

Positive Steps Children's Day Nursery

Two Waters Methodist Church, Mill Street, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, Hertfordshire, HP3 9RZ

Inspection date	18/04/2013
Previous inspection date	28/10/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children make good progress in their learning and development. They freely make choices in their play and are able to help themselves to resources on offer to them. This helps them become independent and confident.
- Children form secure attachments with staff who provide a caring and supportive environment for them. As a result, children are settled and happy.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. There is a trusting relationship with parents and there are well established links with other professionals. As a result, individual needs are successfully met.
- Children relate well to the practitioners and develop good social skills as they learn to engage and play cooperatively.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to extend children's learning opportunities by offering rich, varied and imaginative experiences outdoors.
- Ways in which the staff and parents work together to share information about children's learning at the nursery and at home is not fully consistent.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the children's activities at the nursery, which included indoor and outdoor play and meal times.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, learning journals and planning documentation and discussed with staff how these are used to support children's learning and development.
- The inspector engaged in children's play and carried out a joint observation of their play with the manager.
- The inspector met parents and discussed their views on the service provided.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Full Report

Information about the setting

Positive Steps Nursery was registered in 2008 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises in Apsley, near Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. It is one of seven nurseries which are privately owned. It is managed by Positive Steps Children's Day Nurseries Limited. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a purpose built building and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 17 members of child care staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two staff members hold Qualified Teacher Status. One member of staff is working towards an Early Years Professional Status qualification. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 107 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop further the outdoor area so that it offers rich, varied and imaginative experiences for children that further promote all areas of their learning in the outdoor environment

- develop further the opportunities for parents to engage in their children's learning at home by consistently sharing information about children's progress and next steps on a regular basis.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn. They implement educational programmes that are interesting to children, while providing them with suitable challenge across all areas of learning. However, learning opportunities are not fully extended when using the outdoor area as

the emphasis in this area is mainly focused on physical development. Staff know the children well and complete detailed observations and assessments including the progress check at age two. In addition, summaries of each child's progress are actively used to inform planning for the next stage in children's learning. Staff have recently introduced 'wow moments' so that knowledge about children's progress outside of the nursery can be obtained. This has been particularly successful in the pre-school room and information about children's progress is regularly shared with parents. However, this is not so consistent in younger children's rooms so that the identified next steps in their learning are well known by parents and can be fully supported at home.

The nursery offers a welcoming environment where children are eager to try the activities on offer. The quality of teaching and learning is good and staff have a positive impact on the children in their care. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported so that they can fully participate in the nursery activities. For example, advice from outside agencies is sought to offer specific assistance and all advice is quickly acted upon. When necessary support plans are put in place and this is sensitively shared with parents so that the needs of children are met. Children who speak more than one language are well supported. They are making good progress in their learning. For example, key words used by children at home are known and used by staff during the children's day. As a result, positive steps are taken to ensure all children feel fully included and they are helped to make progress, according to their individual abilities. This contributes effectively to narrowing the achievement gap in children's learning.

Children enjoy free flow play as they move between the resources and activities with good staff support to enhance their learning and development. Staff have recently reviewed the layout of younger children's rooms and as a result, toddlers now enjoy a wider range of experiences in defined areas. For example, they love the freedom to explore painting, playing with sand, exploring jelly or sharing books in the cosy area. Children enjoy the spontaneous and planned story sessions and love joining in with sounds that animals make. They have constant access to a good selection of toys and equipment including musical instruments and sensory resources. These are stored at low level enabling them to make choices in their own play and learning that develops their personal independence. Plans are in place to further develop the younger children's base rooms, such as the provision of more physical play resources indoors so that these children can make further connections in their learning.

Babies have also enjoyed a review of their base room and the resources on offer to them. For example, the benefits of treasure baskets and heuristic play has been explored. This is an ongoing project and children are able to explore sensory items including the newly developed 'black and white' area. Recently the baby room leader has started to create pictorial books of children's family members so that these can be used in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. Babies respond happily to the staff's interaction that provides good attention for each child. Staff ensure they get down to children's level and use gentle voices to communicate with them. Resources to support babies emerging physical development, such as push-along toys are used as and when necessary. Overall, staff are enthusiastic and very keen to develop 'their rooms' so that children enjoy learning in an accessible environment.

Children in the pre-school room display high levels of confidence. They are very busy and active learners who enjoy exploring and investigating the interesting and stimulating learning environment. Independence in this room is highly promoted. The room leader here is very experienced and is an inspirational role model to other staff members. As a result, staff follow children's lead in their play and good use is made of open-ended questions to help children make connections in their learning. Pre-school children have lots of opportunities to play with what interests them and set their own challenges in their bright and interesting base room. For example, when playing with bricks they build a 'bridge' to walk to the 'giant's castle'. They write for a purpose, draw complex pictures, use the computer with confidence, take turns in their imaginative play and negotiate how to solve problems as they play. This means that children are demonstrating characteristics of effective learning and they are developing skills for the next stage in their learning, such as starting school.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and have warm relationships with the attentive staff. Babies and toddlers smile broadly when the staff talk to them, showing close attachments. Positive steps, such as gaining detailed information about each child's individual routines and needs are gathered from parents on registration. This means that staff can confidently help babies and young children settle in easily as their individual needs are well known. In addition, the well-established key person system contributes effectively to children feeling settled and happy. Children confidently seek staff out for help when needed. Transitions between rooms are well supported so that children continue to feel secure. For example, information about each child is shared between staff and children visit their new base rooms as often as necessary so that the transition time operates as smoothly as possible.

Children's health is well promoted. For example, children's personal needs are attended to according to children's individual needs. Nappy changing routines are sensitively managed and hygienically managed. Older children independently manage their own personal hygiene needs and are supported as and when necessary. The nursery is clean, fresh food is prepared on site and a five star award has recently been obtained from an outside agency related to health. Meal times and the utensils used foster good hygiene. Children's independence is highly valued. For example, pre-school children effectively self-serve their meals and help themselves to water during their play. The self-service has been recently introduced to the younger children so that they too develop independent skills. Babies are able to sleep according to their needs; separate bedding is used for each child so that hygiene is promoted. Toddlers and older children can rest or sleep according to their needs with toddlers tending to prefer to sleep following their lunch. The good use of bean bags and cushions means that children have opportunities to relax as and when they feel the need to do this. All children are comforted when needed. As a result, children's emotional needs are successfully met.

Children are encouraged to behave well and consistent messages are delivered by the staff who work well together. As a result, children know what is expected of them and every child learns to treat each other with respect. This contributes effectively to preparing

children for the next stage in their learning, such as mixing with others when they start school. Staff praise children for their achievements however small. Consequently, children develop good levels of self-esteem. Physical play and fresh air is enjoyed by children in the enclosed outdoor space. They love riding wheeled toys and using the climbing frame where they learn to take risks in their play. In addition, music and movement sessions are offered to children so that they can learn about the importance of physical activity in a fun manner. Staff are currently reviewing ideas about how the local community can be used so that babies and children can further develop their awareness of the wider world.

Children are developing an effective understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, younger children are reminded not to run indoors and the reasons are calmly discussed. Outdoors they successfully negotiate space to use cars, bikes and scooters. In addition, they learn how to use the climbing apparatus and slide safely as they are calmly reminded not to push their friends. This also means children develop the understanding of turn taking and how to socialise well with others in group activities. This contributes effectively to the development of skills necessary for transitions to other settings, such as going to school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management are good because there is an accurate overview of the curriculum through the monitoring of the educational programmes. Since coming into post the manager has built a strong team who take pride in their work and the contribution they make to the nursery. For example, some staff have taken on further responsibilities, such as room leader posts and are relishing the responsibility. Morale is high, which has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and the children's subsequent learning. The manager and senior staff members monitor the assessment and planning to make sure they reflect children's progression and the next steps in their learning. This helps to ensure that the good quality of teaching is focused on children's interests.

Monitoring of the nursery is continually reviewed through room leader meetings and full staff meetings. Parents' views are obtained through various methods, such as e-mails, discussions and the use of a suggestion box. Children's views are obtained through observation of the activities they enjoy, the completion of questionnaires and discussions with older children. The manager and her staff are hoping to undertake a quality assurance award scheme in the near future. This demonstrates the commitment they have to continually drive improvement. Since the last inspection, there is evidence to suggest that the recommendations have been addressed. For example, the organisation of meal times has been reviewed so that children have greater opportunities to develop their independence.

Staff have embraced the recent reforms of the Early Years Foundation Stage and assessment procedures reflect their secure knowledge of this. The manager is aware of the need to continually review how children's progress in all rooms is shared with parents. She is also aware of the need to ensure parents are further involved in their children's learning. For example, the 'wow' boards have been introduced, which have proved

successful in some parts of the nursery. Parents express complimentary comments regarding their children's care and learning. They state that the staff are 'very accommodating' and that transition times between rooms are very well managed so that their children feel welcome and supported at this time. Staff recognise that partnerships with other professionals make a strong contribution to meeting children's needs. For example, advice is actively sought on the best methods to support children who have additional needs. Outside agencies often visit the nursery to support staff in meeting all children's individual needs. Ideas are readily adopted so that they can play an active part in the nursery. As a result, children are well supported in their learning and development. The manager is taking positive steps to make links with schools where children may attend so that transitions run smoothly. For example, the pre-school room leader has plans to further develop this relationship by making pictorial books showing various aspects of children's schools, which can be used to allow children to become familiar with their new environments before they attend.

Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust. Safe recruitment procedures ensure all those working with children are safe to do so. New staff state that the induction system is very detailed and that they feel very supported in their roles. Clear supervision by the manager and regular appraisals means that training needs are discussed and supported. Continuous training is highly valued so that knowledge and skills are always up to date. Most staff have first aid training and regularly update their safeguarding knowledge. Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They demonstrate a secure understanding of procedures to follow if they have concerns about children in their care. The manager works closely with outside agencies when necessary and attends meetings to protect children. Policies and procedures including safeguarding and complaints are frequently reviewed to ensure they are up to date and reflect current requirements. In addition, the nursery displays a policy each week and provides information about the impact of this through their newsletter and website. Any concerns expressed by parents are always professionally managed and are fully investigated so that children's welfare is protected.

Staff are well deployed and effective use of regular bank staff ensure ratios are always met. Positive steps are taken to ensure staff absences, such as holidays and illness are carefully managed. Resources are interesting and provide challenge to support children's learning and development. Many of the staff are well-qualified; this is very evident in the pre-school room. They use their skills and understanding to provide a broad range of activities indoors for pre-school children across all areas of learning that supports their development effectively. Staff carry out daily safety checks, any accidents are carefully monitored so that all areas used by children are as safe and secure as possible.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY364529
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	908684
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	88
Number of children on roll	107
Name of provider	Positive Steps Children's Day Nurseries Limited
Date of previous inspection	28/10/2009
Telephone number	07932 395 668

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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