

Willows Farm Day Nursery and Preschool



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

Inspection date 31 August 2017
Previous inspection date 5 April 2016

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Requires improvement	3
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The management team does not ensure that the managers of the holiday club have a secure understanding of their roles so that staff are clear about their responsibilities.
- Fresh drinking water is not accessible for children at all times in the holiday club.
- Although staff in the nursery attend training, the management team does not focus enough on enhancing staff's teaching skills to a higher level.
- Occasionally, the most able children in the toddler room do not have excellent opportunities to develop their early writing skills.
- On occasions, staff in the holiday club do not use children's interests to help them to provide stimulating activities that engage children at all times.

It has the following strengths

- Children develop a good understanding of the world. Regular visits to the on-site farm help them to learn about and respect a wide range of animals.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Parents describe staff as 'amazing'. Key persons carry out home visits prior to children starting nursery. This helps children and their family to form warm trusting relationships with staff.
- Staff successfully work in close partnership with other professionals to support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Children learn to solve problems themselves, for instance they work out how to use the water pump to extract the water from the barrel that they have just carefully filled.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and the Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that all managers provide staff in the holiday club with sufficient guidance to fulfill their roles 	31/08/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that fresh drinking water is accessible to all children at all times in order to maintain their good health. 	31/08/2017

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

- use the information from staff supervision meetings to target professional development even more sharply to enable staff in the nursery to extend their knowledge and teaching skills further
- improve the quality of activities and experiences offered in the holiday club so that they are consistently guided by children's interests
- expand opportunities for children in the toddler room to develop their early writing skills.

Inspection activities

- One of the inspectors joined the children attending the holiday club on a visit to the on-site farm.
- The inspectors spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection. They completed joint observations with two of the managers.
- The inspectors held a meeting with the three nursery managers. They looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery and holiday club.
- The inspectors spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.

Inspector
Lorraine Pike

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management requires improvement

The manager of the holiday club is not supported effectively by the management team to understand her role and responsibilities. She does not always provide staff with all the information they need so that they know which children they are responsible for. Nevertheless, the management team ensures that sufficient staff hold a first-aid qualification and they always carry mobile first-aid kits when away from the base unit. Staff are deployed effectively to ensure ratios are maintained and children are supervised at all times. Safeguarding is effective. The management team ensures that staff have a good understanding of identifying any children who may be at risk of harm. They know the action to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare. The management team uses robust recruitment procedures to ensure that staff are suitable and continue to remain suitable for their role. The management team and the well-qualified team of staff regularly reflect on the service that they offer. They closely monitor the educational programmes to identify any gaps in children's learning.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Children are motivated individuals. For example, older children work out how to draw a star by drawing two triangles at different angles. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported, for instance, staff use key words in their home language. Babies enjoy exploring their own reflection in mirrors. Staff consistently respond to babies' babbles, helping them to learn the pattern of speech. Younger children dip pieces of vegetables into different coloured diluted paint and push them down onto slices of bread. They discover how the paint absorbs and how the colours mix together. Sometimes, staff in the holiday club do not always use children's interests to plan really challenging activities that engage them consistently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Children enjoy a range of nutritious meals and snacks. However, drinking water is not available for children at all times in the holiday club so that they can help themselves when they are thirsty. Staff obtain detailed information from parents about all children's individual needs and procedures are in place to follow these. Children use good manners and are confident. The inviting outdoor areas provide all children with good opportunities to develop their physical skills. In addition, weekly sports sessions run by a visiting specialist outside agency help children to develop their fitness.

Outcomes for children are good

All children make good progress in relation to their starting points, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Older children write their own name and express a keen interest in books. They participate in the nursery's reading scheme, helping them to link letters to sounds. Children gain the necessary skills needed for their future learning at school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY426319
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1112080
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 - 12
Total number of places	252
Number of children on roll	331
Name of registered person	Kids Play Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP900863
Date of previous inspection	5 April 2016
Telephone number	01727 829535

Willows Farm Day Nursery and Preschool registered in 2013 and is operated by Kids Play Childcare Group. The nursery employs 63 members of childcare staff. Of these, 48 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including one early years teacher and six with qualified teacher status. The nursery opens 7am until 7pm Monday to Friday, all year round. It also operates a holiday club from 8am until 6pm Monday to Friday during all school holiday periods. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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