

Natural Steps Nursery and After School Club

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

Inspection date	07/01/2014
Previous inspection date	29/07/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	4
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children are happy, settled and content in the nursery.
- Children are welcomed by friendly staff, so they feel valued and part of the nursery. Staff have implemented new ideas, toys and equipment to create a learning environment that is interesting to the children who make suitable and improving progress.
- Children's well-being is promoted through some positive practices and procedures that support their safety and security.

It is not yet good because

- Assessment and observation arrangements to help plan to meet individual children's next steps in learning are not fully developed.
- Not all staff provide supportive interactions or experiences to challenge children's learning.
- Risk assessment for outings is not sufficiently robust to identify and manage risks.
- There are weaknesses in the educational programme for literacy with older children.
- Lunchtime routines are slow and do not consistently run smoothly to meet the needs of younger children.

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 activities in the three base rooms and play in the hall.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector sampled children's learning journeys, planning documentation and a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the setting and spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.

Inspector

Anneliese Fox-Jones

Full report

Information about the setting

Natural Steps After School Club registered in 2005 and the nursery provision opened in 2009. The provision is 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 52 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 is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 22 children on roll in the nursery in the early years age group. The provision supports children who are learning English as an additional language. There are currently 11 staff employed who work with the children in the nursery. This includes the manager who holds a level 4 and degree in early years. Five staff are qualified to level 3 in early years and two staff are qualified to level 2. One member of staff is working towards a level 2 qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- improve ongoing observations and assessments and the individual experiences planned for each child, highlighting in particular how these will help children achieve the next steps in their learning and development
- improve procedures for monitoring and assessing any risk to children's safety on outings and review risks regularly
- improve the programme for literacy development and active learning by giving older children greater opportunities to see their names written and a variety of ways to discover recording their ideas to support early writing skills
- increase staff's confidence and interactions to implement the learning and development requirements well, so young children receive plentiful and effective adult interaction, with regard to promoting children's communication and language skills during day-to-day routines.

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

- consider ways to improve the lunch time arrangements to meet the needs of younger children, allowing them to eat their lunch before falling asleep.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are happy and settled in this suitable learning environment. Most staff provide appropriate levels of support to ensure children have opportunities to make steady progress in their learning and development. Newly introduced procedures to gather initial information from parents mean that children's starting points are now assessed. However, staff do not consistently carry out observations of children's learning in all areas. This means the systems for observation and assessment used to accurately plan and track the next steps in each child's individualised learning are not well embedded.

Interactions between the staff and children are mostly kind and caring. However, not all staff are confident and experienced enough to adapt tasks or sharply focus their support to improve children's learning. For example, when helping children to build a train track, staff do not make effective use of the opportunity to model new language. They do not encourage learning, such as through counting, colour recognition or problem solving or enable children to work cooperatively by building the train track with others. Overall, interactions between the staff and children are still developing but have improved since

the last inspection.

Children are interested in the planned activities on offer. Children have regular opportunities to express themselves creatively, imaginatively and musically. Younger children show great pleasure in mixing and exploring messy paint and shaving foam. Older children are excited to act out scenarios in their pretend shop. They fill small baskets and carrier bags with items and use money to pay the shopkeeper for their goods. The children concentrate for extended periods of time, making use of the new resources and increased selection of equipment to extend and develop their play.

Children use resources to practice early writing skills. They make marks using crayons, and colouring pencils, and draw with obvious pleasure, responding well when staff praise their achievements. Children have opportunities to become familiar with the written word as they see print in their environment through books, displays and posters. However, staff provide older children have slightly fewer opportunities to see their names written or to use a variety of ways to record their ideas to encourage early writing skills.

Young babies are mostly happy and content. They confidently explore a range of materials and resources in their designated room. The atmosphere is calm and babies demonstrate their natural curiosity as they independently move around and explore the resources that are accessible to them. They have valuable opportunities to get outside in pushchairs and enjoy walks around the local area, where they find out about their local environment. Children have many opportunities to play outside in the fresh air. Overall, all children acquire satisfactory skills appropriate to their age and this ensures that most children are prepared for future learning needs.

Partnerships with parents are positive and are sufficiently focused on promoting parental involvement in children's learning. Staff share information regarding the younger children in the form of a daily diary that provides parents with brief details of their child's routine in the day. However, as staff do not consistently observe and assess children's progress well, they are unable to always share information effectively with parents. Nevertheless, staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have carried out the progress check for children at age two years to enable them to share with parents a suitable summary of children's development and act on any areas if there are concerns.

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

Children are cared for by a caring staff team. Children are beginning to form stronger attachments with key staff as revisions to the key person system are becoming more established, after recent changes to staffing. This suitably promotes children's sense of security within the nursery. There are sound settling-in procedures that enable staff to get to know the children, supporting the move between home and nursery. There are suitable arrangements in place for supporting children's moves between rooms. For example, children regularly visit and join together with different rooms for short sessions, enabling them to become familiar with the new surroundings and to get to know the new staff.

Overall routines, staff deployment and activities support the varying needs of the children in the nursery to a satisfactory level throughout the day. However, there are some inconsistencies in the lunchtime arrangements, with regards to feeding the babies. Many babies fall asleep before they are served lunch. This means that sometimes the routine planned does not match their needs at this time, although they do not go hungry.

Children's health and physical well-being are effectively promoted. They enjoy participating in action rhymes and moving in time to music. They take part in regular physical activity, both indoors and outdoors, and develop their agility and coordination through exercise. They take risks safely as staff encourage them to challenge themselves on the large indoor physical play equipment. Children show great enjoyment when running, hopping, chasing and riding on wheeled toys. Younger children particularly enjoy opportunities to roll and fetch balls. This helps children to be physically active. There are sound hygiene practices in place, which promote children's good health and well-being. Children's knowledge of a healthy lifestyle is promoted as staff offer healthy snacks and a varied diet. Meals are provided in accordance with parents' wishes and any allergies or dietary needs are given priority. Children have hearty appetites and eat wholesome, freshly cooked midday meals.

Children play in a clean and welcoming environment where many resources generally promote their development in all areas of learning. Staff promote inclusive practice through the activities, procedures and use of resources. Staff use various themes to explore different cultures to allow children to gain an understanding of diversity within their community. Children learn about safety through discussions, such as how to keep themselves safe. They are involved in routine activities to develop their understanding of safety, such as tidying the toys away so that others do not trip, or taking part in the fire drill which is practised regularly so they know how to exit the premises in an emergency. Appropriate action is taken to ensure accidents are kept to a minimum and many staff are suitably qualified to administer treatment. Sound procedures are followed for the administration of medication. Children are building on their understanding of good behaviour. Staff are polite and speak positively to the children supporting them in recognising to respect and value others. Children make a positive contribution to the nursery as they display polite and cooperative behaviour. They learn to show consideration for others and are able to share and take turns with popular toys.

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

The inspection was brought forward, following concerns received about a child becoming ill on an outing. In addition, concerns were raised about staff qualifications, suitability of drivers, child supervision, outings, staff training, first aid and risk assessments. This inspection found that the majority of staff have relevant experience, suitable qualifications and generally have the necessary skills to do their jobs. This includes mini bus drivers. There are effective systems in place to enable staff to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through regular training. However, the provider has failed to notify Ofsted of a significant event whereby a child was admitted to hospital from an outing at the local

library. It is a legal requirement to do so. On this occasion, Ofsted does not intend to take further action. Nonetheless, effective recruitment, vetting, induction and appraisal systems help to ensure that all staff are suitable in their roles. However, this recent outing highlights that there are some inconsistencies in the arrangements for outings, particularly with regards to robust risk assessments in order to identify and manage any potential risks and hazards.

Despite this, there are a several members of staff with first aid qualifications who are available to respond to accidents. Staff regularly complete risk assessments on the building to ensure that any potential hazards are minimised. This allows children to play safely both indoors and outdoors, allowing them to safely make decisions about what they want to do. Effective procedures are in place to record attendance, accidents, incidents and the administration of any medication. This ensures that children's safety, welfare and care are promoted.

There have been many positive changes made since the last inspection. Most notably staff are now deployed well to provide support to children and this change ensures that most routines run smoothly. The quality of teaching is improving too as supervision, consultation and appraisals with staff ensure that the impact of their practice is consistently monitored. There are generally effective systems to monitor and evaluate the provision. Actions from the previous inspection have been addressed and new procedures are being implemented. Children now benefit from an increased range of resources and play spaces that create opportunities to excite their curiosity and motivate them in their play. However, systems to monitor the learning and development requirements to make sure that staff are monitoring each child's progress are less well embedded. Nevertheless, the management team is working well with the local authority early years advisors, which further enhances the self-evaluation process.

The premises are secure and written policies and procedures underpin the staff's practice, and are made available to all parents. This helps the setting to be managed efficiently and in the interests of the children. Detailed safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and staff understand the importance of these. Therefore, staff have a sound understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements and their responsibility to safeguard children from harm.

The nursery values working in partnership with parents and provides them with suitable information about the early years provision. Parents demonstrate that they are happy with the care their children receive. Staff develop effective links with local schools and other professionals involved in children's care. This liaison generally supports children's learning and prepares them for future transitions.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY305089
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	949258
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	56
Number of children on roll	22
Name of provider	Community Mission Project
Date of previous inspection	29/07/2013
Telephone number	01189 514444

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

