

Positive Steps Day Nursery and Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY283818
Inspection date	14/01/2009
Inspector	Gillian Little
Setting address	Home Farm, Church Street, Shellingford, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, SN7 7QA
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Positive Steps Day Nursery and Pre-School in Shellingford, Faringdon, is one of five nurseries run by Positive Steps Children's Day Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2004 and operates from a purpose-built, single storey building in the village of Shellingford near Faringdon. Children attend from the local area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for 55 children in the early years age group at any one time and is currently caring for 61 children who attend on both a full-time and part-time basis. It is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for older children but currently has no children on roll. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.45 until 18.15 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery employs nine staff, of whom five hold relevant qualifications and four are working towards a relevant qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children are able to experience a range of activities within a welcoming and attractive environment where they learn to develop respect for others. Staff support children appropriately but are not confident with the observation, assessment and planning cycle, and the key person system is not always effective in providing the youngest children with security and continuity. Children are generally safe and there are some good procedures in place to promote their health, although staff are not always rigorous when carrying out daily risk assessments. The nursery has an inclusive approach, welcoming all families and children, and actively seeks parents' views. The self-evaluation process identifies many strengths and some areas for further development but does not identify other weaknesses, such as the deployment of qualified staff.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the observation, assessment and planning systems to fully record children's progress towards the early learning goals and to provide effective learning experiences
- ensure that risk assessments are rigorous and include all possible hazards to children
- ensure that the key person system is effective in providing children with security and continuity
- ensure that staff deployment effectively provides appropriate numbers of qualified staff to work directly with children.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery building provides a safe environment for children with suitable furniture and equipment, and easily accessible resources to encourage children to explore. Effective procedures to promote children's health include a nutritious menu, easily accessible soap and paper towel dispensers, and high levels of first aid trained staff. However, staff are not always rigorous in carrying out daily risk assessments. They fail to notice that an uncovered sandpit in the garden has several centimetres of very dirty water, despite carrying out a visual and written risk assessment. They therefore do not take action to reduce this potential risk to children's health and safety. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that staff working with children have appropriate background checks, and staff have a good knowledge of how to deal with any safeguarding children concerns. Recruitment and induction procedures are rigorous, and staff continuously review a comprehensive range of policies and procedures. There are adequate numbers of qualified staff and the nursery actively supports other staff in gaining appropriate qualifications. However, although staffing ratios are maintained throughout the nursery, there are not always sufficient numbers of qualified staff working directly with the children. For example, the nursery manager is also the room leader in the toddler room but because of other duties does not always work directly with these children. All regulatory documentation is in place although staff are not always prompt in completing the appropriate paperwork, such as accident records. The nursery welcomes all families and ensures that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in activities. Policies are easily accessible to parents and are available in a range of different languages. Parents receive a range of good quality information about the nursery and have regular feedback regarding their children's progress, although development records have limited observational evidence. The nursery does not currently have links with other childcare settings which nursery children attend, which limits opportunities to develop consistency and continuity in children's learning and development. The self-evaluation process includes managers, staff, parents and children to provide an inclusive picture of the setting. It highlights many positive aspects of the nursery but does not recognise some areas for development, and over estimates the quality of its practice on outcomes for children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children have some opportunities to play outdoors on a daily basis and occasionally have visits within the local environment. They enjoy nutritious meals, such as fishcakes with rice and peas, and older children are confident in following hygienic practices, such as using soap dispensers when washing their hands. Staff working with younger children wipe their faces and hands with individual cloths before eating and explain why they are doing this. Children learn about safety rules, such as lining up to go through doors, and they frequently practise fire evacuation. Children have good opportunities throughout the nursery to develop independence. For example, older babies help to tidy up toys, toddlers help themselves to tissues to wipe their noses and preschool children help to serve lunch. Levels of behaviour are good and older children are able to play well

together, chatting as they do so and sharing resources. Children benefit from the staff's friendly and calm approach which helps them to develop positive attitudes to others. They are able to explore a range of good quality toys and staff support them appropriately in their learning. For example, younger babies enjoy printing with paints with the help of a member of staff or exploring fabric rattles, soft toys, and toys with flaps and buttons. Older babies explore a shallow tray of water with plastic vehicles, and bottles of glitter water as a member of staff helps them to notice how the glitter changes when bottles are tipped upside down. Toddlers become engrossed in a story which a member of staff reads with expression, encouraging the children to talk about the pictures. Preschool children enjoy playing with construction toys, exploring the home corner, painting, and dressing dolls. Staff plan activities with children's individual interests in mind although, at times, activities are not always particularly appropriate to children's level of development. For example, children as young as three years routinely practise writing their full name in handwriting books. Staff work with other agencies to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ensure that all children are able to access activities. Each child has a key person who supports them within the nursery and a secondary key person to support them when their main key person is absent. However, in practice, this does not always work effectively. An initiative to share good practice within the nursery chain results in a member of staff swapping roles with a key person in the youngest baby room for a day. The member of staff has never met the children previously but is involved in their intimate care, such as changing nappies, feeding them and putting them down to sleep, which does little to promote security or continuity for babies. The nursery takes steps to ensure that parents have appropriate information about the Early Years Foundation Stage and parents show that they are happy with their children's care and learning. Staff encourage parents to share what they know about their children to help form a picture of their progress. Staff assess children's progress towards the early learning goals but there is little observational evidence to support this. They lack confidence in using observation, assessment and planning systems which limits their ability to effectively identify children's individual needs and next steps in learning.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.