

The Willows Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	151115
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Lisa Jane Cupples
Setting Address	Recreation Ground, London Road, Liphook, Hampshire, GU30 7AN
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Registered person	Jackie Finlayson, Jillian Cooke, and Janice Bowley
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

The Willows Nursery School opened in 2001. It operates from the pavilion, which is located within the recreational grounds, in the village of Liphook. It is privately owned by three equal partners, who are also involved in the day to day management of the nursery. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The nursery offers full day care and sessional care; lunch is provided by parents. It opens five mornings and four afternoons a week, during school term time. Full day care is from 09:15 to 15:15 and sessional care is from 09:15 to 12:15 and 12:15 to 15:15. Children attend for a variety of days or sessions and the group serves the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 50 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 43 children receive funding for early education. It is the group's policy to accept children from two years and six months due to the facilities available. The nursery school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery school employs two staff to work with the children alongside the three partners. Of these, three have qualifications to National Vocational Level 3 or above and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff have a very good understanding of the procedures to follow and what to record if an accident occurs on the premises. Parents are required to give written consent for staff to administer medication and also sign to acknowledge the administration of medication. Parents give written consent for the staff to seek emergency medical treatment or advice. The owners all hold first aid certificates ensuring children will receive treatment promptly if an accident occurs on the premises and a fully stocked first aid box is in place, which is easily accessible in an emergency.

Children benefit from a clean and well-maintained environment. Staff implement good hygiene procedures to protect the children and promote their good health effectively. Tables and work surfaces are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray and staff wash their hands after dealing with bodily fluids. They use disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies to protect the children and themselves. They also ensure the changing mat is cleaned thoroughly after each use, helping to prevent the possible spread of infection. One of the owners now holds a food hygiene certificate, ensuring the preparations of all snacks are in line with current guidelines. Children are beginning to learn the importance of personal hygiene and are developing good self-care skills through daily discussions and routines. For example, they are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times and talk about 'washing away the germs'.

Children benefit from a nutritious diet because staff have a good understanding of healthy eating. The nursery provides an extensive range of fresh fruit and vegetables at snack time. Children talk about their favourite foods and the type of food that is good for them. Snack time is used well as a social event, promoting the children's table manners well, encouraging them to say 'please' and 'thank you' at appropriate times. Staff discuss the children's needs with the parents and ensure all details of their medical, cultural and parental preferences are recorded, ensuring the children's needs are being fully met.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle as they talk about exercise being good for them and often go for walks to local parks, reaping the benefits of the fresh air. Children have ample opportunities to develop their large muscle skills as they participate in a wide range of activities inside and outdoors. They practise their balancing and climbing skills as they take part in obstacle courses and develop their hand to eye co-ordination during games, throwing and catching balls and bean bags. Children are learning to move their bodies with good control during musical movement, using their imaginations exceptionally well as they emulate the movements of insects and animals during the activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are secure and the staff provide a safe environment because they are vigilant and remove any possible hazards immediately. Children are gently reminded of the rules and are learning to keep themselves safe through discussion and daily routines. For example, they all

know they must not run in the nursery and they know what happens during a fire drill. Most health and safety policies and procedures are in place and are implemented effectively, keeping the children safe. However, the recruitment and vetting procedures do not include health checks at this time, which could have an impact on the children's safety when new staff are appointed. The main door to the building is locked and all visitors have to ring a bell to gain access. They must show their identification if they are unknown and everyone has to sign in and out of the visitor's book, providing a full record of everyone on the premises, helping to keep the children safe.

Children benefit from a wide and varied selection of toys, resources and play equipment which is suitable for their needs. Different selections are used for the different age groups ensuring their individual needs are being met during planned activities. Children have access to a broad selection of resources which are stored in low-level cabinets around the room. They are able to freely choose activities and additional resources to extend their ideas. They know where everything is and often help younger children to locate specific items.

Staff have a very clear understanding of child protection procedures and would recognise the possible signs and symptoms of abuse, helping to safeguard the children who attend. The policies and procedures are shared with parents ensuring they are aware of the setting responsibilities, although the child protection policy is out-of date and the owners are not sure if the correct contact details are in place. This could cause a delay if the staff have to contact the child protection team. Staff ensure all existing injuries are recorded and the policy includes procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff, helping to protect the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly on arrival as they are met at the door by staff. Children are encouraged to hang up their coats and bags, increasing their independence, while staff and parents ensure younger children are assisted as necessary, building their self-esteem. Children are extremely happy and they laugh and giggle throughout the activities, for example, singing and dancing and enthusiastically telling staff what they have been doing. Staff interact with the children exceptionally well, talking to them all the time, making eye contact, playing at their level and showing affection. Staff continually praise and encourage the children helping them to learn different skills. The setting uses the Birth to three matters framework effectively to observe the younger children's progress and staff provide a wide range of experiences for the children alongside their peers. This helps them to settle into the daily routines and ensures the activities and resources are suitable for their needs and stage of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The whole staff team have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and stepping stones. Key workers observe the children's progress and keep detailed records of their achievements. The information gathered is collated and used to inform the curriculum and the key workers also organise and plan individual activities alongside the main curriculum to further support the children, ensuring they all make good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

Staff get to know the children extremely well and their progress records are up-to-date and evaluative. This enables them to set up activities which are aimed at their level of understanding,

providing appropriate challenges and stimulation to hold their interest and ensure they make good progress during planned activities. However, older, more able children are not always sufficiently challenged during everyday activities and routines. For example, staff often pre-cut art work, limiting the children's ability to further develop their skills during free-play. Staff participate fully with enthusiasm and children benefit greatly from the good support and supervision, enabling them to ask questions to learn more, repeat activities and tasks to consolidate their learning and enjoy the attention and conversation with the staff and their peers. Staff are extremely good at asking open-ended questions to extend the children's learning and experiences and ensure they give the children time to think about their responses before answering. This encourages the children and helps to make them feel valued and important members of the group.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. They concentrate well during large group activities, such as story-time and registration. Children share their ideas and understand the rules of the group, often reminding others to share and take turns. Children enjoy handling books as they pretend to read stories to each other. They select their favourite books often ask staff to read to them, developing their understanding that text has meaning. Children recognise letters and are able to link the sounds with ease. They enjoy 'Jolly Phonic' sessions, learning the alphabet while singing songs and matching the correct actions to the letters, laughing and giggling throughout.

Children use mathematical language at every opportunity, describing shapes and using positional words during their play. They talk about quantity and volume during sand and water play, as they guess whether the water or sand from one vessel will fit into another. They count confidently throughout the day and recognise numerals with ease. Children are able to identify simple patterns when matching shapes and colours and older children are beginning to calculate, doing simple addition and subtraction with groups of objects. Children learn about their local environment and talk about the weather daily. They recognise the changes in the weather and describe what the day is like. Children also learn about time through the daily routines and are able to explain what will happen next at any given time. They use their imaginations extremely well during role-play. The number of children in the home corner is limited to four at any one time, enabling the children to fully develop and extend their own ideas. Children are able to recognise and name an extensive range of musical instruments. They play them with confidence and talk about the different types of sounds they make. Children are beginning to learn about beat and tempo as they begin to recognise sound repetition and patterns.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a very clear understanding of equal opportunities and ensure the comprehensive policy is implemented effectively throughout the day. Children have equal access to all activities and a wide range of multi-cultural resources. They learn about the world around them through activities and planned topics and themes. Staff get to know the children and their families extremely well, building strong and trusting relationships, which help the children to feel secure and valued as part of the group. Staff talk to them about their siblings and other family members, building their confidence effectively. Staff discuss the needs of all children in detail with the parents and record the information clearly in their registration forms, ensuring their practice reflects their needs. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well because staff implement the clear rules and boundaries effectively. Children know what is expected of them and are keen to please the staff team. A clear behaviour

management policy is implemented effectively and consistently across the staff team, ensuring the children receive the same messages from all members of staff. Staff deal with unwanted behaviour exceptionally well. They are calm and relaxed and always give clear instructions to the children, ensuring they understand and offering alternatives so they can see they have been treated fairly. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are strongly supported in the setting. The special needs co-ordinator is experienced and works closely with the parents and other agencies to ensure all children can participate fully in all aspects of the nursery.

Children benefit from the exceptionally strong lines of communication between the setting and their families. Parents and children are made to feel extremely welcome on arrival as staff greet them at the door and share information about the children's individual needs. Parents have access to a full set of policies, helping them to understand how the nursery operates. A complaints procedure is shared with the parents, although it still includes Ofsted's old contact details, which may prevent the parents from making contact with the regulatory body if they had any concerns about the setting.

The partnership with parents of children who receive funding for early education is good. Parents receive good quality information about the nursery's aims and objectives for the children. The prospectus also includes detailed information about the curriculum and the Foundation Stage, helping them to understand what the nursery does and how their children learn through play. Parents are extremely well informed about their children's progress through daily discussion, written reports each term and access to their children's records at any time on request. Children benefit from the strong links between parents and their key workers, building good relationships and providing a supportive learning environment for them. When the children first attend the parents are required to complete a detailed registration form with one of the owners about their child's achievements at home. They are able to discuss their child's ongoing progress with their child's key worker at any time. However, there are currently no opportunities for parents to make written contributions about their children, limiting their involvement with their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well supported and supervised throughout their time at the nursery. Staff deployment is effective ensuring staff are vigilant. They are skilled at working closely with the children and still overseeing the nursery as a whole. This enables them to intervene when necessary, ensuring all children benefit from the extensive range of activities and resources available. Children benefit from the well-organised daily routines. The sessions run smoothly and staff are aware of their individual roles and responsibilities, providing a stimulating learning environment. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. All staff have a clear understanding of the registration and inspection process, helping to ensure the children's health, safety and general well-being are promoted effectively in most areas, although the recruitment and vetting procedures, the complaints policy and the child protection policy needs to be improved to further safeguard the children.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. Clear roles and responsibilities are defined; ensuring every member of the team knows exactly what is expected of them. This provides a well-organised and relaxed environment for the children. The owners are knowledgeable and have a clear vision of what they want to provide for all the children who attend. They play a very active role in the nursery. The owners are extremely supportive and enthusiastic, encouraging and motivating the staff team successfully. Staff are strongly

supported and enjoy their time in the setting, building good relationships with the children and their families. The owners complete annual appraisals and regularly observe practice and the delivery of the curriculum by staff to assess the setting's own strengths and weaknesses. Staff are fully conversant with the overall objectives of the planned curriculum, providing a well-balanced programme for the children.

The owners effectively monitor and evaluate the nursery education. The needs of each child are discussed in detail with the key workers and their observations and records are used to inform the curriculum, ensuring children's individual needs are being met. Daily activities are evaluated and practice is amended as necessary to improve the quality and achieve the desired learning goals for the children. The written evaluations are used as a working tool and staff often refer to them when planning activities to check how it went last time and see if anything needs to be changed. The whole staff team are fully committed to improving the quality of care and nursery education for all children. They are enthusiastic and motivated, attending training and increasing their knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals effectively. Children benefit greatly because the staff are keen to ensure many learning opportunities are available to help the children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure at least one member of staff holds a food hygiene certificate and to ensure parents sign to acknowledge the administration of medication. They were also asked to ensure the daily attendance register includes children's arrival and departure times and the number of staff present. One of the owners has completed a food hygiene certificate, ensuring appropriate procedures are followed during the preparation of snacks and parents now sign the medication records to acknowledge the administration of all medication. Staff are now included in the daily attendance register, ensuring a full record of all adults present is maintained and the arrival and departure times of children is now included maintaining an accurate record.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to ensure the planning and organisation of continuous curriculum activities, for example role-play, incorporates specific learning intentions and to increase the opportunity for children to understand and solve simple number problems in everyday activities and routines. They were also asked to increase the challenge set for all children with particular emphasis on outdoor physical play and using different equipment. The owners have reviewed the curriculum planning to ensure the learning intentions are clear. The role-play area is now themed and linked with topics, ensuring the play is purposeful with clear learning intentions for all children. Activities such as calculating how many cups are needed at the tables during snack-time have been introduced to develop the children's problem-solving skills effectively and they now have access to a wide range of physical activities. The children practise climbing on the climbing frame, complete obstacle courses and use the parachute with skill, providing adequate challenges during their outdoor play.

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 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 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):

- update the child protection policy to include information about the Local Safeguarding Children Board and update the complaints policy to include Ofsted's correct contact details
- improve the recruitment and vetting procedures to include health checks.

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):

- ensure sufficient challenges are provided for older, more able children during everyday activities and routines
- provide opportunities for parents to make written contributions to their children's records throughout the year.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk