

# Inspection of The Willows Day Nursery

1 Sovereign Way, Trafalgar Industrial Estate, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 9SW

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Inspection date: 27 July 2023

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is inadequate

Children do not receive good-quality care or learning in this nursery. While minimum adult-to-child ratios are adhered to, this is achieved by moving staff to work in different rooms around the nursery. Children do not receive consistent care from a key person. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not have their needs met. Throughout the day, much of the staff's time, particularly in the pre-school room, is spent on routine tasks. As a result, staff spend more time supervising the children than in engaging in high-quality interactions.

Staff are expected to follow a specific approach to planning and delivering the curriculum. Staff know that they are to follow children's interests. However, most staff are not trained or confident in this method of teaching. They do not understand the benefits behind it and how to sequence and support children's learning. Overall, the learning environment and activities are not well presented. As a result, children's interest is not captured or sustained for any period of time.

Despite these weaknesses, staff warmly greet children and their parents on arrival. Babies receive kind and caring interactions and cuddles from staff. Their individual sleep and nappy changing routines are followed. Toddlers gather on the carpet for circle time; they listen and join in as staff sing favourite nursery rhymes. When time allows, staff get down to the older children's level and chat freely with them. They ask some questions and talk about number and colours. Staff encourage children to use good manners and to say 'please' and 'thank you'.

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

- There is currently no nursery manager in post to lead the staff team. A new manager has been appointed but has yet to start. Interim deputising arrangements are not working well. Practice within the nursery has not been monitored effectively. Senior management accepts that there are weaknesses and have plans to address these.
- Staff are required to carry out daily risk assessments, and there are clear reporting procedures for broken equipment. However, some risks are missed or overlooked. Staff fail to remove a discarded plastic bag in the playroom for toddlers. Antibacterial spray, which should be kept out of reach, is left out on the changing unit. Broken finger guards on doors, while noted, are not swiftly dealt with. This means children's safety is compromised.
- The setting has a number of fire exits. Most staff know how to evacuate the premises. However, fire evacuation procedures are not clear and do not clearly outline the roles played by staff. Written fire plans on display are confusing. Some fire exits are not in use. Some are locked, and other routes, which lead

into the garden, are overgrown and inaccessible.

- Cleaning has not been completed to a satisfactory standard. Children's toilets and low-level basins are dusty and smeared in dirt. Older children who wear nappies are changed on an unclean mat on the floor of the toilet area. This arrangement does not afford children with dignity and privacy. Children are not supported to follow good hygiene procedures, as there is not an accessible supply of soap or hand towels.
- While there are clear procedures for staff induction, supervision and professional development, these are not being followed. New staff are not appropriately inducted, and staff do not receive regular supervision. Staff have not received appropriate training or support on how to plan and deliver a rich and challenging curriculum for the children.
- Current staffing arrangements do not ensure that the role of the key person is fulfilled. Some children are not assigned a key person, while others do not have their key person caring for them, as they are working in another room.
- Children are adequately supervised. However, much of this, particularly in the pre-school group, is done from a distance. On a number of occasions, staff raise their voices from across the room in order to get children's attention or to get them to stop doing something. This approach does not support children's learning, reintroduce them to play or help children to regulate their own behaviour.
- The recently appointed cook prepares and cooks children's meals two days each week. On other days, childcare staff currently undertake this responsibility. Information is gathered with regard to children's dietary requirements. The nursery has a policy for healthy eating, but this is not implemented. Many children drink squash instead water. The cook does not have a planned, balanced menu to follow. Parents are not made aware of food and drink that their children are receiving. As a result, children's good health is not promoted.
- Toddlers and pre-school children spend time in the garden on a daily basis. The ground outside is predominantly surfaced with soil and loose wooden chips. Some surfaces are worn, and the protective bark underneath the nursery climbing frame and slide is missing, making it hazardous to children. A separate paved area, where children can explore with wheeled toys, is not currently available. Babies who are located on the first floor of the premises do not have the same daily opportunities to be outside in the fresh air.
- There is currently no designated special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) in the nursery. Support is offered remotely from senior management. However, provision for children with SEND is poor. Children who have allocated funding to receive one-to-one support attend the nursery without this support. As a result, they do not get the individual care and attention to meet their needs and support their integration into the nursery.
- Parents receive information via an online application and verbally at drop-off and collection times. In the past, parents have received guidance on how best to support children's behaviour and their speech development. However, more recently, parents are not well informed. They do not receive information about the food and drink on offer, and some do not know who their child's key person is. Parents of children with SEND are not kept informed about changes to their

children's care and education arrangements.

- Sufficient numbers of staff are trained to deliver paediatric first aid. Any accidents are appropriately dealt with, and information is shared with parents.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Weaknesses in leadership and management mean that risk assessments are ineffective. Fire safety procedures, while in place, are confusing, and areas of the nursery are not clean enough. As a result, children's health and safety is not assured. That said, safe, robust recruitment procedures are followed in the appointment of new staff. Those with designated responsibility for safeguarding have attended the relevant training and have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection practice. Staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. They recognise possible signs and symptoms of abuse and know how to identify and report concerns about children's welfare without delay.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
ensure that individual needs, interests and development of each child is considered and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child, in all areas of learning and development	29/09/2023
ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities	29/09/2023
ensure that staff have appropriate training, skills and knowledge to plan and deliver a rich and varied early years curriculum and to positively support children to manage their own behaviour to improve the experiences of children in the nursery and the overall quality of the provision	29/09/2023

ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place for the effective supervision of all staff	29/09/2023
ensure that each child is assigned a key person and that the key-person system is appropriately embedded to ensure every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs	25/08/2023
implement plans to employ an appropriately qualified and experienced nursery manager and ensure that there is a named deputy who is capable and qualified to take charge in the manager's absence	29/09/2023
review and improve staffing arrangements to ensure that staff spend quality time with the children, ensuring that children's learning and development needs are consistently met	25/08/2023
improve arrangements for the planning and preparation of meals, snacks and drinks to ensure that these are healthy, balanced and nutritious	25/08/2023
ensure parents and/or carers are provided with accurate information with regard to food and drinks provided for their children and any changes to individual care arrangements	25/08/2023
take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire or other emergency and have clear emergency evacuation procedures in place, which are known by all	25/08/2023
ensure that fire exits are clearly identifiable and free from obstruction and that fire doors are easily opened from the inside	25/08/2023

ensure that all children, including babies, have access to a safe and suitable outdoor play area and/or outdoor activities on a daily basis	25/08/2023
ensure that the premises and outdoor spaces are fit for purpose, suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided	25/08/2023
ensure that toilet and handwashing facilities for children are clean and that there is an accessible supply of soap and hand towels	25/08/2023
ensure that there are suitable and hygienic changing facilities for children who are in nappies or undergoing toilet training	25/08/2023
take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff and children are not exposed to risks and that risk assessments are robust and any identified risks are removed or minimised	25/08/2023
identify a SENCo for the setting and ensure there are appropriate arrangements in place to support children with SEND.	29/09/2023

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY495009
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10304308
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	48
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	75
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Alpha Nurseries Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP900801
<b>Telephone number</b>	01366 381515
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 January 2018

## Information about this early years setting

The Willows Day Nursery registered in 2015. It is one of several nurseries run by Alpha Nurseries Limited. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Dawn Pointer

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector has taken the impact of the pandemic into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The inspection was carried out as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The inspector and the deputy manager carried out a tour of the nursery to discuss and understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- The inspector observed staff interaction with the children, both inside and outside, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the deputy manager, the nominated individual and the area manager responsible for supporting the nursery. She also spoke with the managing director of the company.
- The inspector considered relevant documentation, including evidence of staff qualifications and suitability.
- The inspector spoke with staff, including the nursery cook, at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with a sample of parents and took account of their views.

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.

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