



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY243905

DfES Number: 558909

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 13/01/2005
Inspector Name Glenda Pownall

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Positive Steps Day Nursery
Setting Address St Joseph's Church
Cookham Road
Maidenhead
Berkshire
SL6 7EG

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Positive Steps Day Nursery Limited 4426856

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Positive Steps Day Nursery Limited
Address Shellingford Primary
Church Street
Shellingford
Oxon
SM7 7QA

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Positive Steps Nursery is 1 of 3 nurseries and 1 out of school club run by The Positive Steps Children's Day Nursery Limited. It opened in 2003. It operates from 3 rooms in St Joseph's Centre situated close to Maidenhead town centre. A maximum of 58 children may attend the day nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.45 to 18.15 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 67 children aged under 5 years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 staff. The manager and 8 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 3 staff working towards a qualification. Additional teaching staff provide lessons in swimming and French.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Positive Steps Nursery is acceptable, but children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. Provision for personal, social and emotional development, physical and creative development are generally good.

Teaching has significant weaknesses. There have been changes to the staff team. Most staff have a working knowledge of the early learning goals, other staff's knowledge is very limited. Planning covers all areas of learning but some aspects, such as technology, calculation and mark making are not adequately planned for. Plans do not record the learning intention of activities and how they will be adapted for individual children. An assessment system is in place but does not effectively record children's progress. An effective system is in place to support children with special educational needs. Staff generally work well together as a team. Behaviour management is generally good.

Leadership and management have significant weaknesses. The organisation does not enable sessions to run smoothly. The leadership oversee planning and observe staff practise in order to monitor the efficiency of the education programme and quality of teaching. This is not effective in ensuring that the needs of all children are met. A good range of resources supports all areas of learning, but they are not all complete. Staff are not always effectively deployed to support children's learning. A staff appraisal system enables staff to identify training needs.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Staff have good relationships with parents. They are provided with good information about the setting. Three parents evenings a year enable parents to view their child's records and discuss their progress. They are not informed of their child's targeted next steps. Staff do not take account of parents' comments about their child's learning.

What is being done well?

- Children form warm relationships with each other and adults. They are confident to speak within the environment to each other, staff and visitors.
- Children use a good range of building resources to freely create models using their own ideas.
- Staff keep parents well informed of the day to day activities of the setting through a monthly newsletter and a notice board in the room.

What needs to be improved?

- the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and the organisation

of the education programme

- the planning scheme to identify the main learning intentions of activities, detail how activities will provide sufficient challenge for all children and to record children's interests, achievements and possible difficulties so that the next steps in learning and teaching can be planned
- the assessment system to effectively record children's progress towards the early learning goals, identify their targeted next steps in learning and inform all parents of their child's progress along the stepping stones
- the opportunities children have to make decisions for themselves, use technology, practise writing for a variety of purposes and make simple calculations as part of everyday activities
- staff knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones leading towards the early learning goals.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children interact well and are confident speakers. Staff reinforce good behaviour by offering praise and encouragement although some behaviour issues are not dealt with appropriately. The children are generally well behaved; they share resources and take turns at activities. Children leave their main carer to participate in available activities. Children often receive disrupted support from staff. Children walk away from activities or become restless.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children are confident to speak in group situations. They use speech well to relay information and develop imaginary stories. Through planned activities they develop awareness of letters and the sounds they make. Children lose interest and concentration during group times in the overcrowded book corner and when planned story time does not take place. Children rarely use books for pleasure. Children have limited opportunity to recognise their names or attempt to write for a variety of purposes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Some children can count to 10. Children sing number songs to reinforce their counting skills. Staff miss opportunities to increase children's awareness of counting and simple calculation throughout the session. Staff support children at activities to match and recognise numerals. The use of incomplete resources limits children's progress. For example, puzzle pieces and numeral cards are missing. Staff do not extend activities to provide sufficient challenge for children who are more able.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

A satisfactory range of topics develops children's knowledge of the world around them. Related trips enhance activities such as a visit to a castle and a farm. Children access a wide range of resources to design and build. Planned activities encourage children to become aware of customs of their own culture and those of other people. Children have limited access to technology resources. Staff do not always use good questioning techniques to encourage children to think for themselves.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show good spatial awareness stopping or changing direction to avoid moving obstacles. Children show increasing control and dexterity using small tools such as rolling pins, glue spatulas, scissors and construction pieces. Activities to develop large-scale muscle skills are not effectively planned; they do not provide sufficient challenge for all children. Children develop an awareness of health and hygiene through daily routines.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children respond positively to new experiences and are confident in communicating their thoughts, such as when smelling and feeling cornflour and water. Staff allow children time to experiment and design with construction resources. Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes from memory. They are confident in role-play situations. Some craft activities are not well planned and children have limited access to activities to express and explore creativity through art.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- introduce an effective method of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the organisation of the education programme
- implement a planning scheme to identify the main learning intentions of activities, detail how activities will provide sufficient challenge for all children and record children's interests, achievements and possible difficulties so that the next steps in learning and teaching can be planned
- develop the assessment system to effectively record children's progress towards the early learning goals, identify their targeted next steps in learning and inform all parents of their child's progress along the stepping stones
- provide opportunities for children to make decisions for themselves, use technology, practise writing for a variety of purposes and make simple calculations as part of everyday activities.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.