

Willows Farm Day Nursery

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



Inspection date

Previous inspection date

5 April 2016

7 May 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The relationships between staff and parents are extremely effective. Parents find that staff listen to ideas and actively support them to educate and care for their children.
- Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development effectively. Children rapidly gain valuable skills that help them to interact with others. They become confident and enthusiastic about learning.
- Staff are interested in children's learning experiences. They enjoy working with the children, sitting at their level, interacting, investigating and exploring together.
- Staff make very good use of the outdoor learning opportunities at the nursery and in the area beyond. Children benefit from being able to choose where they learn and from the extensive opportunities to experience the natural world.
- Strong links with schools help children to make a smooth move to the next stage of their education. Staff work well with other professionals sharing achievement records and implementing specific programmes, in order to offer optimal chances for disabled children and those with special educational needs to make good progress.
- The managers are very ambitious for the nursery. They successfully review and evaluate practice on a regular basis, taking steps to secure sustainable improvements.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not always successfully share, or make sufficient use of, the next steps in learning to ensure that their teaching is precise and highly responsive to children's learning needs.
- Opportunities to enhance children's language for speaking and thinking are not consistently extended.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the use of children's identified next steps in learning, making sure they are shared so that staff can tailor their teaching more precisely to the specific learning needs of individual children
- enhance children's opportunities to acquire the widest possible vocabulary at an early age.

Inspection activities

- The inspectors observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspectors completed joint observations with the nursery managers.
- The inspectors held meetings with the nursery managers. They looked at relevant documentation, such as, the nursery's self-evaluation, evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery and the policies and procedures.
- The inspectors spoke to a selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Alison Reeves and Susan Parker

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The strong team of senior managers leads the nursery effectively. They successfully communicate their high expectations to staff. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have a very good understanding of the process to follow should they have concerns about a child or colleague. Staff are deployed appropriately to ensure children's safety and appropriate ratios are maintained. The nursery has comprehensive, up-to-date policies that comply with the latest legislation. Recruitment processes are robust. Supervision and professional development support staff to identify training needs and to gain higher-level qualifications. Managers organise training ensuring it is delivered promptly so lessons learned are implemented quickly. Managers closely monitor the progress of all children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff offer children a wide range of experiences that interests and often challenges them. They take account of children's interests when considering the type of activities that are most likely to appeal. Many of the experiences are practical and allow children to get fully involved. Children are very enthusiastic about exploring the texture and sounds of various materials. They have enormous fun making things to eat and making shakers from plastic containers and dry pasta. The youngest children investigate the shredded paper, picking it up and letting it fall. Staff share books with the children and often use singing to encourage children to use their voices. They include the home languages spoken by children effectively. Staff make frequent observations of children's play and share the assessments with parents.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children spend plenty of time in the fresh air. Staff make good use of the available spaces to offer play that encourages children to move. The youngest children thoroughly enjoy exploring the robust equipment that helps them to develop their walking and climbing skills. Staff are attentive to children's health and dietary needs. They pay close attention to ensuring children's care is of a high quality. Staff are good role models; they encourage children to adopt positive attitudes to sharing and taking turns. Staff use some innovative ways to support the youngest children in their hygiene practice. They offer them a quick, fun and entirely appropriate way of washing their hands before eating.

Outcomes for children are good

All children make good progress from their starting points, achieving the level of development typical for their age. Additional targeted support is in place to help those who need it. Children are confident in their counting and identification of shapes. They enjoy sharing their knowledge of letters and sounds as they spot things in the environment and relate them to the initial letters of their names. Older children are exploring early reading and writing. Staff focus their attention on helping children to catch up with their peers where they have gaps in their experience. Staff place a strong focus on encouraging independence, self-reliance and responsible behaviour to help children prepare for school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY426319
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1044519
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	0 - 11
Total number of places	182
Number of children on roll	256
Name of provider	Kids Play Ltd
Date of previous inspection	7 May 2014
Telephone number	01908209216

Willows Farm Day Nursery was registered in 2013. The nursery employs 53 members of childcare staff. Of these, 30 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including one with Qualified Teacher Status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7am until 7pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports disabled children and those with special educational needs. Staff also support children who speak English as an additional language.

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