

Positive Steps Children's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Cordalee Harrison

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Positive Steps Children's Day Nursery is privately owned and is one of five settings owned by Positive Steps Children's Day Nurseries Limited. The nursery opened in 2008 and operates from seven rooms in a converted church situated in Apsley, near Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 88 children may attend the nursery at any one time. Opening times are from 7.30am until 6.15pm weekdays. The nursery operates for 51 weeks of the year. Both full time and sessional care is offered. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 57 children on roll; they are all in the early years age range. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 staff, of whom 12 hold relevant childcare qualifications to level 2 or 3. A further four staff are currently on training courses.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery is welcoming, bright and attractive. Children and parents feel welcomed and valued in the nursery because staff are knowledgeable, positive and confident in their interactions with them. In addition, displays of children's work provide a good indication of the range of their learning experiences and foster a sense of pride and belonging for them. Child-initiated activities are central to children's learning experiences; it is the foundation of their daily activities; this promotes inclusion very well. Sufficient qualified and experienced staff supervise children's activities in all areas of the setting. This ensures that children's welfare, learning and developmental needs are met to a consistently high standard. The key person system is an integral part of the nursery's operational plan and this helps parents to engage very well in the welfare and learning of their children. The nursery has addressed all of the recommendations from the last inspection and this demonstrates their commitment to continuous improvement to their practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve the strategies for partnership working with other practitioners, where children receive education and care in more than one setting, to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information
- review the arrangements for managing children's crockery in the preschool room to make sure that appropriate standards of hygiene are maintained at all times

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the nursery are strong; this enables the nursery to safeguard children's welfare and promote their learning and development to a high standard. There are systematic procedures for the recruitment, vetting and induction of all staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. Only staff who are fully vetted are left alone with children. Across the setting staff have good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and guidance and implement it effectively in their daily practice. They apply safeguarding to all areas of their practice. All documentation required to safeguard children's health and welfare is in place; it includes all necessary information. For example, there are records of children's attendance together with information about their key persons, as well as a record of all visitors to the nursery. Policies such as safeguarding, child protection and policies about uncollected children, are linked. Staff are familiar with the child protection procedures and they are clear about lines of communication to deal with causes for concern about children's welfare in the nursery, with agencies such as the local Children's Services.

Children are safe and secure in the nursery, they are not able to leave the premises unattended and only people admitted by staff are able to enter the premises. Closed circuit television adds an additional dimension to the nursery's security measures. The setting uses regular risk assessments, daily hazard checks and close supervision to effectively identify and minimise risks for children in all areas. Fire exits are marked and kept clear and fire-fighting equipment, such as a fire blanket and fire extinguishers, are in place. In addition, the areas are kept generally free of slipping and tripping hazards. Children's meals are prepared on the premises following nutritional guidelines issued by government. Children's meals and snacks include the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. There is a good system for the management of children's food allergies and intolerance; it takes account of the management of food from the kitchen to the table. However, the management of children's crockery and cutlery in the pre-school room is not sufficiently hygienic. The nursery deploys its resources effectively. Sufficient staff, qualified in childcare and education as well as first aid, are available to meet children's needs. Staff support children well at meal times; this ensures that even the youngest children are able to eat well and enjoy this social occasion.

Across the nursery staff give children their time and attention in play and conversation. This helps children to make effective use of the good quality play resources that are available to them. The setting is proactive in engaging parents in children's welfare and learning. In addition to parents' welcome packs that are translated in several languages, children and their parents are welcomed with positive images of people from varying backgrounds and cultures. To enable parents to contribute and influence outcomes for children, the leadership team has recently put systems in place to encourage them to contribute to the overall planning of activities and to help to develop the nursery menus. However, there is acknowledgement that these systems are new; they are works in progress.

Provision for parents to share their children's progress records and for fathers to join their children in play on selected dates, are further examples of the measures that the nursery is using to develop meaningful relationships with all parents. These very good practices set the expectation that equality and diversity are at the centre of the nursery's provision. There is a trained special educational needs coordinator in the nursery and staff know that her role is to work with children, staff and parents to ensure that the correct strategies are in place to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and / or disabilities.

The self-evaluation aptly reflects the nursery's overall performance. Management have clear ideas about how they will continue to gain improvements in the nursery. For example, the nursery is supporting a number of staff to gain qualifications in childcare and to fulfil roles such as the designated person for safeguarding and the special educational needs coordinator. Staff and management understand that high levels of qualification, coupled with up to date knowledge and practices, are key to driving and maintaining improvements for children in the nursery. The setting is aware of its role to work in partnership with practitioners. However, the procedures for doing so are not fully established.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Through interesting topics and themes, children experience learning across all areas of the curriculum. Staff assess all children regularly and identify where they are in their learning and development. They use the information to plan the next steps in children's progress. Staff securely link children's observation records and planning to the expectations of the early learning goals. Consistent observations and recording of all children's progress provides good quality information. This helps staff develop a systematic approach to building on children's past experiences as they progress across the different stages of development.

Children explore, experiment and use a variety of art and creative activities to promote learning. For example, they develop fine movements as they use rolling pins and cutters along with malleable materials. They use scissors, glue sticks and various mark-making implements as they make pictures and collages. They use their imagination and develop communication and social skills as they use realistic resources to consolidate learning in their pretend play. Children know that their contributions are valuable as they provide ideas for activities, such as to use their body shapes and their handprints to create a picture of the jungle for their wall display. Across the setting children are experiencing and enjoying books. Staff read stories to children in a captivating manner; this encourages the children to listen, participate and predict what will happen. Younger children demonstrate that they too are enjoying books as they turn the pages of card books and explore the pictures with sight and touch. Children are developing skills for the future as they use modern resources that are appealing to all ages of children, including a variety of construction sets, interactive play centres, shape sorters, push and pull items and a computer. All children enjoy music, ranging from large group music and moment activities, to nursery rhymes and rice shakers for the youngest children.

Children are achieving and enjoying, they are proud of their achievements and eager to show what they can do. They demonstrate that they can sequence numbers up to 12 and recall all of the letters in their names to the tune of familiar nursery rhymes.

The atmosphere in the nursery is generally calm and purposeful, however children show their emotions to express their feelings. Staff are kind and patient; this allows children to understand that their needs are important. Staff use appropriate behaviour strategies that are appropriate to children's understanding and this helps to create an atmosphere where children engage in meaningful activities without undue disruption. Children across the nursery are enjoying experiences that help them to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles, such as outdoor play each day. All children eat balanced and nutritious meals and babies feed and rest according to their individual routines. Staff manage children's personal and hygiene needs in ways that are appropriate for their stage of development. For example, safe and hygienic procedures are in place for children who wear nappies, whilst the child-sized toilet and washing facilities help older children to take responsibility for aspects of their personal care. Some of the children use the toilets independently and routinely wash their hands. Children develop their understanding of personal safety as they help to tidy away resources that are not in use and learn about safety rules such as not to run indoors. Consistent routines, such as regular evacuation of the premises, help all of the children to begin to understand what to expect in an emergency.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met