



Willow Bank Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148695
Inspection date	11 October 2006
Inspector	Sheila Collins
Setting Address	Duffield Road, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, RG5 4RW
Telephone number	01189 27 2338
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Registered person	Willowbank Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Willow Bank Preschool opened in 1985. It operates from a purpose built building which is situated in the grounds of Willow Bank Infants' School, which is in Woodley, Berkshire. There is also an outdoor area attached to the building, which is for the exclusive use of the pre-school children. A maximum of 24 children aged between three years and five years may attend the preschool at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.30 to 15.00, term time only.

There are currently 48 children on roll. This includes 47 funded three and four year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with disabilities and learning difficulties. The setting also supports children for whom English is an additional language although there are none attending at the present time.

A committee runs the preschool and employ eight staff, seven of whom work on a part time basis. Of these staff, three hold a qualification, which is equivalent to NVQ3 and two are working towards NVQ2.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are independent in their self – care skills, knowing that they must wash their hands after messy play, using the toilet and before snacks. Staff give gentle reminders to those who forget. The children learn good hygiene procedures from the staff during every day routines, for example, cleaning the tables before snack and mopping up spillages.

There are six staff members who hold a current first aid qualification. This benefits the children because any minor incidents such as bumps and falls are dealt with appropriately by competent staff. Staff know children's individual medical and dietary needs. All relevant documentation is in place to support children's well being.

Children are able to access drinks of water at any time, if they wish. Staff remind them to have a drink after physical play sessions. The children have healthy snacks such as bread sticks and carrots and pour their own drinks at snack time. The children choose when to have their snack as there is a snack bar system in place. When the snack bar is due to close, staff ask the children who haven't had their snack if they would like one, which ensures each child has the opportunity.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities both inside and out, which promotes all round healthy development. They take part in recreational play activities outside and benefit from planned physical education sessions weekly.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in an environment that is welcoming. They are greeted individually on arrival which shows them that they are valued as individuals. The children settle quickly and enthusiastically to the activities on offer. They are secure and confident as they move around safely. They know the rules which are in place for their safety, such as not tipping their chairs onto two legs and not throwing toys. Staff are vigilant to ensure all aspects of the children's safety. They undertake daily checks, both inside and out and regular risk assessments to ensure that the children can play freely and safely. The staff explain to the children why they can not go into the kitchen to help put the bread in the oven. The children take part in evacuation drills and staff record these appropriately.

Children benefit from an excellent and wide range of resources, which promote all areas of their development. They self select from items during free play time from lower levels of the shelving unit or ask staff for specific items, for example fuzzy felt. They play an active part in keeping the room safe, for example, taking part in tidy up time. The overall layout of the

playroom allows the children freedom to play safely. However, the quiet area, where the computers and headsets are located, is under used by the children.

Staff are very well deployed in all areas ensuring the children are protected and safe at all times. All staff have a good working knowledge of safeguarding the children, which further ensures the children's welfare. All the required procedures and documents are in place but the written child protection policy lacks precise detail of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a staff member or volunteer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children enter the preschool confidently and settle well to activities. They independently select the toys they wish to use, directing their own play. Staff allow them to play without constant supervision, but are on hand to support if needed. The children include adults in their play and invite them to join in, for example bringing food to them from the home corner.

The children are making friends and have good relationships with staff. They greet each other and enjoy each other's company. They consult with each other about activities and cooperate well together, for example when laying out the train track and playing in the sand. They help each other to get out resources and to put their work away in their individual baskets.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are interested and motivated to learn. The children are becoming independent and take responsibility for their own work, putting it in labelled trays.

At group times, they sit and listen well. They initiate conversations and talk confidently with others. They are keen to use new words such as 'kneading' and 'squidgy' when discussing bread. They listen to well read stories and join in with repetition and prediction eagerly in 'Dinnertime' and take part enthusiastically in interactive stories for example 'The Three Little Pigs.' They are learning about different letters and sounds through activities and are beginning to link these together. They have good opportunities to see their names in print on a daily basis as they self register, use their names at snack time and see these on their work baskets. The children take part in mark making using different tools such as painting and colouring with crayons. They have opportunities to write their names, for example when painting. However, the resources for them to select from at the independent writing table are limited.

The children count confidently for instance when taking part in games but opportunities for the children to count are not extended in all practical activities, for example in the bread making session. They use a good range of mathematical language appropriately in their play, especially when putting together the train track. They are beginning to explore mathematical concepts such as bigger and smaller when comparing play dough models and understand the meaning of over, under and through when taking part in 'The Bear Hunt.' They discuss and identify shapes and colours.

The children enjoy investigating, exploring and experimenting, for example, finding 'jewels' hidden in the sand and pieces of jelly in the water tray. They build complex structures enlisting the help of staff and ensure that the train track is put together properly. They talk with confidence about the days of the week and the weather. They initiate topics for discussion, for example about the rain and lightening and involve the adults in this. They are beginning to understand and use technology as they correctly use the telephones and the computer.

The children have opportunities to be creative everyday. They confidently paint, draw and make collages. They use a wide range of different materials and media such as paint, dough, sand and water. They create their own works of art on the table and help the staff to take prints from these. They are confident when describing their pictures to the staff. They play imaginatively, for example when using small world play, the home corner and the train track. They take part in singing sessions and enjoy music time when they play rhythms on instruments to the guitar accompaniment.

The children engage happily in and enjoy physical activities, for example, the weekly physical education sessions. They balance on logs, ride bikes and enjoy outdoor play. However, there are limited opportunities for planned use of the outdoors as a learning environment.

The staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the early learning goals and plan an interesting and varied curriculum for the children. The planning covers all areas of learning and staff use evaluations to see if the objectives are met. The staff monitor the children's learning through observations, which they transfer to individual development records. The staff observe the children in both individual and group situations and use these to help with future planning. Staff are aware that the record keeping system does not ensure that the next steps for each child's learning are recorded.

The staff praise and encourage the children in their efforts and achievements, so boosting their self-esteem and confidence. Most staff ensure that they are on level with the children either by sitting at the tables or on the floor so that they can join in with work and play and hold conversations with the children. They extend the children's knowledge and understanding by effective use of open-ended questions. They encourage the children to take part in the different activities but do not insist if a child chooses not to, for example The Farmer's in the Den and in the Bear Hunt Story.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The staff know the children well and their individual needs. Although a key worker system is in place, all staff work with all of the children. The children have a sense of belonging and are happy and settled. They are given time to say good bye to their parent or care, with staff available to support as needed. The individual care and individual requirements of all children are taken into consideration during the sessions and children who have learning difficulties or disabilities are integrated well within the group by both staff and other children.

A basic daily routine is in place which ensures that children feel secure. Staff warn children if there are any differences; for example, the bread making activity would need to allow time to

make, bake and discuss the bread rolls, so the children could take their hedgehog rolls home at the end of the session.

The children are becoming aware of the wider society. They undertake outings within the community for example to post their letters. They enjoy visits from members of the community in particular, Police, Paramedics and Fire personnel. They see positive images of other lifestyles in books, topics and projects are able to use a variety of resources which promote equality and diversity; for example, disabled people in small world play and in the home corner, a range of dolls, cooking utensils and food. They also take part in a variety of celebrations.

The children are becoming aware of being responsible for and caring for others. They have the opportunity to take the preschool's bears home at the end of the week and to care for them over the weekend. They also cooperate and take turns, for example in games, building the train track and negotiating using pieces of equipment like the telephones. They help one another when putting on and taking off aprons and generally show concern for others.

The children behave well and understand responsible behaviour. They know right from wrong and have discussions about sharing and taking turns. The staff allow the children to negotiate with one another and support them if necessary. The staff praise and encourage the children for their efforts and achievements throughout the sessions, which builds on their self esteem and confidence.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive an introductory leaflet when they make first enquiries and then a comprehensive prospectus, in which there is excellent information about the preschool 'Learning environment'. This includes the Foundation Stage Curriculum and early learning goals covering the six areas of learning. The parents take part in fundraising events, committee events and socials. They receive regular newsletters in which they are consulted, for example the ingredients being used for the bread making and ideas for activities to support their child within the topic being followed. The notice boards provide parents with current and up to date information and copies of the policies and procedures are available for parents to read. They are able to make suggestions to help the preschool evolve, for example the possibility of a lunch club. They have daily opportunities to discuss their child's progress with staff and opportunities to attend meetings each term, where more formal records are shared. The staff continue to explore ways in which to encourage parents to be involved in their child's record keeping.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The children benefit from the good organisation of the pre-school. Staff work well together as a team and are flexible within their work to undertake roles not necessarily assigned to them. There are good procedures in place for the recruitment and checking of staff, which safeguards the children. A key worker system is in place which benefits the children in maintaining consistency and continuity of care.

The leadership and management is good. Children benefit from the good organisation of the pre-school. Strengths and weaknesses of practice are accurately identified and the staff and committee take action to develop or negate these, for example, the preschool is looking for ways to extend the outdoor provision to further enhance the children's care and educational experiences and the possibility of a lunch club.

Detailed and comprehensive policies and procedures underpin the good quality of the provision and are reviewed regularly. However, the written policy for child protection is limited as it does not contain the precise procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a staff member. Adequate records of the children's attendance are kept, however the times the children actually attend are not recorded on the register.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the group were given three recommendations. These were to

develop opportunities to increase children's awareness and respect for other cultures including those of children attending the setting; to provide a healthy alternative at snack time and to review and develop documentation and records to ensure they are relevant and up to date.

At the last education inspection, four recommendations were made. To develop the craft area to enable children to make props to develop role play and access resources freely to develop their imagination and creativity in craft activities ; review and develop planning, observation and evaluation of activities to ensure they are child centred; to provide more opportunities for children to calculate for practical purposes and to develop an action plan to show how all areas of the preschool will continue to improve.

Since these inspections there has been a change of supervisor and committee. The children are having healthy snacks which benefit them. They are beginning to learn about other cultures and staff are looking at ways to extend this. The staff and committee have reviewed policies and procedures and are continuing to evaluate these, so that both staff and parents are aware of the way the preschool operates. The children have free access to craft materials and staff continue to explore ways to extend this. The planning and recording system has been reviewed. Children are beginning to calculate in practical situations and this will continue to be evaluated. The current supervisor is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the practice in the preschool and is working with the committee and staff to make improvements which will benefit all of the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints required 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 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 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):

- extend the child protection policy to include precise procedure to be followed in the case of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer
- review the registration system in place to ensure that the times of children's arrival and departure are recorded.

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):

- continue to explore ways in which to encourage parents to be involved in their child's record keeping
- extend the planned use of the outdoor learning environment
- continue to evaluate the record keeping system to ensure that the next steps for each child's learning are identified.

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