. Children benefit from nurturing attachments to staff, supported by a secure key-person system. Leaders have developed an engaging curriculum that mirrors the season, ensuring a wide range of rich and diverse experiences. Children enjoy learning about different festivals and topics that foster their imagination. They enjoy a range of authentic and traditional activities, such as gardening and woodwork. This supports a love of learning as a group, as children play collaboratively with their friends, sharing resources and ideas.

Children are confident with high levels of self-esteem, and they develop a sense of belonging. Staff play sensitively with children to support their wellbeing. Children show high levels of wellbeing and are very positive in their attitudes and behaviours. They enjoy learning about traditional stories and using their imaginations to build 'castles' with magnetic tiles, reflecting what they have heard. They paint pictures of their favourite characters and discuss their favourite books. Children make typical progress from their starting points in all areas of learning and grow in their independence. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those known, or previously known, to children's social care, are particularly well supported and make rapid progress. They are fully included in the provision thanks to staff's secure understanding of the barriers they face to learning and the swift implementation of robust adjustments to support their learning.

Next steps

- Leaders should develop staff's understanding of children's learning and development further to ensure that teaching is of a consistently high level.
- Leaders should strengthen the curriculum for physical development, particularly outside, to ensure that all children are supported to excel in this area of learning and development.

About this inspection

The inspector spoke with leaders, staff, children, parents and carers during the inspection.

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.

Inspector:

Rob Yates

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): 314628

Address:

The Drill Hall
72A Middle Street South
Driffield
YO25 6QF

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 12/04/1999

Registered person: First Steps Pre-School (Driffield) Committee


Register(s): EYR

Operating hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday : 08:00 - 15:30

Local authority: East Riding of Yorkshire

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 5 March 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

2 to 4

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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