

Playsteps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY321164
Inspection date 22/02/2010
Inspector Janet Maria Moutter

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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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.

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Description of the setting

Playsteps Nursery opened in 2006. The nursery operates from six rooms in a converted former rectory in central Swindon in Wiltshire. Children are accommodated in one of these six rooms and there is access to two enclosed outdoor play areas with varying surfaces.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 65 children, at any one time. There are currently 98 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. With registration on the both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery opens for five week days from 8am to 6pm all year round, with the exception of one week between Christmas and New Year.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery has 19 staff in total, 14 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Of the 19 employed staff, two are working towards degrees and a further six staff are on their NVQ level 3 programme.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children feel extremely secure in this setting, a friendly nursery, which is a particular strength of the provision. They enjoy a positive experience of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), making good progress in their learning and development whether indoors or outside. All are welcomed and have their individual needs very well met, including children learning English as an additional language. The manager evaluates the provision appropriately; she acts on the advice of outside professionals and demonstrates an exceptional capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that daily plans take account of specific aims and that these include the outdoor learning environment and cover all six areas of learning
- ensure planned, purposeful play, is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities
- plan and provide experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development to encourage life skills and keeping themselves safe as they progress towards the early learning goals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children benefit from the consistency that the staff demonstrate in their approach to supporting the children's learning. Arrangements for safeguarding the children are robust and regularly reviewed, and risk assessments are carefully organised and well managed. The nursery is quite well-equipped, safe and secure. This safe, supportive environment enables children to thrive.

This is a direct result of the staff being keen and enthusiastic and putting children's safeguarding and welfare needs first. The staff are well deployed, they listen and respond to the children's requests, making good resources available for all to be challenged, explore and experiment. However, the fine balance has been lost of child initiated to adult-led activities in one or two base rooms, which means that purposeful play does not correspond to the weekly play plans. Clear, robust policies are understood and implemented by the whole team. There are effective systems in place for staff to monitor the strengths and weaknesses within their practice and regular staff meetings serve as a tool to this end.

The manager and all the staff know each child well, this has a positive impact on both the staff, the child and their families. Partnerships with parents are valued and their views are counted and this plays a major part in the child's learning. The nursery is welcoming and information is freely exchanged. The staff develop effective links with friendly rapport with parents and there is appropriate sharing of information, for example about baby sleeps and feeds. The nursery also works very effectively with parents/carers and other agencies and professionals to ensure that children are cared for extremely well and that parents have all the support they need.

Self-evaluation is fully inclusive, it involves all staff, children and parents to provide an accurate diagnosis of the strengths and areas for improvement of the early years provision. Continuous improvements taken by the nursery setting are well-chosen, monitored and evaluated and carefully planned, so that impact is evident in most of the areas in which it is needed.

Staff promote equality and diversity extremely well, making sure all children are included in activities, including those learning English as an additional language. The key carer system works well to help children settle in and provide ongoing individual support, so children's individual needs are met appropriately. Parents appreciate the flexible settling in arrangements and find the staff to be 'very, very caring'.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children thoroughly enjoy their time spent at the nursery. They are confident learners who arrive happily and part willingly from their parents and carers. Children are engaged and interested in exploring the areas and activities on offer, there is a good variety of activities freely available for all six areas of learning and

there is clear pictorial evidence of the children at play. For example, children can see and recognise photographs of themselves at activities, which have been made into posters and placed around the room. The whole nursery is well pictorially documented and very appropriate and easily available to all the children. The children are engaged and enthusiastic and making good progress because the resources are well presented.

Staff are very good role models and support the children so that they have a clear understanding of what they hope to achieve, both the children through play and staff through observation of the children at play. Children are encouraged to think about using their bodies when outside getting their daily fresh air. Time spent outside of the base room had aims; some children continued to be encouraged to experiment with weight bearing activities ready for walking, such as with appropriate sit in ride toys, gaining control experience which was a specific aim for outside play, which was good. However, the actual outside activities for the older children had no specific aim and not all six areas of learning were available. The impact is that the children, for example at the sandpit, had limited resources with which to build from their imaginations and again the mark making opportunities were not available. The older children asked for help and support when getting changed out of their Wellingtons and outside clothes, showing confidence in making decisions. However, there were gaps in purposeful play activities for the older children, to build on independent skills at this time and again at lunch time, for example, setting out and tidying away was not child initiated and there was nothing in the plans to monitor this aspect of independence. Role playing could be clearly seen being acted out in the home corner and outside and in the shop. Children were heard using the mobile phones and one child was given a 'shopping list', by another to get things in her supermarket trolley.

Children are aware of basic hygiene routines. They use the bathroom and tissues independently, with reminders to wash their hands before snacks and meals to avoid cross infection. Babies and young children have their hands and faces wiped with individual flannels before and after food. Parents are consulted about their child's dietary or religious food requirements to ensure they receive the appropriate meals. The nursery has a rigorous system in place to ensure the dietary needs of children are met. Children benefit from healthy choices in their meals and snacks, pouring their own drinks of milk or water under supervision. Snacks include slices of fruit, such as pears or apples, and freshly cooked main meals served with vegetables. Food and drink is consumed socially as children and staff sit together and chat about their lives and families. Staff promote good behaviour through lots of praise and encouragement. They help children learn to share and respect one another.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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