

Willow House Children's Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311267
Inspection date	14 September 2007
Inspector	Karen Cockings
Setting Address	Colne Rd, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD1 3AY
Telephone number	01484 428479
E-mail	
Registered person	Broad oak Children's Nursery Association
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Willow House Nursery is one of several childcare settings run by Broadoak Children's Nursery Association, which is a registered charity and a limited company, managed by a voluntary management committee. The nursery opened in 2000 and operates from a single storey building close to Huddersfield town centre. There are three rooms available for children's play and an enclosed garden for outdoor activities. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open every weekday throughout the year from 08.00 until 18.00 except Bank Holidays, offering full day care or sessional places.

There are currently 26 children from birth to five years on roll, of whom eight receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area as most of their parents travel into the town to work or are students at the university. The setting supports a number of children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications or are working towards them. The setting receives support from the local authority and the management committee includes parent representatives.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a healthy, well balanced diet which includes a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. The cook plans a varied menu to cover an eight week period, taking care to provide vegetarian options. She has a good awareness of children's individual dietary needs. The nursery has achieved the Kirklees Gold Award for food hygiene and healthy eating practice. Children enjoy meal times and most eat very well. Second helpings are available if they wish. Older children show growing independence as they carefully pour their own drinks, while babies like to try to feed themselves.

There are regular opportunities for children to enjoy fresh air and exercise, which help them to keep fit and well. They like to play in the garden and show great excitement as they explore new outdoor play equipment donated to the nursery. They shake colourful streamers and use large arm and body movements as they play with hula hoops. They practice balancing and climbing on the slide, stepping stones and beams. They throw balls through the hoops and carefully steer wheeled toys around the play area. Younger children develop confidence in themselves as they pull themselves up to a standing position and crawl around exploring their environment.

The nursery is suitably clean and comfortable. Staff follow good hygiene practice, such as cleaning tables with anti-bacterial spray before children have their meals. Children gain independence in managing their own personal care and learn that they need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They put on aprons before they paint or play in the water tray. They have a good awareness of the need to wear their caps when playing outside in sunny weather and know that they need sun cream to protect their skin.

The majority of staff have a current first aid certificate and first aid materials are readily accessible. Records are maintained of all accidents and medication administered to children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in secure premises where the outer door is kept locked and notices posted to remind parents about the need for careful supervision on leaving the building. Safety gates are fitted to restrict unsupervised access to certain areas. Staff create a welcoming environment for children by displaying their work and hanging colourful fabrics around the nursery walls. Children have sufficient space to move around and to explore. There is easy access to toilet facilities for the older children, which encourages them to be independent in managing their own personal care.

Some rooms in the building become very hot at times, despite the use of curtains and fans. Temperatures in the under twos rooms can be particularly high as staff are not able to open all windows fully to ventilate them. As a result, there are times when babies are flushed and irritable. Staff try to remedy this by using fans but have not fully considered associated safety hazards, such as trailing wires, for crawling babies and toddlers. Some sockets are left uncovered in the main play room where at times all age groups are together.

Children learn how to use the environment and equipment safely because staff give gentle reminders. For example, they show children how to use scissors properly and remind them not

to run around too much indoors. Activities are sometimes planned to raise children's awareness of safety issues, such as making a zebra crossing in the garden and teaching children how to cross roads safely. Children are also involved in regular fire drills. Many resources are stored at child height so that they can be easily accessed.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection. There are guidance materials available about the procedures to follow if they have concerns about any child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at nursery and make steady progress in their development. On arrival they are greeted warmly by familiar staff who set out interesting play activities for them. Most children settle quickly to an activity of their choice. All children are grouped together at first, which creates a family atmosphere. Babies and toddlers like to crawl around the play room, exploring their environment and showing curiosity about toys and play materials. Older children enjoy contact with them and are interested in what they are doing. Later in the morning the younger children move into their own play areas where they are cared for by staff who know them well and are attentive to their individual needs. For example, they know which children do not like having nappies changed and try to make it more pleasurable for them by providing a toy to distract them and talking and singing to children as they work.

Children take part in a variety of activities to support their learning and development. Most staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework but are not yet fully confident in their planning for this age group. They are considering ways of developing plans to meet the needs of the younger children. They provide, however, some interesting sensory resources, which encourage babies and toddlers to explore. For example, there is a low level sensory frieze with a variety of textures for the children to touch and investigate. Children also like to explore items in the treasure basket and to handle the home made shakers.

Older children have opportunities for free play and to take part in focused activities. They are familiar with daily routines, such as snack and group times, which help them to feel comfortable and secure. Staff plan specific activities each day but some aspects of the continuous play provision are not exploited fully. For example, resources at the water tray are not well organised to stimulate children's thinking and there are insufficient opportunities for children to explore a range of media and materials.

Children build very positive relationships with each other and with the adults who care for them. They enjoy each other's company, seeking out special friends and giving staff and other children friendly hugs and greetings. Staff show interest in what children say and do, which helps to develop children's confidence.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory, which ensures that children make acceptable progress in most areas of their development. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, using it appropriately to inform their planning. However, some areas of learning are not given sufficient priority and as a result children do not have the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge fully. For example, children have not recently been able to access the computer and other programmable toys because they are broken. There are

limited opportunities for children to learn about the world around them through outings and visitors to the setting. However, children develop an interest in nature as they observe tadpoles and watch them growing and changing. They hunt for insects and small creatures in the garden and they like to fit the train track together and to build models with construction toys. Activities are sometimes planned to raise their awareness of different cultures and beliefs.

Children are interested and motivated to learn. They are very excited by new outdoor equipment and eagerly test this out. They demonstrate growing independence as they pour their own drinks and put on aprons before painting. Strong attachments develop between children and with the adults who care for them. They show care and concern for others as they talk to an adult about an expected new baby and say they will miss her when she leaves. They particularly like the special dolls which they are able to take home and share with their families.

Many of the children use language well to communicate with each other and to express their own needs. Rhymes and songs are a great favourite and children join in with lots of enthusiasm. They have an extensive repertoire and like to join in with relevant actions. There is lots of conversation when all the children are sitting together at meal times. Children enjoy books and stories both independently and with the whole group. Some like to pretend they are the teacher, holding the book so that the children can see it. They are beginning to link sounds to letters as they join in planned activities and find their name labels at lunch time. Children show emerging writing skills as they draw, paint and attempt to write their names on their work. However, opportunities for mark making are not always extended to other areas, such as in the role play area.

Children develop good counting skills because they are often involved in number rhymes and counting activities. They usually count to three before they start a new song and they spontaneously count each other and the numbers of cups on the table. Staff plan activities to help children to learn about different shapes. For example, they paint and decorate different shapes for display and to hang in the garden. Staff then organise active games, where children run to the shapes they recognise. However, opportunities for children to explore other mathematical concepts, such as volume and measurement are more limited.

Children's creativity is nurtured as they paint and make small models and collages. They enjoy helping to make items for the wall displays and use their imaginations as they play in the role play area with dolls and utensils. Children tend to use the home corner independently, putting dolls to bed and pretending to feed them. However, the area is not always used fully to stimulate and extend children's enjoyment and learning. At times children are very imaginative as they find resources to represent other objects. For example, they use a large piece of blue fabric to represent the sea and a child makes himself into a ladybird by putting a red cushion on his back. Children enjoy the musical instruments and learn many songs and rhymes.

Staff find out about children's interests from parents who are asked to complete an 'All about me' information sheet, which is included in children's records. They also undertake regular observations of children to help them to monitor children's progress and plan for the next steps in children's learning. A tracking system records progression through the stepping stones and key workers use observations to compile children's development folders. There is a good balance of freely chosen and focused activities. Staff take a positive approach with children, which helps to develop their confidence and builds self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are warmly welcomed into the nursery. They feel a sense of belonging as they see their work on display around them and become familiar with daily routines. They are cared for by friendly staff who get to know them well and are responsive to them as individuals. Some activities are planned to help children to learn about the world around them and resources reflect positive images of different cultures and needs. The children participate in special events locally, such as the opening of the new bridge, but the location of the nursery limits the possibilities for regular outings. Staff work appropriately with parents and other professionals where children have additional needs.

Staff give lots of praise and encouragement, which helps children to feel good about themselves. Appropriate strategies are used to help children to manage their own behaviour and where necessary, staff seek advice from other professionals. Children learn to play cooperatively together and to consider the feelings of others. They develop a sense of responsibility as they help to keep the play room tidy and learn to take care when the younger children are crawling near them. The effective use of empathy dolls enables children to think and talk about feelings. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are invited to share what they know about their child with the key worker as part of the discussion before children are admitted.

Relationships with staff are positive and there is ongoing communication about daily events and children's progress. A daily record sheet is produced for the younger children so that parents know about significant events of their child's day. Notice boards are used effectively to display helpful information for parents about the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Parents may see their children's development folders on request. Staff have found that parents' evenings and suggestion boxes have not proved very successful in the past although open day events have been well attended. Parents may be involved in the operation of the setting by becoming members of the management committee. However, there is potential for the promotion of more active involvement of parents generally in their children's learning.

Required parental consents are secured and records, such as accident and medication records are shared with them. Policies and procedures are available for them to see but are not made easily accessible to them unless they ask. Procedures are in place for dealing with any concerns and staff are aware of the requirements with regard to the investigation and recording of complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery is suitably organised to support children's play, welfare and learning. There are appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure that children are protected and cared for by staff who are suitable to do so. The management is able to bring in additional staff from other parts of the organisation to cover absences when necessary. Staff generally work well together and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities each day.

Space and resources are organised to enable children to enjoy a variety of play experiences and staff ensure that they are able to give children the support they need. There is a willingness to attend additional training to further develop skills and practice. A collection of policies and procedures help the setting to run smoothly and are regularly reviewed and updated.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager routinely spends time working alongside staff so that she is able to oversee their practice and to give support as needed. This also enables her to get to know children and their parents well. Through the appraisal system, training needs and areas for improvement are identified. Senior staff oversee the planning for the educational provision but evaluation is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all areas are fully developed. There is commitment to the continuous improvement of the setting, reflected in the cooperative working with other professionals, such as the community teacher.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to improve staff appraisal systems, develop the planning of activities for older children and to ensure that the children's toilets are kept in a suitable state of decoration. A formal appraisal system has now been introduced and is used to identify staff training needs as well as helping to determine an overall training plan for the nursery. This is one of the ways in which the management reviews the setting and works towards improvement.

The provider has sought advice from the local authority and advisory teachers visit regularly. This has helped the staff to develop planning to ensure that the needs of children in the different age groups are addressed. The children's toilet area was redecorated following the inspection, improving the overall environment for children.

A number of recommendations were made following the last nursery education inspection. The provider agreed to increase staff's knowledge of the early learning goals, to extend opportunities for children to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts, to recognise their name and link letters to sounds. It was also recommended that children be encouraged to use tools such as pens and that opportunities for them to move imaginatively to music be extended.

Staff have attended training, which has increased their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and developed their observation and assessment skills. This means that they are better equipped to help children to make progress towards the early learning goals. Staff ensure that there are opportunities through focused activities and daily routines for children to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts, particularly around number and counting. Opportunities for children to make simple calculations and to begin to understand weight, measurement and volume are still more limited. Children are learning to recognise their own names as they find their name labels in the entrance hall and at the lunch table. They also try to write their own names on their work. Staff plan activities to help children begin to link sounds to letters.

Children have regular access to tools, such as pens, crayons and paintbrushes, which helps to build their confidence in handling and controlling them. Opportunities for children to practise writing for a purpose are not yet fully exploited. For example, there are not always writing materials in role play areas. Children enjoy many songs and rhymes and they explore sound and music when handling musical instruments. As a result, children are making steady progress in most areas although there is potential for some aspects of learning to be further promoted.

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 record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- assess risks to children in relation to the use of electrical fans and take action to address them, while ensuring that equable temperatures are maintained
- consider ways of sharing policies and procedures more effectively with parents
- continue to develop planning systems to support different age groups and to identify the next steps in their learning.

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):

- consider further ways of involving parents in their children's learning
- improve monitoring systems to ensure that all areas of learning are fully promoted and to develop aspects of continuous provision, such as role play and creative areas.

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