

Positive Steps Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY243905
Inspection date	28 March 2007
Inspector	Susan Mary Deadman
Setting Address	St Joseph's Church, Cookham Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 7EG
Telephone number	01628 623777
E-mail	maidenhead@positivestepsnurseries.co.uk
Registered person	Positive Steps Day Nursery Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Positive Steps Nursery is one of three nurseries and out of school club run by The Positive Steps Children's Day Nursery Limited. It opened in 2003 and operates from five rooms in St Joseph's Centre situated close to Maidenhead town centre. A maximum of 68 children may attend the day nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.15 for 51 weeks of the year. They are open on a Saturday from 08.45 until 13.15 for pre-booked sessions. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 97 children aged under five years on roll; of these, 39 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports a number of children who have learning difficulties and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 17 staff working with the children; of these, 11 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are four staff working towards a qualification. Additional teaching staff provide lessons in swimming, music and French.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and benefit from good hygiene practices, which help reduce the risk of infection. For example, the staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies. Children know to wash their hands after using the toilets and prior to snacks and staff clean the tables at this time.

Children benefit from a healthy diet, which meets their individual requirements, and gives them a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating. Children have a variety of fresh fruit at snack time. A good variety of healthy food options promotes children's health. Independent access to drinking water ensures children are hydrated throughout the day. Children talk about the benefits of healthy eating and understand that vegetables, such as carrots, are good for them.

Staff promote children's welfare after minor accidents. They record, in full detail, the information and share this with parents. There is effective sharing of information relating to medication.

Children enjoy a suitable range of physical activities that contribute towards a healthy lifestyle. They show great excitement over the new climbing frame and slide. Regular access to the outside play area promotes children's physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are generally well organised and staff work creatively to make the best use of space. Children hang their coats and other belongings on child height coat pegs. Staff care for children in age related rooms. The baby areas are light, bright and attractive to their young occupants. Toddlers have a suitable size room that meets space requirements. Areas in this room are identified to allow children's independence of choice. For example, children sit on the vinyl sofas to look at books and then access art activities before going on to use table toys.

Children in the pre-school have use of the reception area as well as the main playroom. The toilets are off the main play area and hold some storage space. All children have regular access to the secure outside play facilities. This area benefits from safety surfaces, which promote children's safety. There are minimal facilities for staff.

Children have access to a good range of play activities, which are maintained to a good level. For example, staff clean toys in the baby room on a weekly basis.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised wherever possible, as staff are vigilant. For example, they remain with children in the bathroom area. There are generally good procedures in place to ensure no one gains access to the building unless invited to do so. Staff complete basic daily risk assessments to promote children's safety.

The fire evacuation procedure is on display and children practise leaving the building in an emergency. Staff use the outcome to good effect. For example, they record full details, identify any issues and address these immediately.

The staff promote children's welfare as they have a good understanding of child protection procedures. Induction arrangements for new staff are clear. As a result persons who are not vetted do not have unsupervised contact with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and confident in the setting. They participate in a variety of activities which support their development. Babies enjoy a very stimulating environment. They have a large variety of interesting play equipment, which they clearly enjoy. Toddlers enjoy activities such as blow painting, construction and drawing. They have fun diving under a large parachute and squeal with delight as it comes down on top of them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and provide a sufficient range of activities and experiences. Staff's understanding of the Early Learning Goals supports children's learning, as they use these to devise planning. However, staff do not fully extend children's learning. Staff make good use of transitional reports and records of achievement to access each child's stage of development. Assessments and evaluations are used to plan for children's next developmental aim.

Children experience music and play musical instruments whilst joining in with singing activities. They enjoy creative activities such as painting bubble wrap, which will make the skin of their dinosaurs. Through planned topics children learn about the world around them. They design Chinese writing on T-shirts and make lanterns during Chinese New Year.

Children have a good amount of access to the written word and understand that print carries meaning. Staff reinforce children's writing skills by providing a range of activities to allow children to practise these. For example, children enjoy writing their name in foam on the table. Children link sounds to letters as they make the sound of the first letter for days of the week. They recognise their name cards and place these in a box. Children learn the meaning of new words, for example, staff inform them that a mechanic fixes cars.

Children make suitable progress in their mathematical development. They count, understand and name shapes. However, the delivery of some activities is not particularly stimulating and does not always extend children's learning. Staff talk to and listen to children, although they do not make the best use of extending children's thinking or problem solving skills. This is particularly noticeable during activities designed to promote mathematical understanding.

Children are proficient at using the computer and have accurate mouse control. Staff support them in this area, which ensures children gain the best out of this activity. Children sustain interest in the activities for a suitable period of time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are generally responsive to children's needs. They greet children warmly on arrival and talk to parents at this time. Effective communication with parents enables staff to gain a clear understanding of children's requirements. However, observations in the toddler room indicate an over reliance on the presence of the key worker to meet children's individual needs.

Children are very sociable and for much of the time behave well. Staff in the pre-school sometimes refer children to the feelings board after minor disputes. However, staff do not always deal with negative behaviour in a way that provides children with clear indications of right and wrong.

The setting supports children who have special educational needs and there is a strong partnership with outside agencies. Effective communication between staff, parents and other professionals promotes children's development.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the effective exchange of information between their parents and staff. Particularly evident is the exchange of information; which allows staff to gain a clear understanding of children's development at the commencement of the placement and between staff as children progress through each age room.

Parents are happy and confident with the setting. They are made welcome into the nursery and receive a good amount of information relating to their child's development. Parents are aware of the records staff maintain on their child. They are very satisfied with feedback, although some parents state they would prefer more frequent written updates. Informative and well-presented newsletters provide parents with a good amount of information, relating to the care and education of their child. It provides a detailed account of past, present and future activity plans and the learning aims of these. There is an effective complaints procedure, which ensures systems are in place to record any concerns. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery are satisfactory. There are effective procedures in place to evaluate staff's development. The deployment and organisation of staff and the premises does not always provide an environment, which is conducive to learning. Although staff provide children with a suitable range of activities, they do not always plan their time effectively. For example, they often prepare activities whilst one member of staff sits with children for discussion time. Children are distracted and not fully involved with the topic of conversation. The vast majority of children in the toddler room sleep after lunch, a few do not and they play in a room, which is kept dim for some time.

The behaviour of most children is very good and they are polite to peers and adults. However, noise levels in the pre-school are sometimes high and it is difficult to hear children or adults talking. Staff in the toddler room do not always notice children's behaviour and age appropriate disagreements between children go unchallenged.

Children are cared for by staff that hold the required level of qualifications and experience. Staff support children as they generally follow a good range of policies and procedures. For example, staff request and record the explanation for injuries children arrive with. Clear record keeping systems promote children's welfare. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the provider was asked to address various issues in relation to the nursery education. These included: monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and

organisation of the education programme; the planning of activities to sufficiently challenge children; develop systems to record children's progress; and provide opportunities for children to make decisions, use technology, practise writing and make simple calculations.

Recommendations were also made relating to the care inspection. These related to staff attendance registers and the complaints procedure.

The provider and staff have made good progress in these recommendations, which results in a progression of children's potential to develop. Effective recording of children's profiles provides staff with a very clear insight to children's stage of development. The increase in the availability of computers for the children, results in children having a good amount of time to learn and extend their skills in technology. They have several opportunities to develop their writing skills through planned activities. Plans show that children access a suitable range of activities that provide them with opportunities to count. However, there are still many missed opportunities for children to develop and support their understanding in this area. Children make independent choices, this is particular noticeable at snack time. For example, children decide when they would like to break for a drink and food.

There are specific staff identified to monitor and evaluate the nursery education, which is working generally well and results in many improvements. The management group oversee the evaluation and seek ways to make improvements. The setting works in partnership with the Local Authority and staff take part in training programmes to improve their implementation of activities.

The manager continues to monitor the recording of staff's attendance, which is not always accurately maintained.

Parents have access to a comprehensive complaints procedure. The parent notice board contains information, which identifies Ofsted as the regulators of childcare. The effective complaints procedure ensures that any issues are managed appropriately and a log of the outcome is maintained.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been two complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

As a result of a complaint on 06/07/2004 in relation to National Standard 12 - partnership with parents and on 09/09/2004 in relation to National Standard 7 - health, Ofsted required the provider to investigate and report on their findings.

The provider improved the procedures for providing parents with their child's records on leaving the setting. In relation to health and hygiene, the provider reverted back to their original procedures for cleaning the premises and reinforced staff's awareness of hygiene routines. Ofsted are satisfied that the provider responded appropriately to both issues.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make sure there are systems in place to ensure children's individual needs are met at all times
- ensure existing behaviour management strategies are consistently applied
- review the deployment of staff to promote effective working

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop teaching methods to ensure staff extend children's learning in all areas of development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk