



Positive Steps Stokenchurch

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY292355
Inspection date 14 July 2005
Inspector Elizabeth Juon

Setting Address Lower Church Street, Stokenchurch, High Wycombe,
Buckinghamshire, HP14 3TJ

Telephone number 01628 623777

E-mail

Registered person Positive Steps

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

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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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

The Positive Steps Nursery, Stokenchurch, is one of three nurseries run by the Positive Steps group. It opened in 2004 and operates from a refurbished building in the semi-rural village of Stokenchurch, situated in a conservation area close to Junction 5 of the M40 motorway. The nursery has sole use of the building and is divided into four group rooms with the appropriate facilities. There is an enclosed

garden for outside play. A maximum of 58 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.45 to 18.15 all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 32 children aged from birth to under eight years on roll. Of these, six children currently receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local area and beyond. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs. There are no children attending with English as an additional language,

The nursery employs eight staff. The owner and administrative staff are in offices on the premises. Three of the staff including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff follow appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, maintain satisfactory hygiene standards in the setting and have a clear procedure when changing nappies, safeguarding children from cross infection. The appropriate use of medical and accident records promotes children's health, although parents do not always countersign the accident book. Children learn to apply sun cream and wear hats before going out into the garden on a hot day. Staff generally store food safely however, the refrigerator in the milk kitchen is disorganised, bottles lack clear labels and there is no record of refrigerator temperature which will affect children's health. Children understand simple good health and hygiene practices through the daily routines in the setting, for example, they wash their hands before eating food. Children are nourished, food is freshly prepared daily and a clear record of children's food allergies are available, so that all adults are aware and can act accordingly. Children enjoy healthy snacks throughout the week, including fruit and breadsticks. Drinking water is available; milk is a choice at breakfast but not at other times. Snack and meal times provide an opportunity for children to sit together and talk, however they are unable to practise useful skills, for example pouring and do not have an adult role model at the table to extend learning and conversation. Children enjoy physical play. They participate in action rhymes and songs and outside they like to ride on bikes and gain confidence pedalling down hill and climbing through a tunnel, showing increasing co-ordination and control. The planning of indoor and outdoor activities is not effective in enabling children to develop a full range of physical skills. The babies come into the garden each day for fresh air and sit on rugs playing with toys watching the older children play. Children rest and sleep according to their needs, however ventilation in the sleep room on a hot day is inadequate and cot sheets are not fresh daily.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure indoor and outdoor environment. The nursery is bright and newly decorated and the rooms are suitable for their purpose. Children in the pre-school room are disturbed as visitors come through from the front door. The baby room is particularly cosy with a good variety of stimulating toys available at low level. Children enjoy a selection of activities and use suitable and safe equipment that is mostly new, appropriate for their age and in good condition. A daily risk assessment of the premises is undertaken and recorded; most hazards to children have been minimised. Children are secure in the premises there is a locked front door with an entry bell. They can play safely in a fenced off outdoor area but staff are unaware of dangerous plants such as Deadly Nightshade, present in the garden. Children cannot access the kitchen; the serving hatch is in use at mealtime. They are safe in high chairs by using appropriate restraints, sleeping children are regularly checked and a baby monitor is available so staff can listen. Unfortunately, at present, not all staff have completed the necessary vetting procedure although working with the children without supervision. Staff understanding of child protection procedure is unclear, some staff do not have up to date knowledge and the procedures that are in place lack detail, should concerns arise. Children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe to avoid accidental injury by, for example, forming a queue, taking turns and walking in the setting. Children are becoming aware of fire safety through taking part in frequent fire drill practices.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show interest in what they do and take part in a range of appropriate indoor and outdoor activities, although these are not always sufficiently challenging to help children take the next step. There is a variety of activities to stimulate the interest of younger children; babies engage in exciting activities such as being in the ball pond, playing with balloons and investigating ice cubes. Children particularly enjoy exploring sand and playing outside in the garden. The activities on offer do not always engage children's interest and attention effectively and children begin to wander. Children acquire new knowledge and skills; they are beginning to manage their own personal hygiene independently. Children make positive relationships and have friends. They are comfortable with staff and ask for help if needed, turning to any member of staff to meet their needs; staff are kind and considerate although not always consistent in one particular room. Children develop confidence and self-esteem, staff praise, encourage, and award well- done stickers.

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The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make progress through each of the six areas of learning. However, children do not have sufficient challenge to increase their skills in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics and physical development. Children are interested in activities; staff interact with children during play encouraging them but do not engage with children to extend their learning; they do not ask questions to make children think. Children

acquire new skills but differentiation is limited for less or more able children, as the daily activity does not have a clear learning intention to meet individual needs. The pre-school staff plan the educational programme within the six areas of learning around half-termly themes but planning for the stepping-stones towards the early learning goals is not obvious. Staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum as a whole is not secure. New staff recently appointed into the pre-school room, without verification of their qualification or experience, show a lack of sound knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum, which is apparent in the plan of activities. Observations of children's progress are not sufficient to inform future planning to meet children's individual needs.

Children are making satisfactory progress in the areas of knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social, emotional, and creative development. Children use their imagination in role-play and have the opportunity to dress up. They enjoy messy play and painting, recognising colours well; children do not spontaneously create, as the necessary materials are not readily available. They sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes. The children are making friends and have good relationships with adults and each other. They share news about their family, for example about the pets they have at home. The children are learning manners, say please and thank-you and take turns; staff help children to play co-operatively. The children are beginning to gain an awareness of their own culture and the wider world through the resources that are available and the introduction of celebrations. They are finding out about their local environment and talk about the weather. The children have planted sunflowers, petted snakes, and other animals in the safety of the nursery; they examine living things to find out more about them. There are few opportunities for the children to operate simple equipment or construct for a variety of purposes. The design of the travel agency display fails to make a link with children's experiences or give them the opportunity to design or make the tasks. Children explore mark making when painting and drawing but the opportunity for emergent writing on a regular basis or writing for a purpose is limited. Some children can write their name and they are beginning to recognise their name on labels attached to their drinking bottles. There is little opportunity to model writing for children. Children show interest in books, they are encouraged to choose books by staff. At story time, children do not participate fully, younger children are not engaged as story time does not offer sufficient interest for all children; staff do not organise story time to encourage participation or ask questions such as 'what happens next?' Children counted up to seven at registration and used numbers appropriately in games such as 'What time is it Mr. Wolf?' and when talking about the date or their age, 'I am four' said one child. They show less interest in counting independently or using mathematical language, for example staff miss the opportunity to count the queue of children or use words such as in front or behind. Children do not count or make simple calculations in everyday activities such as snack time. The setting does not display a number line or use numbers as labels to enable children to recognise printed numerals. Children's physical skills and understanding of the natural world develop in outdoor play. They use a range of large and small equipment and practice kicking balls, pedalling bikes and crawling through the tunnel. Planning of physical activities does not ensure clear progression through the stepping-stones to encourage physical development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children come into the setting happily and confidently and display a sense of belonging. They move freely around the environment and know the routine. Children easily access age appropriate resources provided by the staff but choices and decision-making are limited. They are developing an awareness of their local community and culture and some awareness of cultures other than their own. There are appropriate systems in place to provide support to children for whom English is an additional language and children with special needs; the nursery works in co-operation with other professionals and parents to meet the child's needs. Children are generally well behaved, are beginning to share, take turns and have consideration for each other, although, children are sometimes distracted in large group activities such as story time or ring games. Children's self-esteem is developing through praise and encouragement from staff. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. They receive information about the setting and the Foundation Stage curriculum; they have access to policies and procedures. Parents spend time informally talking with the staff at the beginning and end of sessions. The introduction of a key worker system is going ahead; a list of key workers is on the notice board but at present parents are unaware of their child's key worker. An exchange of written and verbal information on, for example, dietary requirements helps to meet children's individual needs. Parental consents are in place, but not always signed. A monthly newsletter gives useful information on, for example, activities children undertake and names of new staff appointed but not their qualification or status of suitability. Parents receive a record of children's achievement when children leave, comprising of a tick list of statements descriptive of children's progress. Parents spoken to at the inspection were satisfied with the provision and the care and progress their children are making.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Vetting and recruitment procedures do not ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff whose suitability is not verified work with children without supervision, compromising children's safety. Adequate staff are available on the premises but staff and space are not organised appropriately to maintain adult:child ratios. Deployment of staff is not effective to ensure children's safety, welfare and development, inside or outside the setting. Policies and procedures are in place, read by staff at induction, however some lack detail or are not adhered to, failing to safeguard staff and children's well-being. The new manager is enthusiastic, and has a commitment to the ongoing improvement of the provision and is keen that children should be learning while enjoying themselves at nursery. She encourages staff to work as a team and attend training for their personal development and to benefit the children. However, she is not ensuring that the appropriate staff member attend

relevant training to encourage children's care and development. Staff are kind and caring towards the children, children in the toddler room and baby room have adequate support from adults. The pre-school room is not always meeting the adult to child ratio and staff miss opportunities to extend learning for more able children or provide support for less able children. The leadership and management of nursery education are satisfactory. Children are making some progress towards the early learning goals. The registered person has not followed basic procedures to safeguard children and has not considered the impact of this oversight on children's safety and well-being. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure un-vetted adults do not have unsupervised access to children
- ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are suitable to work with children
- deploy staff effectively within the premises to ensure the safety, welfare and development of children.

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- ensure staff improve their understanding of the Foundation Stage and allow for more detailed planning, evaluation and monitoring of the educational provision to enable children to make progress toward the next step in their learning
- develop staff awareness of effective explanation and questioning to encourage children's thinking.

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