

Positive Steps Apsley

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



Inspection date

10 January 2017

Previous inspection date

12 November 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate	4
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Inadequate	4
Outcomes for children		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is inadequate

- Children's safety is compromised. There are numerous breaches of the legal requirements that have a significant, negative impact on children's welfare. For example, there are not sufficient numbers of staff to care for children, staff deployment is ineffective and there are not enough qualified staff caring for young babies.
- The key-person system is not used to consistently ensure that children's care is fully tailored to meet their individual needs. Ways of engaging parents in their children's learning are poor.
- The safeguarding policy that covers the use of mobile phones is ineffective. This is because staff do not question or prevent parents from using their phone in the setting. Despite there being a keypad entry system, it is not used securely to protect children's overall safety.
- Staff supervision meetings and professional development for staff are ineffective as they do not focus on raising standards for children.
- The quality of teaching is poor. Activities and experiences do not stimulate and engage children. Children's behaviour is not managed appropriately. Staff do not implement the behaviour management policy effectively.
- Staff do not record accidents promptly to ensure that all details are correctly shared with parents.

It has the following strengths

- Children develop their physical skills in the fresh air as they exercise outside on a daily basis.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children; children are suitably supervised and staff are deployed effectively to meet required ratios 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that at least one member of staff working with young babies holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification, and is suitably experienced in working with children under the age of two years 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that the key-person system is used effectively to promote children's learning and ensure that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ implement robust procedures for safeguarding children, with particular reference to the use of mobile telephones in the setting and ensuring that the setting is secure 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improve supervision meetings to extend staff's professional development so that it increases the potential to deliver good quality education 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that monitoring of staff's practice as part of performance management effectively supports them to improve their personal effectiveness and deliver good quality teaching 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improve the quality of teaching by delivering all areas of learning through planned, purposeful play to ensure that the individual needs, interests and stage of development is known for each child 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that records of all accidents, injuries and first-aid treatment are recorded promptly and accurately 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improve strategies for engaging parents in their children's learning and development to ensure that parents know what their children are learning and how they can help them improve 	10/03/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that staff manage children's behaviour appropriately. 	10/03/2017

Inspection activities

- Ofsted inspected this provision as a result of a risk assessment, following information received about this provider.
- The inspectors observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The lead inspector carried out a joint observation with the nursery manager.
- The inspectors held a meeting with the nursery manager, area manager and childcare director. They looked at relevant documentation, such as the policies and procedures and the complaints file. Inspectors also viewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery and a range of daily attendance registers.
- The inspectors spoke to some parents during the inspection and took account of their views as provided in documentation.
- The inspectors reviewed the provider's self-evaluation record and discussed how the staff reflect on practice. The inspectors looked at a range of children's observation and assessment records.

Inspector

Jo Rowley and Michelle Baldock

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is inadequate

The arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. The required adult-to-child ratios are not maintained. For example, the setting does not consistently have the correct number of staff on site for the number of children they have attending. Staff deployment is ineffective. For example, although the baby room is staffed regularly with the same staff, neither holds a relevant level 3 qualification. Therefore, they do not possess the underpinning knowledge required to sufficiently meet the needs of young children. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They know the procedure to follow and who to contact inside and outside of the nursery, if they have concerns about children's welfare. However, staff do not challenge parents when they are observed answering their mobile telephones in the nursery, which is against the nursery's policy and compromises children's safety. In addition to this, the security systems for entering the building are not used effectively. The front entrance keypad is not used securely. Parents allow other parents to enter the nursery or they watch other adults inputting the security code on the keypad to gain entry. This compromises children's safety with people who are not vetted able to enter the setting. There is a high turnover of staff and changes to the management. Staff supervision and appraisal meetings are ineffective. The monitoring of staff is not effective in supporting them to raise the quality of their practice.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

Children wander aimlessly with little engagement in discussion with staff, or with activities. Although planning in all the rooms is clear, staff do not provide children with challenging and stimulating activities. Therefore, they do not make sufficient progress. Staff expectations are not good enough and some staff have a poor understanding of the age group they are planning for. The key-person system is not effective in supporting children's individual needs or interests. Staff build friendly relationships with parents. However, staff do not engage parents in their children's learning, although feedback about their children's day is exchanged. Staff complete observations and the management team tracks children's progress, including specific groups of children. Parents are encouraged to contribute to initial assessments of children's starting points when they first start but they are not kept informed of their children's ongoing progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

Children's behaviour is not managed effectively. Staff do not deal with challenging behaviour when, for example, children's lack of engagement in activities leads to pushing or arguing over toys. Children eat a range of freshly prepared snacks and meals. The nursery cook follows a four-weekly rota, taking into account children's individual needs and dietary requirements. Nappy changing areas, toys and resources are cleaned adequately. The setting has a regular cleaner and housekeeper that takes responsibility for cleaning these areas. In addition to this, staff follow a cleaning rota to ensure that the nursery areas and equipment remain clean. Young babies develop suitable bonds and attachments with the staff in this room. Staff demonstrate some care and consideration when planning for their interests.

Outcomes for children are inadequate

Overall, children including those who speak English as an additional language and children who have special educational needs and disabilities, are not supported well enough to make sufficient progress given their starting points. However, children do gain some skills that are important for when they start school. For example children in the pre-school room practise their mark making as they begin to write the letters in their name. They enjoy practising their cutting skills as they create their own works of art.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY364529
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1081174
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	88
Number of children on roll	133
Name of registered person	Positive Steps Childrens Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP911260
Date of previous inspection	12 November 2013
Telephone number	01442266119

Positive Steps Apsley was registered in 2008. The nursery employs 21 members of childcare staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including the manager who holds a qualification at level 6 and a deputy manager who has early years professional status. The nursery opens from 7.30am to 6.15pm all year round, Monday to Friday, except for bank holidays. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language and children who have special educational needs and disabilities.

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.

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