

Willows Educare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148968
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Inspector	Heather Tanswell
Setting Address	Heamoor CP School, Bosvenna Way, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 3JZ
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Registered person	Heamoor Pre-School Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 Pre-school and After School Club opened in 1998. The committee run group operates from the Willows Educare building in the grounds of Heamoor County Primary school, a rural village on the outskirts of Penzance, in Cornwall. A maximum of 52 children may attend the provision at any one time. The setting is open from 08:00 until 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. Nursery education sessions run from 09:00 until 11:30 and 12:45 until 15:15 during term times only. The out of school club operates from 08:00 until 08:45 and 15:20 until 18:00 during term times, and from 08:00 until 18:00 during school holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed play area.

There are currently just over 100 children from two to 12 years on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from surrounding towns and villages. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting employs 11 staff of whom 10 have early year's qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3 with four staff currently working towards additional and higher qualifications. The setting

receives support from an advisory teacher from the Local Authority Family Services and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for on clean and tidy premises where staff implement the health and hygiene procedures to make sure children are protected from cross infection. Children are familiar with appropriate hand washing procedures, routinely and independently wash their hands before snack and after using the toilet. There are detailed procedures in place for exchanging information about the administration of medicine. Staff also ensure important information about any outbreaks of illness that occur, go home to minimise risk of further infection and raise general awareness of common childhood diseases and infections. Children are well cared for in the event of an accident because all members of staff are trained in first aid.

All children are developing an awareness of healthy eating habits as they enjoy a variety of nutritious snacks and participate in cooking activities that encourage them to try new flavours and tastes. Children can have a hot lunch provided from the neighbouring school kitchen. Packed lunches brought from home are stored in a fridge, but the storage temperature is not checked, to make sure it stays fresh. Outdoor play is a regular feature of the children's routine and provides a good opportunity for them to play out in the fresh air, run around, and exercise their large muscles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children stay safe and secure inside the premises as staff keep doors that provide entry and exit locked and use a safety gate to prevent children from accessing the kitchen unaccompanied. The outdoor areas are fenced and gated. Children are supervised closely at all times and cannot leave the premises alone unseen. Perimeter gates are bolted, but the outer fence is too low in some places and there is no risk assessment in place to guide staff on what to do if an unauthorised person tries to gain access.

Children use resources and equipment that are maintained in very good condition and sorted away in low-level units so that they can gain easy access. Both playrooms are divided into distinct play areas and adapted as required to encourage children to move safely around the room and have regard for the safety of others. Children are aware of the rules of the setting and handle sharp tools such as scissors very carefully. All children regularly practise fire drills to ensure they know how they can quickly and safely evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and are aware of their reporting responsibilities. They have detailed and recently updated written policies to follow that reflect recent changes in local safeguarding children procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and very happy. This is largely because practitioners are sensitive to and show interest in what children enjoy doing and are curious about. Staff seek out children's ideas about planned topics through discussion. As a result, children influence the range of activities and resources on offer to extend learning through purposeful play, are motivated and fully involved. Staff carefully observe the children as they play, making sure they have the space and resources to explore their ideas imaginatively. Junk materials are especially well used by children as props for creative and imaginary role-play. Tubes become pirate's spyglasses to view the world through, and large boxes put on the heads of pairs of children turn them into galloping, neighing horses.

Children of all ages and their families join in with outings and cultural experiences that celebrate the community the children come from and the wider world. Together they celebrate special days, enjoy train journeys to fishing coves, play on the beach, explore houses and gardens of historic and environmental interest and meet people who play an important part in the community, for example by working on lifeboats. Children's enjoyment is enhanced further by how well staff use their expertise and experience to plan a wide range of worthwhile activities and organise the environment to suit their growing independence and changing needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards all early learning goals, based on their starting points. Staff have a very well developed understanding of the Foundation Stage and interact enthusiastically with children at all times promoting their enjoyment and learning. The imaginative use of resources inspires children's wonder, for example, they sample a table of shells, listening and commenting on the quality of sounds of the sea they can hear. Children are competent, independent learners, seeking out resources they need, for example to label their work. Children understand the purpose of writing and the use of symbols to represent meaning. They make marks as part of play and daily routines, with most children forming recognisable letter shapes and some writing their own names. Children are beginning to discriminate initial sounds in commonly used words and enjoy rhyming games. All of these skills developed through well-planned activities, routines and conversation promotes a range of skills and especially children's ability to communicate effectively, and develop early literacy and fine physical control skills.

Children show great pride in their achievements, which they are keen to share with adults. This is because, practitioners show good levels of respect for children in all they do and say. They give children a five minute warning that free play time is about to end so they can complete work to their personal satisfaction before helping tidy away. Children concentrate and try very hard to succeed in their self chosen tasks such as cutting up card, spreading glue all over a surface to connect junk materials, constructing models, mowing the lawn, progressing through computer games and wiping table tops thoroughly. As a result, children become independent learners, adept tool users, and problem solvers. Children use numbers accurately, well beyond 10 to count and match to the correct symbol as they count how many children are present and complete the daily calendar. Children learn how to count and calculate how many, as they represent numbers using their fingers and sing favourite action rhymes.

Long and medium term planning of the curriculum ensures that all aspects of learning are covered as the term and year progresses. Weekly plans show the learning intentions of activities

linked to nationally accepted developmental norms suited to the ages and stages of development of the children who attend. The space and resources in both rooms are well organised and presented to promote learning, however, older and more able children do not always have access to the range of large equipment available in the outside play area to practise their physical skills. Every child has a progress record based on information gathered from home and through observations at the setting. Practitioners use these records of achievements and their knowledge of what children enjoy and are interested in how to plan a range of worthwhile and suitable future experiences to promote learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about their own environment, culture and the culture of others through well-planned activities that establish strong links with the whole community. They go on a wide range of interesting outings to places linked to topics, such as the exotic gardens at Trengwainton and celebrate a range of festivals such as St Piran's Day and Chinese New Year through art and craft activities. Displays show images of people from around the world and children handle resources that present positive images of others. For example, dolls are properly dressed in traditional costumes and small world characters reflect cultural diversity.

Staff make sure each child's needs are identified and plans put into place to promote individual development by working well with parents and other agencies. The caring attitude of staff and their high expectations underpinned by effective settling in policies and procedures, makes children feel welcome, valued and want to care for each other. Children are very well behaved and show high levels of self-control and concern as they ask kindly for help and tidy away happily. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive a professionally written and produced prospectus that provides detailed and important information about the management of the setting. Staff work effectively with parents on entry to find out what children already know and are interested in. The information they gather helps settle children into play and learning promptly. Regular newsletters and notice board displays keep parents up to date with information, policies and procedures. Most valued by parents, is feedback through daily discussion with key workers. Parents are invited to share their child's records of achievement and copies are sent home at the end of each year. Relationships with staff are very good and parents feel welcome, which helps them and their children develop trusting relationships with practitioners.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a well-qualified staff team and ratios are good, ensuring that all children have plenty of individual attention. Staff show commitment to continuous improvement by attending training. The manager is pro-active in developing new ways of leading the staff team and meeting the needs of children in the nursery and wider school community as well as implementing latest government strategies. Children's care is securely underpinned by all the required documentation, including comprehensive policies and procedures, which have recently been updated.

Leadership and management are good. The committee works effectively with staff, to oversee the quality of children's care, with the manager implementing good systems, such as regular

staff appraisals. Overseeing the quality of the nursery education is delegated to the play leaders, who evaluate activities and topics. The whole team work well to consider ways of improving assessment and planning systems, so that the learning needs of all children can be consistently met. A particular feature of the setting is how well staff incorporate children's ideas about topics into their short term planning of activities, which ensures children are motivated to learn, their ideas valued and respected. Pre-school children enjoy the facilities of two large rooms, where the space is used very effectively, to provide a good variety of resources and activities. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting agreed to ensure that the incident records are shared appropriately with parents, that accident and medication records maintain confidentiality and to make the outdoor area safe. The setting reviewed how these records were maintained and made changes to make sure they maintained confidentiality. Fencing was placed at the bottom of the sloping ground to keep children safe from falls.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting agreed to improve the planning and assessment of activities to show less experienced staff how activities can be adapted and extended to meet the needs of the older children. Staff meetings and discussions are used well to influence planning and inform staff about developmental matters, which ensures activities, provide sufficient challenge for all the children who attend.

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.

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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):

- meet environmental health standards by checking and recording the temperature of food stored on the premises to make sure it stays fresh for children to eat
- conduct a risk assessment and develop an action plan to show how children will remain secure when using the outside play area.

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 the organisation of outside play routines to ensure all children have access to large play equipment on which to develop their confidence and skill to climb, slide and scramble about.

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