

Willow Tree Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY280609
Inspection date	19 July 2007
Inspector	Gillian Cubitt / Marcia Robinson
Setting Address	Academy Road, Woolwich, London, SE18 4DJ
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Registered person	Kathryn Cann
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Willow Tree pre-school is a registered charity and is owned and managed by an elected parent committee. It opened in 1975 and operates from two rooms, plus ancillary rooms, in a purpose-built nursery building. It is situated on Woolwich Common in Greenwich. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 14:45 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from three to under five years on roll of these 24 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and attend both part time and full time. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff. Four staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are very well cared for in a clean and tidy environment, where they benefit from good hygiene and cleaning practises. They are learning about personal hygiene as part of their daily routine as staff encourage them to wash hands at the appropriate times. Children's understanding of the procedure for hand washing is further supported by a pictorial display in the toilets. This is particularly useful as a reminder for younger children that washing hands reduces the risk of infection and cross contamination. Children's health is also promoted well by staff who implement good hygiene procedures in the kitchen when preparing food. For example, they use colour coded chopping boards and cleaning cloths which support good health and hygiene practises. Children's welfare, in the event of sickness, infectious illnesses and accidents is ensured because the setting has developed and discussed policies and procedures to follow with parents. Parents receive information about appropriate healthy foods for lunch boxes and they are encouraged to use the fridge for foods that need to be kept cool.

Children benefit from staff's secure understanding about the procedures to follow in the event of any accident, illness and any administration of medication. An appropriate number of staff hold a valid first aid certificate and the first aid box is generally well stocked. Written parental consent to seek any emergency medical advice and treatment is in place which ensures children's health is safeguarded well.

Children enjoy relaxed and sociable snack times as they chat happily together. They eat a range of healthy and balanced snacks, such as, crackers and a selection of fresh fruit with a choice of water or milk to drink. Children are developing their independence skills as they spread their crackers with jam, pour their own drinks and put their plates and cups in a bowl when they have finished. This reinforces children understanding of hygiene procedures. Children also help themselves to water throughout the day from a water station, which helps them to be aware of their bodily needs in warm weather.

Children make the most of fresh air and have good opportunities to develop their physical skills to develop healthy bodies. They have access to a safe outdoor area where staff set up a good range of interesting activities and apparatus, such as climbing frames, bikes, play tunnels and imaginative play areas. The provision for physical and outdoor play is well planned for within the Foundation Stage for the setting.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a setting that is set well back from the main road, behind a secure gated and enclosed area. This makes children safe and secure. Staff also conduct effective risk assessments of equipment and the building for children's safety. For example, there are good systems for fire and emergency evacuations which are practised on a regular basis. There are also well maintained security systems, such as a close circuit television and intercom entry into the premises. All visitors are checked for identification to ensure authenticity although they are not always asked to sign the register which is available in reception. Children benefit from an environment that is very purposely designed, bright, welcoming and well maintained. Play areas are decorated with posters and colourful displays of children's photographs and their artwork.

Children move confidently around the environment, both inside and outside. Space is organised well to allow children opportunities to be active within two large rooms, free flowing into the garden and to relax in a comfortable book area or outside sensory area. Children have easy and safe access to a very good range of toys. They benefit from using resources that are safe, suitable and developmentally appropriate for the children attending. Staff make very good use of the garden in order to extend some of the indoor activities and to provide daily opportunities for children to participate in challenging physical play in a safe play environment.

Children's welfare is promoted because key staff are secure in their understanding of child protection issues. Although some staff lack confidence in their understanding of the indicators of abuse they know who to approach if they have concerns and the documentation to complete with regard to recording incidents. There is a policy, which is in the process of being reviewed, showing procedures which is made available to inform parents. This ensures children's wellbeing is protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time because staff plan activities well which stimulates children's curiosity as learners. Staff create a calm, purposeful environment where children's voices are heard and they are responded to with care and respect. Children settle quickly and happily engage in a good variety of activities which are easily accessible. This helps to develop their independence and competence as they are encouraged to experiment with resources. For example, children find fun in using plastic pipes to create descending runways for their small cars. The excitement of the activity develops children's language skills as they become animated in chatting about what they are doing. Staff support children's learning and development by effective planning to meet children's needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress in their individual learning because practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Organisation of the pre-school, as well as effective planning, ensures that all areas of learning are fully covered. Staff record children's achievements and note these in their profile books. These are then discussed at regular team meetings where future activities are planned to meet children's needs. The staff are currently reviewing their methods of monitoring children's progress to give them a clearer picture of children's progress and how activities can be adapted more effectively for children's different ages and capabilities.

Children socialise well because their environment promotes good opportunities for them to take the lead in their own play which builds upon their independence. Children help and support each other when building constructions and give appropriate praise to their friends. Children behave well because they relate to their environment and learn to respect it and others who share their space, working out minor differences in their own way without the need for staff intervention.

Children are drawn into the world of letters and words in a natural way. They start their day by self registering, finding their name and placing it on the board and more confident children start to make marks or write their name at registration. Children see the written word constantly, not only do they have a very good selection of quality reading material but they recognise simple words printed about the room which have a meaning to them for example, 'splish',

'splash' and 'wet' to describe the water play area. This is also one area where children develop their mathematical skills, counting fish and filling up containers. Staff engage children's thoughts in early recognition of numbers, for example, by bringing their attention to the size of their feet and how they can find their number size by looking inside their shoe. Children use a good variety of modern technology such as, interactive toys, calculators as well as older methods, such as, the abacus, to support their growing confidence when counting and calculating.

Children have good opportunities to learn about their environment. They have excellent outside play facilities where they care for plants, especially their tomatoes and potatoes. Staff extend children's understanding of how food is prepared by involving the children in making soup with the items that grow in the garden. Children also go on outings where they learn about how animals live in their natural environment and they explore nature by visiting such places as Godstone Farm and the Environment Centre. When back at the pre-school children play with small world farms and animals which enriches their understanding in their imaginative play.

Children are very confident moving between the two large, well planned rooms as well as the exceptional outside play area. Here, they have plenty of resources to promote all of their large physical development well. They climb, play on mobile equipment and enjoy team games such as 'Rounders' where they learn to take turns as well as improve their hand and eye co-ordination skills. Inside, children benefit because they have access to a wealth of quality resources that help their development and learning. For example, children make play dough, learning the process through adding ingredients, as well as strengthening their fingers through the kneading process. Children also make very good use of resources to create models with cereal boxes and cylinders, developing good skills using scissors, glue spreaders and twine. At snack times, children are also encouraged to spread their own crackers with butter which the children perform with competence. Children's independence is strongly encouraged although opportunities to stretch the capabilities of more able children are not actively planned, such as, taking more responsibilities within the setting and at snack times helping to cut and prepare fruit.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The setting appropriately supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. Some of the staff are able to speak other languages and this helps communication with parents and children alike. Staff gather all relevant information about children, as well as obtaining key words in children's home language at registration. Staff and parents work alongside well to help with children's settling in process. Furthermore, the system of key workers to an identified group of children fully supports children's individual needs. Children learn about different celebrations and religious beliefs through a range of activities, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. A good range of resources and play materials are available that promote positive images of ability and diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are respected and valued as individuals. Their needs are met well as staff follow their normal daily routines as discussed with their parents. Staff work closely with children who have special needs to ensure that they are fully included. For example, they use picture exchange communication symbols and sign language which help children who have learning/hearing difficulties. They also work in close liaison with parents and outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are well planned for and met. Children behave extremely well, they show concern for each other and play harmoniously. Staff act as positive role models, talking politely

to each other and the children. Staff use appropriate strategies to manage behaviour, for instance they are consistently praising and encouraging children.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the close relationships staff have with parents. Some are involved in the management committee of the nursery. Staff and parents share positive verbal information every day about the children's care, development and progress. A notice board, letters and a quarterly newsletter keep parents informed of events and information. Good information is given to parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum, such as the themes and activities and how these relate to the Foundation Stage and the areas of learning. There are formal arrangements to share information about children's progress and development on a frequent basis. For example, there is a system in place whereby parents are encouraged to support and make comments on their children's learning. This is through a shared book and reading scheme, which involves children borrowing books from the nursery library to take home. This helps to foster clear links between home and nursery. On the day of inspection a number of parents expressed how happy they are with the service provided which keeps them fully informed about their children's welfare and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff are qualified and experienced practitioners. Most have worked together for many years and are confident and comfortable of their roles and responsibilities within the team. They are motivated in their work and this is helped by their participation in further training courses. Staff comply with their registration requirements and effective systems are in place for vetting new and temporary staff together as well as committee members. Most policies work in practise to keep children healthy and protected, although some of these have not been updated with current guidelines. All the required documentation is in place, together with clear information on children's attendance with staff noting when children are present. However, the current registration system does not prompt staff to be specific when children arrive late or leave early.

The required adults to child ratios are always maintained and at times exceeded. Children relate well to the consistent staff team where key workers are effective in their role. The organisation of the day provides opportunities for children to have purposeful play both inside and outside with plenty of free choice.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The committee and pre-school manager work well together. The manager is very effective in ensuring that her staff are fully involved in the planning of the children's learning. The group works well with the local Early Years advisors to continually assess their progress and how they can improve methods of monitoring children's progress. Staff attend relevant training for the Foundation Stage and share their knowledge with other members of staff which ensures that all staff follow consistent methods of assessing children's learning. Staff all pull together well and evaluate how children learn at brief daily informal sessions. There are not, however, formal systems of evaluating the methods of teaching.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to update the emergency evacuation procedure. Staff therefore put into operation clear, written fire drills which are carried out frequently which increases children's awareness of safety.

There were no significant weaknesses under the last inspection for education but the provider was asked to give consideration to reviewing the snack time period to support children's development of personal independence. As a result, children now have more involvement with snack times; they spread butter and jam on crackers and help to clear plates away after they have finished which supports their growing independence.

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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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):

- review and update some procedures, such as, safeguarding children to take into account recent legislation and guidance
- improve present systems of children's registration to ensure times of arrival and departure are clearly noted and all visitors 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):

- improve planning to identify how activities can be adjusted to fully challenge more able children
- improve systems that evaluate the methods of teaching

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