

Windmill Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY347405
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Inspector	Christine Lynn Williams
Setting Address	Windmill Pre - School Midlands Ltd, 68 Bromsgrove Road, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 4RN
Telephone number	07759350156
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Registered person	Windmill Pre-School Midland Ltd (5309202)
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Windmill Nursery opened in 2007. It is one of three privately owned settings within the Windmill group. The nursery operates from a detached house in Redditch and is within walking distance of the town centre. A maximum of 41 children may attend at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:30 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 38 children receive funding for early education. This includes funding for two year-olds. Children attend from the local area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 members of staff. Of these, 10 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a local authority mentor teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is exceptionally well protected because staff make recognising and reducing any possible risks a high priority. All aspects of children health have been carefully considered and thoughtfully implemented. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, with effective cleaning routines, rotas and cleaning schedules used to ensure a high level of hygiene is maintained at all times. For example, staff wear gloves during nappy changing and when handling food, babies bed linen is frequently changed and their comforters, drinking cups and bottles are sterilised after use. Baskets are used to hold individual children's personal belongings, toiletries and nappies and this ensures that young children's personal needs are met in line with parental preferences. There are excellent facilities for supporting children in learning good personal hygiene. The toilet and hand washing areas in the pre-school area have been creatively decorated with children's topic work and this provides an interesting environment that they want to visit regularly. Colourful cartoon characters remind them to always wash their hands after going to the toilet and low level hand basins, liquid soap and paper towels all encourage children to move towards independence. Most staff are first aid trained and some are trained in procedures to support children with specific health needs; for example, Epi Pen and Volumatic inhaler training. This gives opportunities for a wider range of children to experience day care. Well stocked first aid boxes are kept on each floor and these are regularly checked and replenished. Accident and children's medication details are appropriately recorded and are discussed during staff meetings. This ensures staff are constantly monitoring the impact these may have on children's health.

Arrangements for promoting children's physical development is outstanding. Staff understand the physical needs of the youngest children being cared for and provide plenty of space for babies and toddlers to roll, crawl and kick. They carefully support babies when learning to sit and make the most of a purpose designed sensory room to support children's senses and large and small muscle development. For example, babies enjoy the experience of sitting in the ball pool and stand and hold on to soft play blocks. They also look at themselves in mirrors and watch the light reflecting off colour-changing rope lights. Toddlers, climb, scramble, roll and jump from soft play blocks into the ball pit and excitedly throw balls and show wonder at the feel and texture of different surfaces.

Pre-school children get plenty of robust physical exercise and learn to move confidently and imaginatively. Outdoor play, yoga sessions, soft play and lots of action songs, ring games and trips to the park provide them with exceptional opportunities to develop strong skills and a clear understanding of the importance of exercise as part of a healthy life-style. The nursery garden is used extensively during all seasons, where children learn to use their bodies in new and exciting ways. There are climbing frames, sit and rides, play houses, sand pits and large tyres in which to jump in and out. They dig, explore and investigate in the outdoor 'living island' area and enjoy sowing seeds and planting out the vegetables, herbs and sunflowers they have grown. Yoga sessions are used effectively to help children understand what happens to their bodies when they are active. They stretch their muscles, learn to relax by making their bodies floppy and are shown how breathing in and out has a different effect on how their bodies feel. Three and four year-olds show a highly developed sense of personal space as they play alongside each other. They peddle their sit-and-rides skilfully to avoid obstacles and develop excellent ways of ensuring that they do not bang into their friends. For example, they use large coloured discs to sit on at circle time and are taught how extend their arms to find a suitable space to

move freely during yoga sessions and action songs. Daily use of paint, construction, cutting and drawing tools help children develop good hand and finger control, while soft play in the sensory room provides additional challenge and excitement.

Children are provided with nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks and staff show an excellent understanding of the importance of providing children with good nutrition in order for them to become physically strong and healthy. All meals, snacks and drinks have been very carefully considered in terms of content, availability, access and the healthy eating messages provided. Outside caterers provide hot meals for children and in addition parents are able to choose to provide packed lunches or send in ready prepared food for their children for re-heating. This provides parents with a wide choice and the ability to fully control what their children eat. A balanced range of menus is offered, using seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables. Water dispensers are used in the pre-school and toddler rooms to allow children to freely help themselves to drinks at all times. Babies have their own cups and feeder beakers, and staff constantly monitor these to ensure children always drink sufficient. Snacks are carefully chosen to include a wide selection of healthy options including fruit, crackers, pitta bread and fresh vegetables. Pre-school children enjoy the benefits of a flexible snack time where they can sit in small, sociable groups. Large bowls of fruit are laid out, and they help themselves to this, spread their own crackers, and chat happily with their friends. Snack choices are displayed using photographs so that the children know what is on offer each day and careful support helps them to become independent at an early age. Cooking activities and topic work are also used to support children's understanding of healthy eating and staff are skilled at holding meaningful discussions and making positive comments about healthy foods.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a colourful and stimulating atmosphere where indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively and they can learn, explore and develop safely and with close adult support. There is a high ratio of well qualified adults to the number of children present, and staff are carefully deployed, ensuring children are always well supervised. Colourful displays and children's craft work are creatively used to stimulate interest and provide a rich, child-friendly environment. Children enjoy using a diverse range of toys and resources which are attractively laid out to allow them to easily choose what they want to play with. Treasure baskets are used to best effect with toddlers and babies, and provide a variety of different textures and household objects which children can freely explore. The baby and toddler rooms are well resourced, however, there is no domestic-style furniture available to aid very young children in developing early mobility skills, such as standing and pulling themselves up.

Safety has been carefully considered throughout the nursery, and staff place a high priority on ensuring all possible risks have been minimised. Detailed arrival and departure procedures are followed explicitly and a log book is used to carefully record times when children are taken for walks or to the park. This identifies such things as the number of staff accompanying the children, the route to be taken, duration of the trip and the expected time of leaving and returning. Sleeping children are well protected with staff checking them every few minutes and staying close by at all times. Comprehensive risk assessments form the basis of all safety features within the nursery and are used to check for hazards and risks both indoors, outside, during activities and outings. These are used to decide what areas need attention and to develop action plans for making changes. Clear procedures ensure children are collected only by authorised people. Parents are asked to inform staff if a child is to be collected by anyone else

and a password system is used as an extra precaution. Lost and uncollected child policies also enable staff to respond appropriately should either incident occur.

Adults have a good understanding of how to protect children, and recognise that this is their first priority. They are vigilant, aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child. Good policies and reference guides are kept close to hand at all times and this ensures that current, best practice regarding child protection is always followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from staff's caring attitude and enthusiasm for providing high quality learning experiences. They plan and provide activities to help children's development in line with the 'Birth to three matters' approach and the Foundation Stage curriculum and carefully observe and assess children's progress. Staff are well qualified, attentive and playfully respond to children's actions, expressions and what they say. A keyworker system is used very effectively to gain information about young children's starting points, individual routines, needs and preferences and provides a continuity of care that ensures children feel secure and nurtured.

Babies and young children are very well cared for because staff have a good understanding of their needs. Staff are comfortable in using their initiative to change routines and practices to meet the individual needs of children and organise their time effectively to allow them to hold and play with babies and toddlers. Young children are widely encouraged to use their senses through such things as treasure baskets or jelly play and mirrors are used extensively to help babies and toddlers to start to recognise things about themselves and know what they look like. For example, they showed great excitement when they discovered that they could see themselves from all angles in a prism of mirrors. Topics such as 'under the sea' help young children to discover new things, and they use their imagination widely and act out familiar situations through role play and dressing up. Children are grouped very effectively according to their age and stage of development. Some rising three year-olds play alongside and learn from their older friends in the pre-school room, but are also given special attention by their keyworker, who ensures they are kept active and interested through developmentally appropriate activities. There is lots of singing and dancing, and toddlers often rock as they listen to taped music or begin to join in with the actions to their favourite rhymes. Planning and learning assessments are highly effective and regularly adapted to reflect children's strengths and learning needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are encouraged to be confident, enthusiastic and motivated learners due to the wealth of creatively designed activities which help them to make excellent progress in all areas of their learning. Photographs showing how the children have worked through projects, along with displays of children's art and topic work, are creatively used to provide a highly stimulating environment, while labelling, symbols and pictures allow children to self-select resources and playthings. A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's confidence and self esteem and staff form close relationships with the children, set excellent role models for behaviour and use carefully considered questions to help children think, and so extend their own learning. A comprehensively designed educational programme is offered. Planning and assessment have been regularly adapted to ensure children's strengths and learning needs have been quickly identified, over a short period of time. Staff

show a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and are flexible in their approach, showing a dedication to reflective practice and using highly creative ideas to inspire the children in their care. They are playful adults who value children's creativity and independent learning and work closely with the children to join in and spark their imaginations.

Children show high levels of enthusiasm, independence and consideration for others due to the wealth of activities provided to develop their personal, social and emotional development. This underpins the rest of children's learning and ensures they are willing and eager to try new things. They make the most of the wonderful atmosphere within the pre-school area, laughing, showing excitement and becoming fully absorbed in what they are doing. Puppets and soft toys are used extraordinarily well to encourage good behaviour, listening skills, being sociable and caring for others and children also show a high level of independence in their self-care. For example, they learn to take off their own shoes when getting ready for yoga and to tidy away their toys. They also go to the toilet and wash their hands independently, help themselves to fruit and crackers at the snack bar each morning and choose what they want to play with.

Children's development in the area of communication language and literacy is very strong. They are expressive speakers who talk freely at circle times, during activities and when discussing their favourite stories and books. They enjoy a good selection of quality story and reference books, and often make up and act out their own version of favourite stories using soft toys, props and puppets. Story tapes are enjoyed in the inspiring atmosphere of the sensory room and children also choose and take home books to share with their families. A phonic learning system and animal characters are used imaginatively to help children to link sounds to letters and they see a wide range of familiar words displayed around their learning rooms. As a result, some four year-olds are beginning to recognise simple words. Children have excellent opportunities to recognise their own name and they make marks freely as they draw and use paint and dough. Lots of activities are offered to encourage children to develop early writing skills and some older children write their own name on their craft work and help to make labels for displays.

Children show they are developing strong and positive attitudes to mathematics. Counting and number recognition is threaded through most activities. These include purposeful first-hand experiences such as counting the number of children and adults present, or how many domino cards they have left. Numbers are widely displayed around the room and children enthusiastically count up and down on their fingers during number rhymes. They regularly hear staff using mathematical language such as big, small, thick and thin and show a clear understanding of shape and size.

Staff support children's learning in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world exceptionally well, providing a wealth of exploration activities that encourage children to observe, question and explore with natural curiosity. They explore freely as they use sand, water, dig and plant in the garden and have also helped to make a 'living island' from a mound of grass and cress seeds. They learn to care for living things as they sow carrots, beetroot, cucumber and runner beans seeds, watch them grow and then plant them out in the nursery garden. These will be harvested later and then enjoyed during snack times. An outdoor treasure chest full of interesting household objects such as pipes, cardboard boxes and carpet are used creatively by the children to build dens, houses and bridges and they use magnets, cooking activities and topics to fully extend their learning. Children frequently enjoy computer work and show strong skills in using simple programmes to develop their story telling and mathematical skills.

Children's creativity is highly valued and encouraged. They use their imaginations widely, make up their own games and stories and act out familiar roles. For example, they used an outdoor play house, and grew bean plants, to act out the story of Jack and the Bean Stalk. Children express themselves freely through paint, drawing and collage work and they contribute widely to the many inspiring and stimulating displays that decorate their care rooms. Music, singing and movement are an integral part of the nursery day and they join-in enthusiastically at singing times and often sing along to their favourite songs as they play different musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individuality is widely valued and staff build young children's self esteem very effectively by providing lots of opportunities for them to be cuddled and made to feel that they matter. Within the baby and toddler rooms, staff sit on the floor, make eye contact and soothing noises to help young children feel secure. Pre-school children show high levels of enthusiasm, independence and consideration for others because of the positive support and encouragement they receive. Children settle quickly and develop a strong sense of belonging within the nursery. They all have a key member of staff to relate to and this helps them to form close relationships with the adults that care for them. Detailed information about children is gained in advance so that staff can plan ahead to meet their individual needs. This is done through such things as daily care diaries and consulting parents about children's normal daily routines and starting points. Positive praise and close attention is used extensively with the youngest children in the nursery. Staff give babies and toddlers their full attention, actively respond to their smiles and the noises they make and use gentle words and expressive tones. This helps even the youngest children to understand how it feels to be praised. Pre-school aged children behave exceptionally well, responding positively to the clear guidelines and high expectations set by staff. Social rules are explained through the good examples set by staff and clear instructions are given so that three and four year-olds understand what is expected from them. Praise and positive comments are used unreservedly and this results in children feeling good about themselves. Stickers and stars are used effectively to encourage negotiation and to reward pre-school children for such things as being kind, helping to tidy away their toys or sitting and listening really well.

Children develop a good understanding of the wider world as they use and play with carefully selected resources that acknowledge our diverse society. Staff talk and involve children of all ages in activities which help them to become aware of themselves as part of a family group, understand differences and similarities and develop positive attitudes towards other people. For example, low level mirrors are used effectively to help babies and toddlers to recognise the differences between themselves and their friends, while good quality story books and playthings highlight different cultures, beliefs and religions. All children are fully included and staff work closely and collaboratively with parents, physiotherapists, social workers and other outside agencies when necessary. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit significantly from the strong relationship between their parents and staff. They are always warmly greeted and staff take the time to talk to them in detail about their children. A wealth of comprehensive information is made available to parents about the setting's aims and practice. This includes such things as a prospectus, daily care diaries, newsletters, curriculum plans, posters and notices. Food menus and assessments of children's learning and development are also readily available to see and there are daily discussions with key workers as well as parent meetings. Parents of

three and four year-olds have extensive opportunities to share in what their children are learning and often comment on the highly creative displays used to help them understand the topics, themes and activities their children have been involved in. They take home books to share with their children and newsletters keep them well informed of such things as the letters sounds being promoted. Parents views are always valued and respected and they are able to make their thoughts known through a suggestion box and questionnaire. There is also a well considered complaints procedure and recording system in place to ensure that any concerns are recorded and promptly acted upon.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is supported by enthusiastic and committed staff and strong leadership. The nursery owner has a clear vision for how the nursery should be run and further developed. Many creative and innovative procedures and initiatives have been recently implemented, with others planned for the near future. This has had a positive impact on the level of care offered to children throughout the nursery, although some of these initiatives, particularly within the baby and toddler rooms, have not yet been in place long enough to have had full effect. Careful consideration has been given to the deployment and use of staff time, resources and space, and daily routines reflect the high level of evaluation and reflective thinking carried out by both staff and management. For example, staff willingly try out new ways of working and take the time to review and refine their practice in order to provide positive outcomes for the children in their care. Staff are well qualified and there is a strong commitment to on-going staff development. Employment systems are robust, with all staff appropriately checked to ensure they are suitable to work with children. A detailed evaluation of how well things are going lies at the heart of the nursery's commitment to improvement and views about its strengths and weaknesses are constantly sought from staff and parents.

Leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. Strong leadership and creative and innovative staff provide a rich and exciting environment that supports children's learning and development to the full. Exceptional attention has been given to learning about the different personalities, preferences and strengths of the children being cared for and as a result, children are likely to make outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. A highly flexible approach to planning and the curriculum has been taken, so that staff can quickly assess what stage each child is at and begin to move them forward according to their needs, interests and abilities. The nursery owner and manager fully involves her staff in the decision making and planning processes, meets with staff regularly and often works alongside them. There is a strong commitment to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the educational programme offered and a high emphasis placed on reflective practice, particularly in relation to the social relationships being formed between staff and children. As a result, a 'Can Do' ethos has been developed by both children and staff.

A good range of effective documentation, policies and records ensure children's health, safety and well-being are always carefully considered. There is an extensive operational plan, which has been developed in line with the outcomes for children, and this contains clear policies and procedures, highlights staff responsibilities and specific roles and provides staff with good practice advice. This operational plan is available to parents at all times. Overall the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 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 good. 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

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

- improve the use of domestic style furniture to further assist babies in developing mobility such as standing and pulling themselves up.

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 *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