

Willows Farm Day Nursery

Willows Farm Village, Coursers Road, London Colney, St Albans, HERTFORDSHIRE, AL2 1BB

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

05/08/2013

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children benefit from a broad range of high quality resources and can choose to play indoors or outdoors so that they can develop their own ideas. This means that they can initiate their own play and ideas and develop good levels of confidence. The regular visits to the farm further supports children's learning and development.
- Planning and assessment systems have recently been reviewed and these are proving to be effective in involving children more in their learning and development.
- Children are very happy, interested and motivated to learn. They develop good social skills and form strong relationships with staff. They are very well supported in their transitions within the nursery so that children remain settled and secure.
- The management team have clear systems in place for self-evaluation, which include the views of staff, parents and children to ensure targets for future development are identified and continuous improvements made.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to reflect the different ways children learn by extending the use of pictures and photographs so that younger children and those with English as an additional language are able to express their preferences and make decisions about routines and activities.
- There is room to develop the children's base rooms so that cosy areas are provided where children can relax, explore and extend their learning with friends and staff.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spent time observing practice and interaction between staff and children and discussed planning and assessment to ascertain children's achievements.
- The inspector observed the children's activities at the nursery, pre-school and the holiday play scheme. This included indoor and outdoor play and mealtimes. The inspector also took part in children's outings to the farm.
- The inspector spoke to the children and engaged in their physical and imaginative play.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation in the nursery and pre-school base rooms. She spoke to the staff, parents, the manager and a director of the provision to obtain their views on the service provided.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Full Report

Information about the setting

Willows Farm Day Nursery was registered in 2013 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The holiday play scheme was registered in 2011 and is on all three registers. The provision is located in a purpose built building adjacent to Willows Farm, London Cloney in Hertfordshire. It is managed by Kids Play Childcare who operates thirteen other settings. It serves the local area and is accessible to all children. There are enclosed areas available for outdoor play and they have use of play areas within the farm area.

The nursery and pre-school employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight staff members hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2. One staff member holds Qualified Teacher Status. The manager holds an early years qualification at level 6. The nursery and pre-school opens Monday to Friday for 52 weeks of the year from 7.30am to 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 200 children attending the nursery and pre-school who are in the early years age group. The nursery and pre-school provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. The holiday play scheme, the nursery and the pre-school supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The holiday play scheme employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 including one with Qualified Teacher Status. The holiday play scheme opens during the Easter and summer holidays from 8am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently four children attending the holiday play scheme who are in the early years age group.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop the use of pictures and photographs showing familiar events, objects and activities so that younger children and those with English as an additional language can be further supported and express their preferences, thoughts and feelings about the activities and their play opportunities
- develop the indoor base rooms of the nursery, pre-school and the holiday play scheme so that there are reassuring and comforting spaces for all children for them to explore and extend their learning.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This enables them to track children's progress and development and they are able to identify the children's next stage of development. Staff provide an effective curriculum with a wide range of activities both indoors and outdoors in every area of learning. Opportunities for children's learning are complemented by the regular outings to the onsite farm. Children are cared for in rooms according to their age and ability and staff meet their individual care and learning needs well. Staff know children very well because detailed information is obtained from parents and carers about their children's needs, abilities and interests. This is an ongoing process and parents are able to contribute to children's planning through the sharing of children's achievements at home. Staff also talk about children's progress and the areas of learning and stages of development at parent meetings. Parents and carers are involved in the progress check for children aged two and ideas to support children's learning are shared to ensure effective continuity in children's early education.

Staff carry out regular observations and effectively use this knowledge to plan a range of stimulating and challenging experiences, which promote children's learning in all areas. They maintain clear records of observations undertaken on each child, which are linked to the areas of learning and include the next steps planned for them. In addition, a recent review of observations and assessment methods has resulted in children contributing to the planning of interesting activities. For example, children in the holiday play scheme enjoy a varied range of activities based on 'detectives and spies'. As a result, they are active and motivated to learn and develop, which prepares them well for future learning.

Younger children acquiring new skills, such as, crawling and walking are well supported. For example, they love climbing in and out of the purpose built sand container in their play room. They can freely choose to use push along toys and happily explore items set out for them. There are baskets of sensory resources available for them and there are plans to extend the range of sensory equipment across all rooms. Younger children enjoy joining in with nursery rhymes and songs, which is very well supported by a staff member who plays her guitar. Older children enjoy the actions popular songs and early mathematical concepts are incorporated. Staff use simple language and gestures with those children who require additional help in developing their language skills, including those with English as an additional language, and this helps them understand. Key words used by children are obtained on entry and staff refer to these during the day. However, staff have not fully explored other ways to support some children's understanding, such as, using props, visual cues, pictures and real-life objects, to demonstrate what is being said so that all children's understanding of language is further enhanced. There is scope to use photographs of familiar family members and objects so that younger children can express their thoughts and feelings more effectively.

Children have many opportunities to play with what interests them and set their own challenges. For example, when creating a tent they discuss with each other the best way

to do this using the materials and pegs available for them. The children think about their play, solve problems as they go and play harmoniously as a group. This means that they clearly demonstrate the characteristics of effective learners. The children's base rooms are large and bright. Staff have created areas of learning for the children, such as a home area which is changed according to children's interests. However, there is room to review the layout of rooms so that space is used more effectively and cosy areas are created in all rooms and the holiday play scheme. This will enable children to further develop their active learning. Children in the nursery, pre-school and holiday playscheme are busy, active learners who enjoy exploring and investigating the interesting learning environment. They love the outings to the farm. Younger children point out animals and birds they see on route to the interactive animal barn. They become excited when they see the goats, chickens and rabbits. Staff make good use of children's contributions and comments. For example, discussions take place about the varied animals seen and new words are introduced to their vocabulary. This supports young children's language development. Older children are provided with a camera to take photos of their favourite animals. This includes a new born donkey. Pre-school children take turns using the camera and the use of some clip boards, paper and pencils to draw pictures of the 'mummy and baby donkey'. Discussions take place about possible names for the new addition. Effective use of open-ended questions promotes children's language and understanding and contributes to them making connections in their learning.

Children's early reading and writing skills are developing well. Staff encourage toddlers and pre-school children to practise writing their names in preparation for school. They are supported well through letters and sounds activities. This means children have a good knowledge of letter sounds and are well- equipped for the early stages of reading. They show interest in books and happily share these with their friends and staff members. Outdoors, pre-school children have many opportunities to develop skills across the areas of learning. They particularly enjoy imaginative play reminding each other to 'watch for the billy goat' as they cross the bridge to the claiming area and the newly created mud kitchen.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children feel happy and secure because the nursery establishes positive and trusting relationships with parents and children from the start. A key person system is well embedded. Transitions are effective and well organised to ensure good continuity of care. For example, when children are new, staff work closely with parents to discuss children's routines, such as, sleep, food and drinks preferences. Staff caring for babies and young toddlers mirror home routines in the nursery so children's needs are met. Children new to the nursery and those transferring between rooms show high levels of confidence and enjoyment as they join in with adult-guided activities. The attractive low-level windows between the baby and toddler rooms contribute to the smooth transition of children between rooms. In addition, arrangements are made for their key person to move with them so children settle in quickly and information can be effectively shared. This supports children's personal, social and emotional development.

Meals are prepared on the premises using fresh ingredients and foster good hygiene

procedures. Staff are aware of dietary needs and preferences. During the inspection it was noted that jugs of water and cups are available both indoors and in the outdoor areas. Older toddlers and pre-school children are encouraged to pour their own drinks and are reminded as necessary to have a drink of water. Babies and younger toddlers are offered drinks regularly so that they remain hydrated. Any parental preferences for drinks other than water are discussed and accommodated if this is appropriate for children's health and well-being. All care needs are recorded daily in children's diaries and are shared with parents at the end of the day so that there is a continuity of care. At lunch times, staff sit with children encouraging good social skills. They effectively discuss the benefits of eating the nutritious food the children are eating. For example, discussions take place about how the pasta and spinach will make the children strong. This promotes children's understanding about healthy living. In addition, the growing of vegetables on the farm provides further opportunities for discussions about healthy eating. Staff encourage children to be independent by ensuring that they can serve themselves at mealtimes. Older children manage their personal care very well. Staff give them tailored support so that they can be as independent as possible. Space is provided so that children can manage their own shoes the bathroom has simple equipment so that children can easily use the soap and dryers to wash their hands. Staff are very vigilant in ensuring children thoroughly wash their hands following the farm visits.

Children benefit from fresh air and daily exercise in a well-resourced outside areas and the farm. They learn about safety during everyday routines, such as, ensuring children always wear hats when outdoors in the sun and through purposeful adult led discussions. Visits to the onsite indoor soft play area is a popular event with children attending the holiday play scheme. They love mark making and digging in the sand, the mud area and are able to take safe risks in their play when they use the different levels of climbing apparatus. Partnerships with parents, outside agencies and local schools are secure. Staff have worked hard to build links with teachers of local schools. They are invited into the nursery and photographs are taken of the children and the teacher so that these can be used to help children with the transition period. Detailed records and information about children's progress is shared effectively. As a result, children's needs are met and transitions to school run smoothly.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

This is the nursery's first inspection since registration. There are two managers in place, one for the day nursery and pre-school who takes overall responsibility and one for the holiday play scheme. They work very well together, are well-organised and are effective in inspiring their teams and are well supported by senior managers of the organisation. As a result, leadership and management are strong. The manager of the day nursery and pre-school is passionate about providing the best possible care and learning for children. Any concerns made by parents are taken seriously and fully investigated so that they can be reassured and views accommodated. There are good relationships with parents, local schools and outside agencies and means effective continuity of care for children. Parents speak highly of the manager and her staff. They state that their children love coming and that having the animals on site is a wonderful bonus. In addition, they state that they and

their children were extremely well supported during the settling in procedure. They feel well informed about their children's progress and wellbeing. Detailed folders containing information about the services provided and the detailed policies and procedures are easily available in the welcoming foyer.

The manager of the nursery and pre-school continually reflects on practice. This includes reflection of the holiday play scheme provision. She ensures views of staff, parents, carers and children included in the self- evaluation process. Plans for progression are well known, such as, further developing the toddler's outside play area so that this area is fully maximised to promote children's learning and development. The manager is also keen for staff to attend training associated with supporting children's communication skills such as, the 'Every Child A Talker' programme. The monitoring of educational programmes is an ongoing process and ensures children receive a broad and balanced curriculum. As a result, the provision is effective in meeting the needs of all children. Assessment and tracking of children's progress is accurate and effective in identifying gaps in learning.

Well established and effective procedures are in place for safeguarding children's well-being. Staff spoken to on the day of inspection demonstrate that they are fully aware of what to do should they have concerns about children in their care. High priority is placed on protecting children's welfare. All staff have attended a comprehensive safeguarding training course so that their knowledge is up-to-date. The manager follows clear procedures and works with outside agencies, when necessary. Risk assessments of all areas on the premises are thorough and any potential hazards are removed so children are protected from harm. This is further enhanced through additional security measures, such as, security cameras and the use of a secure system for the operation of main doors. Recruitment systems are robust and all staff who work with children have appropriate checks to ensure they are suitable to do so. The manager has a good knowledge of the skills of her staff and carries out staff appraisals and supervision on a regular basis to identify training needs. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities to ensure the smooth running of the nursery.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY426319
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	926671
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	161
Number of children on roll	200
Name of provider	Kids Play Ltd
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01908209216

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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