

Natural Steps Nursery and After School Club

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

Inspection date	08/12/2014
Previous inspection date	07/01/2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	4
	Previous inspection:	3
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 provider and staff have an inadequate understanding of the requirements for the Early Year's Foundation Stage. The building is not secure, daily attendance records are inaccurate and good hygiene procedures are not followed. As a result, this leads to breaches which significantly compromised children's safety, learning and development.
- The provider significantly compromises children's safety as they do not follow safe recruitment systems to ensure all persons working with children are suitable to do so. This means that unvetted staff have unsupervised contact with children. These breaches of requirements do not adequately protect children's welfare and well-being.
- The process for supporting staff practice, such as through supervision, and monitoring, is weak. The quality of teaching is poor and inconsistent. Consequently, children do not make enough progress, especially in their communication and language and mathematical development.
- The key-person system is not effective and staff are not promptly assigned new children to build positive relationships with them. Therefore, children's personal, social and emotional development is not appropriately fostered.
- The provider does not effectively monitor the quality of staff practice and provision. As a result, they have failed to identify or address key areas for improvement.

It has the following strengths

- Children enjoy opportunities to explore materials which support their sensory development.

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 viewed the main play areas.
- The inspector observed children's play, activities and interaction with staff.
- The inspector spoke with a committee member of the company, staff, children and parents during the inspection.
- The inspector sampled available documentation including attendance registers, staff suitability records and some children's progress records.
- The inspectors undertook a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Tracy Bartholomew

Full report

Information about the setting

Natural Steps Nursery and 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, Berkshire. The nursery is in purpose-built accommodation within the community building and is open from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. 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 Nursery and After School Club is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 21 children on roll in the nursery, all of whom are in the early years age group. The provision supports children who are learning English as an additional language. There are currently 23 staff employed who work with the children in the nursery, and 10 of these hold relevant childcare qualifications; this includes the manager who holds a qualification at level 4 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 will issue a welfare requirements notice requiring the provider to:

ensure that people whose suitability has not been checked, including through a criminal records check, do not have unsupervised contact with children being cared for

implement an effective system to ensure that staff, and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children; with specific regard to obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service checks, identity checks and references for all staff

ensure that children are not able to leave the premises unsupervised and take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons from entering the premises, with particular regard to the nursery room door

ensure the daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises includes all children's hours of attendance

We will monitor the provider's compliance with the welfare requirements notice. It is an offence for a person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with a welfare requirements notice. Failure to comply may result in a prosecution.

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

- ensure there are effective arrangements in place for the supervision of staff, which provide support, coaching and training for the staff and ensure the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good
- promote children's good health and minimise the spread of infection, for example, in the Ocean room relation to taking action when children's cutlery falls on the floor
- implement an effective key person system that ensures every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, offers a settled relationship for the child and builds a relationship with their parents or carers
- promote the educational programme for communication and language in order to support children in their development of speech, listening and understanding
devise and implement an effective educational programme to support children in their development of speech, listening and understanding
- develop the educational programme for children's mathematical development.

Inspection judgements

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

The education programmes to support children's learning and development are inadequate. Although some staff understand the learning and development requirements, not all practice provides enough variety to engage, excite or challenge the children's learning and development. For example, during the inspection, some staff were seen to be sitting near the children. However, some staff lack knowledge of how to effectively talk, listen or communicate with the children to promote or support their play. This has an adverse impact on their children's enjoyment, and communication and language development.

Children are generally occupied by the toys and resources on offer, which cover all areas of learning. However, because some staff have a very weak understanding of how to engage and support children, these resources are not effective in supporting or advancing children's development. For example, children who show an interest in completing puzzles are not supported by staff to do these. Instead, the staff members just said, 'puzzle' to the children without further explanation, and then completed the puzzle for the children rather than encouraging them to do this for themselves. This does not support the children's physical dexterity, self-esteem or mathematical understanding of shape, space and measure. In addition, staff do not teach numbers effectively during group activities with children. For example, children who use the addition-symbol placemats with numbered blocks do not understand the purpose of the activity. Although they have a go, the staff do not encourage the children's attempts by informing them the sums are incorrect, offering little help to put this right. This has an adverse impact on the children's willingness to have a go, their self-confidence and their awareness of numbers.

Children have some opportunities to play imaginatively and enjoy caring for dolls, pushing them around the hall, showing attentiveness as they tuck the doll into the pram. Children enjoy dressing up and have a range of tools to aid their imaginations, such as a stethoscope. This helps the children to put observed practical experiences into their play. Babies and older children have sound opportunities to explore and experiment with a range of media. For example, they explore with their hands and body using shaving foam and gloop, a mixture of corn flour and water, which assists their creativity. All children enjoy some opportunities to play and be active outside. Babies enjoy being pushed around in the prams outside to get some fresh air, and older children enjoy playing by themselves in the play house.

Planning, observations and assessments are, overall, adequate, and generally show the children's individual stage of learning. Staff complete regular observations on children in their play and link these to the different areas of learning. Overall, they receive sufficient information from parents to gain an awareness of children's current achievements, and use these details to inform planning. However, not all children make progress towards their next steps for learning because staff do not consistently provide them with good quality

teaching and play opportunities.

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

The provider fails to ensure that care practices support children's well-being. For example, the internal door to the premises is not always locked during hours of operation. This means that the children could leave the provision unnoticed, which poses a significant risk to their well-being and safety overall. In addition, there is potential for unauthorised people, who use other parts of the premises, to enter the premises unnoticed. This compromises the children's safety and well-being.

The key-person system is not well established in the nursery because staff do not fully understand their role to meet children's needs effectively. For example, new children are not assigned a key person and this results in them being passed between staff to pacify them when upset. This fails to help them feel settled or help them gain confidence in their nursery. In addition, a buddy system is not in place, which means that when the children's key person is absent, staff are unaware of how a key group activity is to be led to advance and support children's overall development. This leads to unsuccessful group times and to children lacking enthusiasm for learning.

Children behave well in nursery and, at times, receive praise to promote their self-esteem and confidence. Overall, children are developing some understanding of hygiene routines as they are encouraged to wash their hands after visiting the toilet. However, some staff lack the knowledge to explain the reasoning behind some actions and instructions. For example, children are not consistently told why they should put their hands up when coughing and the reasons why they should wash their hands. This hinders their knowledge of how they can protect their health. Children enjoy suitable snacks and meals. Staff are aware of the importance of following children's individual dietary requirements and check records for newer children to ensure that their dietary preferences are maintained. Children's independence is, at times, appropriately promoted by collecting their own cups and cutlery from the side table. This helps children acquire some skills to be ready for their next stage of learning. However, staff are not vigilant enough in supporting children's health. For example, children drop cutlery on the floor and use each other's cutlery, which places them at risk of cross-infection.

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

The provider has an inadequate understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure that procedures are robust to safeguard children. For example, they significantly jeopardise children's safety and well-being by frequently allowing unvetted staff to have unsupervised access to children. In addition, although staff are subject to a suitable interview process, the provider fails to carry out sufficient rigorous checks to ensure staff are suitable. This puts children at significant risk as the provider fails to meet the legal requirement to safeguard and protect children. Furthermore, the provider does not meet

the associated requirements of the Childcare Register.

The provider has a poor understanding of their roles and responsibilities to monitor, train and supervise staff daily performance. This has resulted in persistent failure to ensure that all children receive secure learning and development opportunities, for example some staff lack the skills to talk to, and engage the children during a craft activity. Consequently, this is detrimental to the children's progress as they are ignored and not involved in the small focused group times. There are some monitoring systems and these shows that the staff are critical of their own performance, with some identified weak practice highlighted. However, as the committee undertake these appraisals, the leaders and manager fail to work together to ensure that staff training needs are accurately identified and appropriate steps are taken to meet them. Therefore, there are ineffective accountability arrangements for professional development. Despite these failings, some safeguarding procedures are suitable. For example, staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in child protection and have attended appropriate safeguarding training. This enables them to be secure in their role to report child protection concerns if needed. In addition, all staff are first-aid trained and there is suitable documentation for recording accidents and incidents. The environment in which children play is suitable, child-friendly and appropriate. There are some risk assessments and staff check the outside areas before taking children outside. The nursery has a suitable range of policies and procedures, although these are not always followed by the leadership and management, and the staffing team. For example, the daily attendance registers fail to accurately record times of arrival and collection of all children, which compromises children's safety. This is a breach in requirements and does not meet the requirements for the Childcare Register.

The self-evaluation and reflection procedures for the nursery are weak and ineffective. Although the nursery has a system to evaluate practice, this fails to identify significant weakness and breaches of regulations. In addition, the provider has failed to address the actions set at the last inspection, which demonstrates that their ability to improve without external support is very weak. Consequently, some leaders have a very poor regard for their responsibilities and show a lack of concern regarding the continued breaches and safeguarding concerns; this has a detrimental impact on children's safety, wellbeing and readiness for school.

Partnerships with parents are positive. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection express happiness with the staff and environment. In particular, they comment that staff are friendly and provide a range of activities and that their children have settled well. The nursery provides a range of information for parents, through notice boards, newsletters and verbal communication. Partnerships with other professionals involved in the care and support of families are in place. Although these are in their infancy, staff are aware of the importance of promoting consistency of care.

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:

- ensure that no individual who is unsuitable to work with children has unsupervised access to a child receiving childcare (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure there are effective systems to ensure that any person caring for, or in regular contact with, children is suitable to work with them and has an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- keep a daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance, and retain it for a period of two years (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that children are unable to leave the premises without a person who is caring for them becoming aware of the child leaving (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that no one can enter the premises without the knowledge of a person who is caring for children on the premises (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).
- ensure that no individual who is unsuitable to work with children has unsupervised access to a child receiving childcare (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure there are effective systems to ensure that any person caring for, or in regular contact with, children is suitable to work with them and has a enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- keep a daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance, and retain it for a period of two years (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that children are unable to leave the premises except where the child is aged eight or over and the parent of the child has agreed that they may leave the provision unaccompanied (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that no one can enter the premises without the knowledge of a person who is caring for children on the premises (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	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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	962795
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	21
Name of provider	Community Mission Project
Date of previous inspection	07/01/2014
Telephone number	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.

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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
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M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
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