

Inspection of Little Willows Kindergarten

Joicey Road, Gateshead NE9 5AT

Inspection date: 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Good
----------------------	-------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
--	------

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enter the setting excited, happy and pleased to see their friends and the warm, friendly staff. They settle quickly and flourish in the nurturing environment. Children independently access a broad range of resources that are set up by staff, who know children and their interests well. For instance, toddlers place trains onto wooden tracks and hunt for bugs hidden in sand. This helps to develop their fine motor skills and hand-to-eye coordination. Older toddlers practise yoga moves with staff, developing their physical skills as they learn how to move and stretch their bodies. They confidently mix mud and pour water in the outdoor mud kitchen. This helps to develop their large- and small-muscle skills.

Older children demonstrate high levels of engagement in small-group activities. They take turns describing and guessing the names of different types of fruit. Children excitedly name a kiwi and explain that it is 'furry' and 'hairy'. Children take part in weekly French lessons and are eager to use the words they know in French to describe the colours of each fruit. Babies actively engage in activities of their own choosing. They crawl into a low-level sandpit and stack wooden bricks on top of one another. Staff encourage babies to select items from a song bag and they eagerly move their bodies as staff sing 'Twinkle, Twinkle'. Staff are excellent role models. They have high expectations of the children in their care. Children behave very well.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The manager is ambitious and passionate about her role. She has good support from the regional manager and the provider. The manager has implemented a number of changes to improve the quality of the setting. For example, communication with parents has improved, and staff and parents report how the changes have made a positive impact on the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is knowledgeable and understands her responsibilities well. She knows where to go to access advice and makes swift referrals to ensure that children get the support they require. As a result, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make the best possible progress.
- Children have superb opportunities to develop their physical skills. They go on regular outings to local parks and each room spends quality time in the setting's well-resourced garden. Older children relish using spray bottles and pretending to put out 'fires'. Toddlers enjoy climbing across wooden planks and painting on large sheets of paper. This helps to develop their small-muscle skills, balance and coordination.
- Children are kind and polite. They use good manners without any prompting from staff. Where children need support, staff provide gentle reminders, such as

'kind hands' and 'walking feet'. This helps children to understand the expectations within the setting.

- The manager carries out regular supervision meetings and staff attend regular training sessions. However, managers have not further developed the coaching and mentoring that staff receive, to support their teaching and raise it to an even higher level.
- Children's mathematical skills are developing well. Babies sit with caring staff and sing 'Five little ducks'. Toddlers count as they bounce balls up and down on the parachute. Older children add sea creatures into a jug and count to eight independently. Staff encourage them to compare which jug has the most water in. Children confidently use mathematical language, such as 'full' and 'empty'. This helps to develop children's early mathematical skills.
- Children benefit from a language-rich environment. Staff introduce a wide range of vocabulary and use simple sign language to help children to communicate. They ask age-appropriate questions and support children to express their ideas and recall past experiences. For example, staff ask children to recall their favourite memories. This helps to develop children's communication skills.
- Partnership with parents is a real strength of this setting. Staff gather detailed information about children's backgrounds and developmental starting points on entry. Staff use the information to help children settle quickly. Where children struggle to settle, staff work closely with families to support them. Parents feel well informed and involved in their children's learning. They comment that they feel staff 'go above and beyond'.
- Children's independence is well supported. Babies move around the room, independently accessing their favourite resources. Toddlers put on their own coats and attempt to put on their own shoes. Older children serve themselves lunch. Staff provide lots of praise and encouragement. This helps to develop children's confidence and raise their self-esteem.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe. The manager ensures that staff receive regular training. All staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and know how to report any concerns. Staff understand the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a colleague. Managers put in place risk assessments, and staff carry out safety checks as they set up each morning to ensure that the environment is safe for children. There are safer recruitment processes in place, and a thorough system for checking the ongoing suitability of staff.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen support for staff through coaching and mentoring to raise the quality of education to an even higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY540675
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10280476
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	120
Number of children on roll	127
Name of registered person	Sister Act North East Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP540674
Telephone number	0191 487 3777
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

Little Willows Kindergarten registered in 2016 and is located in Gateshead. It employs 21 members of childcare staff. Of these, one has an appropriate early years qualification at level 5 and 17 have level 3 qualifications. The setting opens Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Julie Campbell

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with the manager and regional manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The SENCo spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector carried out a joint observations of an activity with the manager.

We carried out this inspection 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023