



The Willows Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY294628
Inspection date	28 November 2005
Inspector	Barbara Christine Wearing
Setting Address	St. James Court,, Wilderspool Causeway, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 6PS
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Registered person	Willows Nursery School Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Willows Nursery School opened in 2004. It operates from a self contained unit in four rooms on the ground floor of a complex of new office buildings. The nursery is situated at St James Court, Wilderspool Causeway, Warrington close to the town centre and within easy reach of motorway links to Manchester and Cheshire. The nursery serves the local area. It is one of four Kid's Academy Nurseries.

The nursery is registered for 60 children from birth to 5 years. Children attend for a

variety of sessions. There are currently 79 children on role, of whom, 11 receive funding for nursery education.

The group opens five days a week all the year round. Sessions are from 07.30 to 18.30.

There are 15 staff who work with the children, the majority of whom have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from Warrington Sure Start partnership. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association and have achieved Investors in People.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from the spread of infection and cross contamination as staff follow the nursery's comprehensive policies and procedures, routines and rotas. These include policies on nappy changing, accident and medication, health and safety and sickness. High levels of hygiene are therefore maintained and appropriate measures are taken when children are unwell.

Children enjoy healthy, nutritious and varied meals and snacks. Staff work closely with parents in order to meet the children's dietary and health requirements and follow young babies individual routines and sleeping and eating patterns.

Children enjoy many opportunities to learn about keeping themselves healthy through related topics and activities such as, healthy eating, taking care in the sun and through daily routines. They have pictures above the sinks as a reminder to wash their hands. They brush their teeth after lunch, have access to drinking water throughout the day and the older children choose healthy snacks at the child run snack bar in the afternoon.

Children develop good large muscle control and co-ordination as they explore the outside and indoor facilities. Young children have plenty of space to crawl and develop their confidence in walking as they use furniture, equipment and staff to support themselves. Staff plan for children's physical development well which ensures that children develop a wide range of skills using a variety of equipment. The older children have great fun with a ball on a parachute. They develop co-ordination skills and learn to co-operate. Staff encourage children to plan how they will move over equipment that they set up in different ways. Children jump, slide, crawl and climb. Children also benefit from regular trips to local facilities such as the park and duck pond.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery provides children and families with a bright and inviting environment.

Children's work and photographs are on display and posters and literature represent positive images, therefore developing a sense of belonging for children and families. Children are grouped according to age. Each room is organised well, allowing children to move safely and independently while choosing their toys or activity. The range of equipment available is safe and well maintained and provides appropriate stimulation for the children being cared for, covering all areas of development.

Risks to children are minimized as staff carry out regular risk assessments and follow clear procedures. Children are closely supervised at all times by attentive staff. The building is secure; there is an intercom entry system, coded internal doors and a web-cam monitors areas within the nursery. Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff remind them of potential hazards and arrange for various people from the community to come to the nursery to talk to them. These have included the Fire Brigade and a lady to talk to them about safety in the sun. Children learn about road safety when going on trips to the local park and as they play with a road safety kit in nursery.

Children are protected from harm as they are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. Staff have a good understanding of the comprehensive child protection procedure and are fully aware of their role within it.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are busy, enthusiastic and happy. They benefit from excellent relationships with staff who are caring, motivated and skilled. Staff make good use of their knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework to inform their planning and practice. They work closely with parents and observe children throughout the day. They therefore have a thorough understanding of children's individual and group needs and plan activities and experiences which provide them with good levels of challenge appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff engage in play with the children, taking pleasure in their achievements and offering further challenges and stimulation through effective questioning. Children and staff clap and cheer for each other as they take turns sliding cars down a track. Staff ask children 'what is going to happen next?' when they share a book together during a play session.

Children enjoy daily opportunities to play with various sensory and creative materials such as pasta, water, paint, sand or dough. However, these activities are usually adult-directed and a different one is provided at each session. Therefore, children are not able to explore the materials fully on a regular basis.

Children are eager and confident and learn new skills as they engage in the well planned activities with the support of skilled staff. They develop excellent communication skills and chat to each other and staff throughout the day.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are interested and motivated to learn. They form close friendships and work harmoniously together, treating each other with genuine care and respect. This is encouraged and nurtured through various routines and the sensitive and calm approach of staff. Children enjoy many inventive opportunities to take responsibility and become involved in the running of the room and in caring for each other. They help to give out dinner, run the afternoon snack bar, arrange equipment in various ways for the P.E. session and help to write the room rules. Children develop a strong sense of community and understanding of the world as they enjoy many first hand experiences such as, using the till at the local supermarket, making a pizza at a local restaurant, making an ice cream in an ice cream van and visiting a building site.

Children are expressive and highly skilled communicators. They chat to each other throughout the day, inviting friends to join in activities, sharing opinions and feelings, recalling past events and describing their plans. Children generally listen to each other and are assertive as they remind each other of this rule. Children link sounds to letters and practise this spontaneously throughout the session. More able children can write their name. Children develop their writing skills through various well planned innovative activities such as, writing Christmas lists, recording what objects sink or float and writing in different media including shaving foam and salt. However, children rarely spontaneously write for a purpose. There are limited freely accessible resources on offer around the room to encourage this. Children therefore do not consolidate the skills they are developing during the planned adult-led activities. Children take delight in looking at books throughout the session and use props such as story sacks and puppets for story telling. Children make very good progress in maths. They use mathematical language and practise their skills throughout the day. They describe objects by size and shape, count how many wheels are on a truck and calculate how many drinks they need at lunch time. Through planned activities, children record how many jugs of water it takes to fill a bottle, create a number line, copy and create patterns and match by size, colour and shape. Children are highly efficient in designing and making. They independently plan how they will make a Christmas decoration and follow that plan through, accessing all the necessary resources including string, sticky tape, scissors and a hole-punch. Children help each other to cut the string and praise their achievements. Staff are skilled in asking children questions which further develop their progress in this area. When using a construction set staff ask 'how can we fix this on?' and 'how can we make it longer?' Children are skilled in using simple programmes on the computer which they freely access throughout the play sessions. Children express their ideas and draw pictures of their family and monsters using the freely accessible colouring pencils and pens, roller paint and some collage materials. However, children do not fully develop their individual creativity in art as many creative activities are adult directed and continuously available resources in this area are limited. Children develop their imagination as they engage in various role play situations including a laundrette and post office. They enjoy singing familiar songs and learning new ones for Christmas. Some children shake bells in rhythm to the songs. Children demonstrate good fine motor skills as they carefully and effectively handle tools such as scissors, pencils and threading materials.

Children engage in a wide variety of imaginative and well planned activities, which

cover all areas of learning and ensure that children make good progress through the stepping stones. These are thoroughly evaluated and used to inform future planning together with the information that staff gather regarding individual children's development. This is gained via their comprehensive assessment procedures, which include spontaneous and planned observations. The choice of continuously available resources in some areas of the room are limited. For example, creative, manipulative, construction sets and maths games are set out by staff and changed each session. This reduces the opportunities for children to practise and consolidate their learning at their own pace. Long, medium and short term plans work well. Children are offered a good selection of first hand experiences which promote their learning and demonstrate staff's clear understanding of the Foundation Stage.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident, have a high self esteem and positive self image. Staff work closely with parents. They, therefore, have a good understanding of children's individual health, dietary, social and emotional needs and religious and cultural beliefs. They ensure that these are reflected and well catered for within the provision. Children learn about the diversity of our society through the positive role models of staff, visitors to the nursery, resources, posters and literature. They portray positive, non-stereotyped images as they acknowledge various celebrations and festivals. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children play together harmoniously and enjoy each others' company. Staff give children boundaries which are appropriate to their age and stage of development. They are sensitive and skilled in supporting children to play within these boundaries and children quickly learn appropriate codes of behaviour. Therefore, there is a happy, calm environment within the nursery. Children are valued, play safely and confidently make choices and decisions.

The setting has a good partnership with parents and carers, thus maintaining consistency for children and enabling their individual needs to be met. Good quality information regarding the setting and curriculum is shared in a variety of ways, including via a newsletter, parent's handbook, up-to-date notice boards and displays, photographs and daily activity plans. Parents share information regarding their child during the settling in process, on a day to day basis verbally, and through the use of daily record sheets or books. Parents are closely involved in their children's learning. They are given a pre-school welcome pack that includes details of the Foundation Stage and the daily routine. They are given a sheet that details activities for each topic that can be done at home. Children bring in items for show and tell and parents are invited to attend curriculum evenings and parents' evenings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff organise their room and daily routine well, enabling children to make choices

and engage in a wide variety of activities both in and outdoors, in large and small groups and with and without adult direction. Children benefit from high levels of interaction with established staff, who receive excellent support and training and work in line with the nursery's policies and procedures. Children are safeguarded as all adults with unsupervised access to children have undergone all necessary checks and clearances and all required documentation is in place. Therefore children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to make a positive contribution is promoted.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The effective staffing structure enables the managers to closely monitor and evaluate the quality of care and education. They are aware of the settings strengths and needs and are pro-active in implementing changes and developments to improve the provision. Staff are given high levels of support through induction, meetings, appraisals and training and their opinions and ideas are valued. Staff therefore enjoy their work and are highly motivated and committed to the continued development of the provision.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should

take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase opportunities for children to fully explore and investigate natural materials and creative resources.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- enable children to practice and consolidate skills by making a wider range of resources consistently available to them.

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