



## The Woodrows Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY321291
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 June 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Elizabeth Warren
<b>Setting Address</b>	Bockings Elm Hall, 465 St. Johns Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO16 8DU
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Woodrows Nursery
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Woodrows Nursery opened in 2006. It operates from a community hall in Clacton on Sea, Essex. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:15 to 15:30 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 43 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come mainly from the local area. The nursery

supports children with learning disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a recognised early years qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

All aspects of children's health and well being are given a very high priority at the nursery. They are protected by staff's understanding and implementation of policies and procedures designed to maintain health and promote healthy choices. Written consent from parents allows children to receive emergency medical care if needed. Any minor bumps are dealt with by first aid trained staff; the details are recorded and signed by a parent or carer. Only anti-allergy dressings and plain water are used to cleanse and dress cuts or grazes. Likewise, any child needing medication has the dose recorded and the entry signed. Medicines are safely stored away from children until needed. Parents understand that children must not attend if they are ill or infectious and any that become poorly whilst at nursery are kept comfortable until they can be collected.

Children understand and follow good basic hygiene and personal care routines. They are reminded by pictorial cues to wash their hands after using the toilet. They are able to take a tissue and dispose of it after use. Children having lunch are encouraged to clean their teeth after their meal, and understand why this is important to their dental health; toothbrushes are provided for them. During hot weather parents are reminded to ensure that children are adequately protected from the harmful effects of the sun; staff may apply sun cream to children with parental consent. Children are taught the reasons for this and can explain why they need a sunhat, sun cream and plenty of water to drink. Alternatively, if it is wet outside, children are still encouraged to play or explore out of doors wearing appropriate protective clothing; the nursery carries spares for any child who does not have any, making sure all children are able to be included. If children need a change of clothes, for example, after a messy or wet activity, these are available and children are offered a discreet space in which to dress. Children in nappies or pull-ups are changed using hygienic procedures, again discretion is assured to preserve dignity and self esteem. The nursery staff are happy to work closely with parents during their child's toilet training period, with advice sought from a health visitor, offering support and continuity between home and the nursery environment.

All children are offered a snack of a choice of high quality, seasonal fruit and vegetables along with a drink of either water or organic milk. Melon, grapes and oranges are favourites. Other healthy choices such as cheese, bread and yogurt are occasionally available. They participate fully in the preparation and choice of snack, cutting up the fruit, peeling if necessary and pouring their own drinks. The snack bar

is open for the duration of the session so children can visit when they feel the need. Staff keep an eye out and ensure that all children have the opportunity to have a snack, reminding those who are busy with other activities. This raises the children's awareness of the range of fruit and vegetables they can enjoy and maximises the development of independence by allowing them choice and responsibility to serve themselves. Much discussion about likes and dislikes and foods which are 'good for you' takes place over the snack bar.

Some children bring a packed lunch which is stored in a specially designated cool cupboard until needed. To keep food safe, parents are asked to provide cool packs during the summer months. Children sit at a table with staff as they all eat together. This way healthy eating habits and good table manners are encouraged and reinforced by example. Children's dietary needs are well known to staff who ensure that children are not given, or exposed to, any unsuitable foods.

Children benefit from spending much of their time in the open air as the outdoors is used continually except in the most extreme weathers. Consequently, they have fresh air and space to move and run freely, aiding their body awareness and physical development. The range of resources and equipment available makes imaginative use of both commercial and improvised materials, so that children have challenging and thought provoking opportunities to engage with their environment and explore the possibilities of the activities set up. They enjoy an assault course using planks and tyres, a slide and steps, and a long tube down which they can roll their cars, to retrieve at the end. They use the wooden castle as a base for imaginative role play games, climbing and balancing carefully as they play in and around it. There is a vegetable garden, dug with real tools, planted and tended by the children so they can watch their efforts take shape, and eventually eat the results.

A variety of wheeled toys help children steer and move with control, becoming aware of the space around them. They are provided with balls of varying size and material to aid throwing and catching, and free play with hoops, bats and ropes. Using hoses and watering cans, both to water the plants and to put out a 'fire' in the playhouse, develop hand-to-eye coordination. Real, high quality tools for woodwork enable children to refine their hammering and sawing skills, very rewarding and a great accomplishment when they achieve the results they are working towards!

Indoors, fine motor skills are further developed with an excellent range of manipulative toys and equipment. Children can use syringes and stethoscopes in the hospital or veterinary surgery, a wide range of tools and mark making equipment for craft and in the 'office' area. Keyboards, as well as clipboards and pens, are available to help them make bookings and appointments. Whilst using the computer they learn mouse control. The home corner is equipped with domestic style pots, pans and cooking equipment, and sand and water play allows children to pour and fill containers. They carefully weigh and measure ingredients for cooking. Construction kits and recycled materials are freely available to be used for model making, and teach children about different ways to fix and fasten things together. At snack time they adeptly pour milk from the carton or water from the jug, learning to judge quantities and learning what happens if they overfill a cup.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment. All staff carry out risk assessments before and during each session, making sure the indoor and outside areas are safe and free from hazards before children begin to use them. The outside door is made safe with a fitted finger guard, so little fingers will not be trapped as children use the door to go between inside and outside. The use of safety gates and low level barriers prevents children having access to the kitchen or office areas. Fire drills are carried out regularly and use stories, role play and songs as well as the more formal approach so that children are not afraid and can respond well when they hear the signal.

Access to the setting is controlled by staff who monitor and guard the door at arrival and pick up times. Any visitor, or parent arriving at the setting during sessions is admitted, after screening, through a different door; they do not have access to children until cleared by staff. All staff, visitors and children are signed in and out, so there is a record of who is on the premises at any given time. Whilst children play outside they are kept secure by locked gates at either end of the play area, and high, secure fencing all around.

The main playroom is heated by radiators, which are thermostatically controlled to prevent them becoming too hot. Ventilation is achieved by opening windows and doors as necessary, maintaining an ambient temperature. The room has a combination of natural and artificial lighting, so children can be comfortable when playing and working. The walls and other surfaces are made stimulating and colourful with children's work, displayed to reflect their interests, topics and planned activities. A display of 'sun safety' uses pictures and labels to remind children and parents how to stay safe in the warm weather.

Many photographs of children engaged in activities are used to provide an excellent display for parents to show how activities are used to help children achieve the different learning outcomes. They illustrate, for example, children playing indoors and outside, listening to a story, sharing resources and cooperating, and taking care of their personal needs by washing their hands. Literature for parents is displayed in various locations and is easily accessible, offering useful and interesting information regarding the care, education and welfare of their children.

Much thought has gone into making excellent use of the available space to provide a stimulating and exciting environment to encourage children to try activities and move freely between areas. Furniture and equipment is provided to allow children to access all activities. The chairs and tables are of appropriate height and good, strong design. Outside, the story bench is homely and inviting for children to sit and browse the selection of books, have a chat with a staff member, or just watch their friends at play. Screens help to define different areas in the room but are strategically positioned so as not to create any areas where children cannot be seen. Low level coat pegs mean that children have space for their belongings and can access these throughout the day as needed, for example, getting out spare clothes or a hat. Their personal care is promoted by the provision of steps to reach the toilets and wash

basins, and towel dispensers have bins nearby for hygienic disposal of used towels.

Children's safety and well-being is of the highest priority at the nursery. Staff are aware of, and act upon, the guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The child protection policy is available to parents and reflects the group's approach to dealing with any concerns. All incidents are logged and the details held confidentially. Parents are advised of the nursery's responsibilities and procedures before a child is admitted.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children's enjoyment and achievement are promoted for by the provision of an excellent integrated programme of care and education. Those under three benefit from activities and care routines informed by the 'Birth to three matters' framework and other sources, whilst children aged three and above follow the Foundation Stage. Staff are aware of the differing needs of children at varying ages and stages of development, and take these factors into account, as well as any additional needs or language needs, when planning and delivering the activities and routines. Younger children have the same opportunities to become involved in activities at their own level; staff adjust their expectations accordingly but are alert for spontaneous learning opportunities, observing and recording the children's achievements to form a personal development profile. For example they enjoy a story time as a separate group, enabling them to listen and respond, learning how to make meaning from new and familiar vocabulary, as they try to concentrate and sit attentively. Older children can enjoy a story and talk about how the characters made them feel, suggesting their own endings or plot lines. All children are encouraged to be independent and make choices based on their interests and developing their natural curiosity as learners, whether in the playroom or outside in the garden area.

Staff and children enjoy warm, friendly relationships and staff enter fully into the spirit of the moment, often dressing up in ethnic costumes or being part of the role play, bringing a sick dolly to the hospital, or helping the postman sort his mail for delivery.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

Staff have an extremely sound knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the Foundation Stage, including how children learn. They plan and deliver a range of activities and play and learning opportunities based on the stepping stones of the early learning goals, enabling children to make excellent progress.

There is a basis of core activities, available at all times and frequently varied to prevent over familiarity and boredom. From this foundation, challenging planned, focused activities are provided for children to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the world around them. These activities are assessed and evaluated to ensure that the learning intentions are achieved. From there key workers can plan the next stages of learning for individual children.

The planning is shared by all practitioners in the setting and draws on a wide range of sources for inspiration and ideas. These include tried and tested favourites as well as new ideas linked to cultural or world events, seasonal activities and sensory and creative opportunities.

Children's development and achievements are recorded in the form of a well presented personal profile. This contains photographs, samples of work and comments and observations from staff, all dated for reference. Alongside this is the stepping stones record, showing the stage of development and indicating the next stages of learning. This record is a working document, frequently updated and available to share with parents and carers at any time.

Children's behaviour is of a very high standard. They are secure in the environment and respond to consistent management by staff. This enables them to maximise their learning potential whilst at the setting, as they feel secure and are therefore confident to explore, investigate and try new things.

Children are able to listen well, sitting attentively and responding at registration time to their name. They ask questions and make their feelings known, seeking help when needed. They can negotiate over sharing of resources and attention from staff. Their play is enhanced as staff join in and introduce appropriate vocabulary, for example in role play, where they may order a Chinese meal, or at the sand tray where they encourage children to use comparative language such as full and empty. Children have excellent, wide ranging opportunities to make marks using a variety of media. Indoors, they may go to the 'office' to write a letter, or make a card at the craft table. Outside, they can chalk or paint using water and big brushes. They use books for information and pleasure. A favourite location is on the story bench outside, rarely without a child looking at a book, telling a story to friends or listening to a willing adult read.

Children's awareness of mathematical concepts such as number, shape and space is developed through day-to-day routines and core provision such as sand and water play. They count in everyday contexts, such as the numbers of children present, how many cups needed at snack time and the number of chairs needed at the lunch table. Equipment for sorting, matching and colour recognition is imaginative and varied, and includes natural materials as well as commercially produced teaching aids. Children learn to recognise numerals as they play hopscotch, work out the date and watch the clock when cooking. Using sand, water and other materials aids understanding of weight, volume and capacity as children pour and fill containers. Staff engage their interest by asking them to estimate and experiment, using appropriate vocabulary. Puzzles and construction kits, as well as modelling with recycled boxes and cartons, develop awareness of shape and space. Children enjoy searching for 'big' and 'little' worms as they dig in the garden. In the home corner, setting the table for a meal teaches one to one correspondence and pattern.

Children investigate and explore a wide range of materials, textures and objects, both man made and natural as they freely play in the garden and playroom. A sense of awe is evident as a bird's nest is passed around the circle, children hold it and describe their feelings, thinking what it would be like to be a baby bird in the nest. Their own vegetable garden is proudly shown off to visitors; children talk about how

they look forward to eating the carrots and tomatoes they are growing. Children can observe the changing seasons as they enjoy nature walks in the adjacent wooded area, collecting specimens to examine closely on return. They hunt in the garden for minibeasts and bugs, and think about the care needs of living things.

They gain an understanding of different world cultures through stories and songs, and costumes and artefacts provided in the role play areas. For example, a banner with a message in Chinese script hangs in the role play kitchen, complementing the woks, bowls and chopsticks. Festivals and cultural events are celebrated throughout the calendar year and children think about the differences and similarities of lifestyle and culture with other children from around the world.

Children have access to a range of play technology items in the nursery, such as a till and telephones. They use keyboards and calculators, torches and a computer to promote learning in all areas. A digital camera produces quick results and the pictures taken by staff and children alike are displayed for all to see.

Creative opportunities include a well resourced free access craft table. Children can select materials for collage and artwork, and spend time making a picture, card or decorative item. They can stick on buttons, scraps of fabric or paper, straws, glitter and sequins to produce something that is all their own work. This may be displayed or can be taken home as the child wishes. They also have guided activities when they can contribute to a group display, or make, for example, a Father's Day card. This free experimentation with colour, texture and form allows children to explore and find ways to communicate and express their ideas, thoughts and feelings as they talk about what they have done, sometimes in a deeply touching way.

Music and singing play a part in day-to-day activities and can set the tone with a rousing chorus, or calm and reflective tune, sometimes accompanied by instruments. Free play with instruments, which includes a multicultural selection, allows children to explore sound and rhythm. Children enjoy small world play with dolls houses and figures, animals and vehicles, or a train set and road layout. They develop sustained imaginative scenarios in the hospital or post office, getting into character and exploring roles and relationships through play. Staff are aware of the learning potential of imaginative and role play and actively engage with the children, without dominating the play.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are very well known to staff. This enables them to tailor care and education to reflect the children's needs and interests. Individual dietary and health needs are made known to staff so that appropriate care may be given, for example any allergies or phobias are handled sensitively and without making the child embarrassed or feel singled out.

Excellent systems are in place to allow children to develop high self-esteem and build their confidence. This is evident in even the youngest children attending, who are seen to be independent in self-care and able to express their wishes and ask for help



when needed. Children feel a sense of belonging as they sign the register at the start of sessions. They find their name card at snack time and at other times for reference, for example, when they want to name their work. They know where to hang their coats and stow their lunchboxes, and are aware of the routine at different times of the day. Children's attitudes to learning are very positive, they eagerly attempt activities and move confidently around the nursery environment. They are open and friendly, chatting comfortably to their peers and the adults around them about home, family and pets.

The nursery ethos strongly values every child and all efforts are made to secure outside professional help and advice where it is thought that this will benefit a child and help in their development. Any child needing additional support, whether educationally, emotionally or behaviourally, is given a great deal of input and thoughtful attention. The result is that children make excellent progress and feel able to relax and express themselves freely. Makaton, or sign language, is used along with conventional language to aid children with expressive difficulties, and effectively helps them to communicate. All the children enjoy joining in with the songs and stories, using the signs appropriately. A visual timetable helps children who find it hard to make decisions about what they would like to do, and is effective in helping them stay focused. Staff are able to develop individual learning programmes with realistic targets; by working closely with parents and outside professionals, children make very good progress. Their achievements are always celebrated and shared with parents.

Children behave extremely well. They understand the boundaries and codes of conduct. Any incidents of challenging behaviour are dealt with calmly and firmly; children are taught to be aware of the consequences of their actions and how this may make others feel. Often they will say sorry and show remorse if they have hurt someone or been unable to wait for a turn with an item of equipment. Any issues are discussed with parents before they develop into problems; staff always discuss behaviour management and strategies at their staff meetings, and do their best to create and maintain a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere where everyone can work and play together.

An effective partnership with parents is seen as key to providing high quality care and education for all the children attending. This begins with first approaches, when parents are given information about how the setting operates, expectations and details of day-to-day routines. Children then have an individualised settling in programme; there is no pressure to conform to a timetable, instead, it is understood that each child will have a different need for support and will settle best if this is allowed to be followed. Children's details are taken and a key worker is assigned who will become the first point of contact for parents. Staff are always available for an informal chat at the start or end of sessions, and at other times by appointment.

#### Nursery education

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding.

In addition to the above, parents are kept well informed of events and activities at the nursery. This includes regular, chatty newsletters, full of seasonal information and

reminders, details of topics and activities that the children will be following, and news of any staff or other changes which may affect their child's education. Parents speak very positively about their experience of dealing with staff at the nursery, and praise the progress that their children make. At an open evening they are invited to come along to try activities, talk to key workers and review their child's profile if they wish. They may complete a feedback sheet which invites them to comment on the nursery and say what they think works well, as well as make any suggestions for improvement. Parents' opinions are sought and valued, and acted upon if it is felt that a change would be beneficial to the children. Parents are included when possible and invited to stay for sessions. They willingly respond to requests for resources to help with topic work and modelling. They may also be invited to talk to the children about their job or profession, or an interesting hobby or aspect of their life. Each day, activities the children have been involved in are detailed and posted on a board by the main door so parents can see what their child has been doing.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children are made aware of how their actions impact on others. They form firm friendships and show kindness and care for their friends and the adults they come into contact with; a drawing of the manager, presented to her by one child, shows a happy smiling face. Children become aware of the differences in culture as they celebrate festivals and discuss stories and images of people from around the world.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Children are cared for by staff who have been checked and vetted to ensure their suitability to work with children. There are robust procedures in place for the recruitment and appointment of staff; job descriptions are clear about what the expectations are in relation to their appointment. All staff are taken on initially for a probationary period, and if they successfully complete this term, they become permanent staff. The thorough induction process is tailored to the individual, with time to read and ask questions about the nursery's policies and procedures. Staff in place are all suitably qualified or experienced. All take part in regular, frequent in-house training and have attended external courses such as on the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Children are cared for in one group, which can be split if necessary for circle time and story time, to allow all children to have maximum benefit from the activity. They are fortunate in having a very favourable ratio of adults caring for them, over and above the minimum requirements. This means that children get plenty of one to one attention and that there are staff available to support children in flexible ways, for example using all the indoor and outdoor areas fully. A key worker system is in place, providing parents with a point of contact for enquiries and concerns. The key workers also complete the children's developmental profiles, providing a picture of their achievements and progress.

All documentation and paperwork needed to support children is in place, mostly produced to a very high standard. Documents are clear to understand, well presented and accessible to staff and parents alike. Details which require confidentiality are kept securely in the main office in locked files. An operational plan sets out the main day to day aspects of the setting as well as containing all policies and procedures, parents' information and examples of registration forms.

## Nursery education

Leadership and management is outstanding.

The management demonstrates a clear vision and child-centred ethos designed to enable each child to achieve their maximum potential. The present owner and manager has recently taken over the nursery. She has worked tirelessly to improve quality and raise standards of care and education for all children at the setting. Many of the staff are long serving and have seen the nursery through several changes of management over the past years. Currently morale is very high and staff demonstrate extremely high levels of enthusiasm and dedication to establishing the nursery in its present form.

The standards of teaching, including how activities are presented, are continuously evaluated and monitored, and any areas needing attention are brought forward at a staff meeting for open discussion. In this way, staff achieve a consistent approach and the children benefit from staff's understanding of the stated learning intentions and the provision of core activities. Staff are encouraged to be reflective and assess their own performance and development. A comprehensive, well constructed appraisal system is in place to address staff's professional training needs as well as celebrate positive achievements. A programme of in house training and external courses keeps staff abreast of trends and developments and refreshes knowledge, allows time for open discussion and includes everyone, so staff feel they, and their opinions, are valued.

Overall, the nursery management is aware of the strengths, such as the child centred approach, and builds on these, and is also conscious of areas for improvement and development. This forward looking approach and determination to provide high quality care and education is the driving force behind the nursery's success.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report since registration.

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.

## **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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)