

# Natural Steps Nursery and After School Club

"The Globe", 12 Portman Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 1EA

<b>Inspection date</b>	29/07/2013
Previous inspection date	25/09/2012

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	4
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How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
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## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is inadequate

- The adult to child ratios are not met because staff arrangements are weak, meaning children are poorly supervised.
- Induction training is weak, which means adults are not clear of their roles and responsibilities and have not undertaken child protection training in order to safeguard children.
- The arrangements for staff supervision are poor and training needs are not identified, which means continuous improvements are not made to promote the interests of children.
- Children are often cared for in their base rooms by staff who do not have a suitable qualification, this impacts on their care and learning.
- The learning and development programme for toddlers is poor because staff knowledge of the requirements is weak, which means children's progress is slow.
- The child protection officer is not clear on the procedure if an allegation is made against a member of staff, which has the potential to impact on children's welfare.
- Not all records required for the safe and efficient management of the provision are appropriately maintained. The attendance register is not accurate to show how many children are present on the premises, the accident record and some staff records were not available for inspection.

- Meals are not always healthy, balanced and nutritious to meet children dietary needs.
- The key person system is not effective and toddlers and children's developmental starting points are not identified in order to plan for their next steps.

### **It has the following strengths**

- Babies build a secure bond with their special adult through warm, playful interactions
- The staff are friendly and communicative with parents at collection time, which helps to keep them informed about their child's day.
- Pre-school children are learning to link sounds to letters well through effective teaching.

### **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 play activities in the nursery base rooms and in the outside area.
- The inspector held a discussion with a parent.
- The inspector spoke with staff working at the nursery about their practice.
- The inspector had a meeting with the managers, the nominated person and completed a joint observation with the manager.

- The inspector looked at documentation.

## **Inspector**

Lorraine Wardlaw

## **Full Report**

### **Information about the setting**

Natural Steps After School Club registered in 2005 and the nursery provision opened in 2009. They are managed by a committee responsible to the Community Mission Project. Both provisions operate from, 'The Globe', a community building situated on the Portman Road trading estate in Reading. The nursery is in a purpose-built provision within the community building and is open from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday for 53 weeks of the year. The after school club has the use of the youth hall, kitchen, restaurant and toilet facilities with a secure outdoor area for play. The after school club operates from 3pm to 6pm, Monday to Friday during term time only. The provision serves the needs of families in the surrounding area. School children are collected from 10 primary schools. The provision offers some full-day holiday care. Children may attend for a variety of sessions.

Natural Steps are registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 25 children on roll in the nursery in the early years age group. The provision supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. There are currently eight staff employed who work with the children in the nursery including the manager. Six staff are qualified to level 2 and above in early years.

### **What the setting needs to do to improve further**

**The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take the following enforcement action:**

We issued a welfare requirements notice that requires the provider to:

- ensure the provider and child protection officer are clear on the procedure to take if an allegation is made against a member of staff (Safeguarding practice)
- ensure staffing arrangements meet the needs of children in terms of adult to child ratios and that there is at least one member of staff holding a full and relevant qualification at level 3 in the base rooms (Ratios)
- ensure staff receive full induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities, which includes safeguarding, child protection and behaviour management. (Training)

**To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:**

- ensure staffing arrangements meet the needs of children in terms of adult to child ratios and that there is at least one member of staff holding a full and relevant qualification at level 3 in the base rooms
- ensure the provider and child protection officer are clear on the procedure to take if an allegation is made against a member of staff
- improve arrangements for supervision and self-evaluation by providing regular opportunities for mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement
- maintain and organise records to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and make sure that these are easily accessible and available
- increase staff knowledge of the learning and development requirements particularly in the toddler room, so young children receive plentiful and effective adult interaction, with regard to promoting children's communication and language skills
- make sure that the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child are considered and use this information to plan, resource and monitor challenging and enjoyable experiences, particularly for toddlers so they can be active and can freely explore a stimulating environment
- ensure the daily attendance of children is accurate and it includes children's hours of attendance
- assign all children a key person to ensure their care is tailored to meet their

individual needs, to build a strong relationship with them and their parents from the very beginning

- ensure meals are healthy, balanced and nutritious.

## Inspection judgements

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

The nursery does not meet the educational needs of all of the children who attend. This is because the learning experiences for the toddlers is particularly weak. They are cared for continuously with three- and four-year-old children and staff are not knowledgeable enough and skilled enough to understand and meet their learning needs. For example, staff direct the under twos and two-year-olds to sit at tables and to play with the resources they have put out for them. On this occasion, two dimensional shapes and blank shape cards are offered, which are not age appropriate and have little learning value to them. Toddlers sit for a while and push the shapes around the table, and then get up to explore the room because they are not interested. The staff member in charge, who is not yet qualified, asks them, quietly, to sit back down on their chair, which they do, because they understand and conform to the boundaries of the group. Children in this room have very few opportunities to make choices. The characteristic of effective learning of children being active, playing and exploring is not evident. This is because most of the adults have little understanding of the learning and development requirements for the younger children. The sensory area is not set up and used by the children in this room. The water tray is empty and there are empty boxes where play resources used to be.

The older children in the room have a slightly better experience because the teaching in the room is more age appropriate for them. For example, they look at pictures say the name and think of other words beginning with the same name, such as 'Waa for windmill'. They proudly and independently sing the alphabet song and count by rote to 20 while waiting for lunch. However, they are sat beside the younger children who are not engaged and look blankly, because the activity is meaningless to them and it does not match their needs. A separate room for older children is not currently being used. Older children listen well to a story and engage in some conversation with others but staff are not skilled at extending children's knowledge and thinking through effective interaction. For example, at snack time a child comments 'this pear is juicy' but the adult sat at the table does not encourage them to talk more, to think more or to compare it to the juice of the orange. Babies under one, enjoy playtimes with their key person. They happily make music by touching the electronic toys and dance and move their bodies. They explore the shredded paper standing at the unit, finding the dinosaurs hidden within. Although planning and staff interactions are meant to take account of children's next learning steps, this is not adequately implemented across the nursery. For example, staff are not effectively emphasising and promoting speaking by using different types of everyday words, although they do effectively respond and imitate to babies vocalisations. Children's learning records show observations of children's capabilities but staff are not using this information to provide a suitably stimulating learning environment for them. Neither are there plentiful

and tailored interactions with the children to build on what children and babies know and can do. Therefore, children are not sufficiently gaining skills for the future and their progress in their learning is limited.

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

Children's care needs are not being adequately met. Although the premises are safe and secure not all children feel safe and secure. This is because there is not always enough staff to care for them in line with requirements. While some babies are able to build strong bonds with their special person, toddlers are not able to do so, which means their emotional needs are not adequately met. This is because the key person system is not fully in place for the older age groups. However, the babies benefit from warm interactive care during play, learning, and routines such as nappy changing. They enjoy cuddles and physical contact from the adults, with whom they willingly interact and are social with. Adults in the toddler room, however, meet the children's sleep needs as best they can, rocking them and putting them down in the matted area with a cover. Nevertheless, the person who does this, and comforts them when unhappy, is not consistent and not their 'special person', to promote secure attachments. Children are encouraged by the staff to wash their hands before eating and all line up in the toddler room. Older children, at other times are encouraged to be physically independent in their self-help, toileting skills. Although children enjoy fruit at snack time in the morning, the hot meals at lunch and dinner are not always balanced, healthy and nutritious. They are often be lacking in vegetables and pudding is sometimes not available.

Children have opportunities to play outdoors although this is not always until later in the afternoon. On occasions staff make use of the large hall for physical play, where children can climb and use large equipment, which is safe and suitable for its purpose. Babies' physical milestones are encouraged mostly in their base room, because the staff help children to learn to walk and adhere to their sleep routines, using the cots as necessary. Staff occasionally take them outdoors in buggies for fresh air and a change of environment. Babies are cared for in a suitably stimulating baby room and the pre-school room is suitably inviting with children's artwork displayed on the walls but it is not currently being used. The toddler room, however, because of the weaknesses in the educational programme lacks resources and organisation. Overall, the nursery is not sufficiently preparing children for their next stage in learning.

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

The provider is not meeting all the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and this has a significant impact on the welfare of the children. This inspection was brought forward by Ofsted, because concerns had been raised regarding safeguarding children, the way staff manage children's behaviour, staffing arrangements including adult to child ratios and the quality of the food given to children. The inspection evidence showed that the children's behaviour is managed appropriately.

However, most staff in the toddler room do not interact with children according to their young needs, but treat them as if they were older. Staff to child ratios are often incorrect in the mornings and the menu is not always nutritious and followed at mealtimes. The process of inducting new staff is weak because they are not clear on their roles and responsibilities and have not undertaken child protection training. New staff lack the direction and guidance from the manager and provider. Although the designated child protection officer has a secure understanding of what to do if they have a concern about a child's welfare, they are unsure of the procedure to take if an allegation is made against a member of staff. The premises are secure, but staff are not vigilant regarding, recording children hours of attendance. Documentation required for the safe and efficient management of the provision is poorly organised and not always readily available for inspection, as required. Parents bring children to the setting who are not booked in, unnoticed by the manager. These failures to meet legal requirements compromise children's safety and their ability to make progress in their learning and development.

The provider and manager undertake appropriate checks with regards to staff's suitability. However, since the last inspection, there has been a lot of staff sickness alongside staff vacancies, which has resulted in a decline in the standards of children's care and education. The provider has failed to ensure there are sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced staff to care for the children at all times. At times during the morning children do not have a fully qualified member of staff caring for them in their base rooms, although overall the provider meets the staff qualification requirements. The manager, attempts to monitor aspects of the nursery's learning and development practice, and has started to make a few improvements by working with the newly appointed deputy. However, the provider and manager do not conduct proper supervision of the staff to ensure that when issues arise they are acted upon. Across the nursery there is a lack of mutual support and self-evaluation in order to drive continuous improvement. The deputy has conducted an evaluation of the nursery but this is not currently shared with everyone, including the provider. This is because there is a current lack of teamwork, to ensure quality standards are met.

Overall, the nursery develops suitable links with parents. Some parents speak positively of the nursery and of the service it provides them with. The staff are friendly and communicative with parents when children are collected. Information on children's care, learning, and development is regularly shared. The nursery has a satisfactory understanding of the legal requirement to record and address concerns from parents, should they receive any. Staff have some links in place with other providers and other agencies to support children.

### The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met  
(with  
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met  
(with**

**actions)**

**To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:**

- keep and implement a written statement of procedures to be followed for the protection of children, intended to safeguard the children being cared for from abuse or neglect (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- keep a daily record of the names of children looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- keep and implement a written statement of procedures to be followed for the protection of children, intended to safeguard the children being cared for from abuse or neglect (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- keep a daily record of the names of children looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY305089
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	929011
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	56
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	25
<b>Name of provider</b>	Community Mission Project
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25/09/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01189 514444

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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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Piccadilly Gate  
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