

Playsteps Nursery

The Hub, Church Place, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5EH

Inspection date	02/05/2014
Previous inspection date	22/02/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		4
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		4
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- The designated special educational needs coordinator and staff fail to meet the needs of children who are making less than expected progress, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are learning English as an additional language. As a result, these children are not making sufficient progress in their learning and development.
- Staff deployment and the implementation of the key-person system are not always fully effective in some areas of the nursery and this has an impact on how successfully staff foster children's wellbeing.
- Partnership working is weak in relation to providing a coordinated approach to seek support for individual children, to help close the gaps in their learning and meet their individual needs.
- The security and organisation of documentation is weak so that not all important records are available for inspection.
- Planning is not effective in building on what children already know and can do. The organisation of the learning environment and routines is poorly considered. This has a negative effect on the outcomes for children.
- Monitoring of the provision is weak and, as a result, the significant weaknesses in practice are overlooked.

It has the following strengths

- Children like to explore the well-resourced outdoor play space. They are given healthy, balanced meals and staff help children to develop a secure understanding of the importance of healthy living.

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 practice in all playrooms and outside.
- The inspector had discussions with management, staff, children and parents.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager and deputy manager.
- The inspector sampled documentation, including children's records and planning.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with the children.

Inspector

Jan Harvey

Full report

Information about the setting

Playsteps Nursery opened in 2006. The nursery operates from six rooms in a converted former rectory in central Swindon in Wiltshire. There is access to two enclosed outdoor play areas with varying surfaces. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 137 children on roll aged from three months to under five years. The nursery opens each weekday 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/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The nursery has 23 staff in total, of these, 18 hold appropriate early years qualifications. One person has an Early Years honours degree, three have an Early Years foundation degree, and two staff are working towards a National Vocational Qualification at level 3.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- put in place arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the achievement of all children, particularly those children who are making less than expected progress, have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who learn English as an additional language in order to use relevant information to help them reach their full potential and narrow any achievement gaps
- make sure staff are deployed effectively to ensure all children's needs are met and that children's key persons are available to give the necessary support for their care and learning, particularly regarding children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language
- ensure that the special educational needs coordinator is suitably trained and able to forge successful partnerships with parents and professionals to gain additional support children may need to achieve
- ensure records are stored securely and made available for inspection, with particular reference to any safeguarding concerns and staff records
- ensure planning is effective in matching activities to children's needs and interests by using accurate assessments to plan purposeful play with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities to build children's confidence, as they learn to explore, think about problems and relate to others
- extend ways to increase children's independence, for example by encouraging them to take on suitable responsibilities as often as possible, such as during meal times
- ensure that equipment and resources are organised to meet the needs and age of the children, particularly in relation to babies and pre-school children, to provide opportunities for child-initiated play
- review daily routines to ensure that they do not interrupt children's play and learning
- improve monitoring of the provision and staff practice to identify priorities for improvement and staff training needs.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff do not have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. They are not assessing and monitoring children's progress sufficiently across all areas of learning. As a result, children do not all reach their full potential. The information gathered from parents when their child first starts at the nursery is not shared sufficiently with the child's key person to enable them to make an early assessment of children's individual starting points or to plan effectively for their next stage of development. For example, in discussion some staff explain that they do not know when the child started at the nursery and what their starting points were. Planning systems are in place, however, activities do not build on what children already know and can do in. As a result, activities do not challenge and extend children's learning. For example, when pre-school children are being read a story, staff ask children if they liked the story rather than asking them questions about it. This limits the progress children are making in their learning as they are not always encouraged to express their own thoughts and ideas. There is some inconsistency in the identification of children's next steps in learning and consequently some individual children's needs are not always matched to their stage of development. For example, the next stage in development for a one year old who is learning English as an additional language was recognising colours rather than focusing on the need to support them further in their communication and language.

Children who are making less than expected progress and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities of all ages are not supported effectively. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) for the setting has insufficient skills and knowledge to guide and support the children and staff. For example, there is a failure to carry out effective individual educational plans and reviews for individual children. The caring and compassionate staff cater for the children's care needs and try and put in suitable targets to promote learning. However, without appropriate levels of support, opportunities to actively help all children reach their full potential are missed. Despite some of the children having attended the nursery for a long time, their child development records confirm that some children have made little progress in their learning. For example, one child has a targeted next step in learning that was initially set 20 months ago. There is little evidence to show what staff have done to plan for this next step in learning to ensure that good progress is made.

Staff throughout the nursery are warm and caring, and children are happy and settled. Staff know the children well, and develop positive relationships with them. They plan activities for learning inside and outdoors. Children benefit from an extensive garden area with a herb garden where children can run, dig, sit together and use the play equipment available. This provides opportunities for children to use their imaginations and senses to explore and engage in meaningful play that assists their learning and development.

Children and babies are seen dancing and moving their bodies to music. Children wiggle and shake their bodies to a lively action song and older children move up and down to an

energetic song naming their bodies. This helps children develop suitable physical skills and older children develop listening skills, following simple instructions ready for starting school. Staff teach children about the natural world as they watch, feed and marvel as the caterpillars change into butterflies. Children know that butterflies need food and water to grow. However, when the butterflies were taken outdoors to be let free from their butterfly house, staff missed opportunities to widen children's vocabulary, recap and discuss what might happen next to them. The activity was poorly organised. Children of different ages within the large group struggled to see what was happening. They became frustrated and lost interest.

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

Outcomes for children are inadequate. This is because the key-person arrangements do not work in practice to ensure that children's individual care and learning is tailored to their individual needs. Each child is allocated a key person but that person is not always available to assist them. This has a particularly negative impact on those children who require extra support. For example, management move staff away from their key child to work with a child who has special educational needs in a different group. This leaves the child without the reassurance that their key person is beginning to provide. This poor deployment of staff prevents children from building secure emotional attachments and, because other staff do not always know about children's individual needs, they do not know how to support them successfully. Also, key persons do not routinely carry out the personal care of their younger key children. This is a further missed opportunity to develop trusting relationships with the children they are responsible for.

The learning environment throughout the nursery does not adequately promote children's learning and independence in all areas. For example, younger children have few opportunities for sensory play as they move around, with limited resources at an accessible level to enable children to choose what they would like to play with. The room has no cosy areas for babies who wish to relax, play quietly or sleep. Home corners and play kitchens have limited resources for role play and many stimulating resources are packed away from view. This inhibits children's ability to use their imaginations and extend activities using their own ideas. The nursery has some attractive displays of children's artwork and paintings. This shows children that their contributions are valued.

Children are seen to behave well during the inspection. Children show some consideration for others and share toys and resources. For example, children pretending to be 'doctors' and 'patients' shared the stethoscope and resources well. Staff introduced new vocabulary to aid children's communication and language development and encouraged them to talk about what they are doing. For example, children described what they hear to their 'patients' saying, 'heart beating really loud'. Children respond positively to praise given by staff. However, some children are left to wander around, sometimes with little adult involvement, which affects their capacity to engage with activities and other children. This has a negative impact on children's personal, social and emotional development and does not prepare children well for their next stage of learning.

The nursery promotes healthy eating through the provision of healthy snacks and meals and drinking water. Children develop an understanding of healthy lifestyles through daily opportunities for being active and play in the fresh air. Children understand the importance of hand washing before eating and do this routinely. Interactions at mealtimes between the staff and the children mean that this is a relaxed, enjoyable time and children sit and eat well. For example, children in the two to three age group were being encouraged to try and eat by themselves by the supportive staff in a calm and sociable atmosphere. However, staff do not make the most of snack and mealtimes to help develop children's independence and confidence. Staff do not encourage children to help set the tables, serve their own food, pour their own drinks from a jug, empty their waste food or help clean up after meals.

Children receive good support when it is time for them to move into the next age group room or as they prepare to move on to school. Children have the opportunity to spend time in their new room with their key person so they become familiar with their new environment. This helps children feel safe and secure.

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

At this inspection, the nursery was found to be in breach of a number of legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It was found that staff cannot demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the learning and development requirements. They do not monitor individual children's progress effectively, especially the achievement of children who are making less than expected progress, who have special educational needs or those who learn English as an additional language. There is evidence of some partnership working with others involved in children's care, such as work with the hospital hearing team to support children with hearing impairment. However, this is not evident for all children with special educational needs. The approach to the care and learning of children with additional needs is poor overall. This can be attributed, in part, to the failure of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to take a proactive role in working with parents, other professionals and staff to seek and provide the necessary support for every child. The SENCO produces some individual education plans but these are not routinely shared, reviewed and monitored. Staff, particularly key persons, do not know about any developmental targets for individual children and, therefore, the individual education plans are of little use. This means that children do not reach their full potential and gaps in achievement remain.

The key-person system and staff deployment are not fully effective across all areas of the nursery. This affects children's ability to form attachments with a special person within the nursery and has a negative impact on their well-being.

The leadership and guidance of staff is underdeveloped because ways to support the professional development of staff are not focused sufficiently on individual teaching skills and their knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff do not routinely interact with children and ask open-ended questions, and miss opportunities to challenge and

extend children's thinking. This does not help to promote children's learning. Some children lose interest or do not take part during some group activities because staff do not manage these well. Children wait for prolonged times between activities, to get ready to go outdoors or to use the bathroom. There is insufficient monitoring of activities and daily routines to ensure these meet children's needs consistently.

Self-evaluation is not effective in identifying key strengths and areas for development. Managers do not regularly supervise staff and effectively monitor staff practice and the quality of teaching.

Staff carry out regular safety checks of the premises inside and outdoors and on equipment, so children play in a safe and secure environment. There are appropriate written policies and procedures in place and in relation to child protection. Staff have appropriate knowledge of the signs that a child may be at risk and the procedure they would follow. Recruitment systems are in place and a suitable induction procedure is followed for all staff. However, the organisation and security of documentation is weak and some information was not available for inspection, as required.

Parents praise staff and say they are kept well informed about children's progress and wellbeing, particularly when they are moving into a new room. For example, parents say they like the caring staff and the family atmosphere.

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	EY321164
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	828142
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	137
Name of provider	Playsteps Ltd
Date of previous inspection	22/02/2010
Telephone number	01793 619 406

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

