



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Windham Early Excellence Centre

Reference: HMI 1581

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Reference: HMI 1581

INSPECTION REPORT

Windham Early Excellence Centre

Richmond

Surrey

Unique reference number: 102882

Head of Centre: Rosie Leonard

Reporting Inspector: Gillian Broadbent HMI

Dates of Inspection: 2 - 5 December 2002

This pilot inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education and Skills as part of its evaluation of the first Early Excellence Centres. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) elects that the inspection is deemed a Section 10 inspection and that the report shall be published.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

Type of Centre:	Early Excellence Centre
Age range of children:	3 – 5 years
Gender of children:	Mixed
Address:	Windham Road Richmond Surrey TW9 2HP
Telephone:	020 8831 6060
Fax:	020 8831 6305
Appropriate authority:	Richmond Local Education Authority
Chair of Governing Body:	Steve Kemsley
Dates of inspection:	2 – 5 December 2002
Date of previous inspection: Section 10:	18 November 1997

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of the inspection is to assure the government, parents and the public that the Centre's provision and services meet the criteria for Early Excellence Centres. Inspection also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that the Centre can improve the quality of care and education provision, and help children to achieve the best they can.

THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Gillian Broadbent HMI	Reporting inspector
Anne Pitt HMI	Team inspector
Linda Kelsey HMI	Team inspector

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The Corporate Services Group
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

THE CENTRE AND ITS COMMUNITY

Windham nursery school was designated an Early Excellence Centre (EEC) in 1999. It faced a major building programme to bring together, on one site, services that were dispersed across the local education authority (LEA). The new building opened in September 2002. The Centre offers: a nursery for children aged 3 to 5; the Jigsaw Unit for children with social communication disorders including autism; the Rocking Horse Club, which provides a social occasion for children at lunchtime; a drop-in facility for parents¹, carers and toddlers; and advice to others working with young children. The EEC shares its accommodation with the Croft Centre, which is used by the local authority to provide a range of other services including those for children with disabilities. This centre was not inspected.

HOW SUCCESSFUL THE CENTRE IS

Windham Early Excellence Centre is effective. It is led and managed well. Strong foundations have been established quickly from which to develop its role as an EEC. The Centre provides very well for children with special educational needs (SEN) so that they all make very good progress. It provides good services for children and their parents. Teaching is good overall and more than a third of the teaching seen was very good. The children in the nursery achieve well overall and reach well above average standards by the time they leave the Centre. It provides good value for money and has a good capacity for improvement.

THE CENTRE'S MAIN STRENGTHS

- The very good teaching of personal and social development, the use of numbers, speaking and listening and early reading skills means that all children achieve very well in these areas.
- The teaching of children with SEN and the management of their learning are very good. The Centre promotes very effective working with other professionals and voluntary groups so that all children with SEN make very good progress.
- Children's relationships with staff and each other are excellent.
- The Centre's relationships with parents are very good. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to become fully involved in the Centre and their children's learning. Their views are regularly sought and are valued.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and recent changes have been managed successfully.
- Teamwork and the effective use of resources are very strong features of the Centre and contribute to the effective dissemination of their good practice.

WHAT THE CENTRE NEEDS TO IMPROVE

Within an overall positive picture there is an area of relative weakness.

- Although assessment overall is satisfactory, a few staff do not consistently evaluate children's learning precisely enough, so that one or two more able children are not fully challenged in writing, mathematical and creative activities.

¹ In this report the word "parents" is taken to mean parents or those that have day-to-day care for children.

NURSERY EDUCATION FOR 3 TO 5 YEAR OLDS

Standards in the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage for 3 to 5 year olds.	When children first enter the nursery they are further on in their learning than would be expected. They make good progress overall. They are likely to far exceed the national early learning goals ² (elgs) in personal, social and emotional development where their progress is very good. In communication, language and literacy and mathematical development children are likely to well exceed the expected standards and in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, they are likely to exceed the goals. In these areas progress is good. In creative development, they make sound progress and are likely to achieve the goals.
Teaching and learning	Good overall. Over a third of the teaching seen was very good and none was unsatisfactory. Teamwork is a strength. Staff plan a rich variety of activities, with a strong emphasis on learning through play. Staff actively encourage children to explore new experiences. The children concentrate on what they are doing and achieve well. Assessment is satisfactory overall. A few older, more capable children are not sufficiently challenged in writing, in recording mathematical work and creative activities.
Personal development	Very good. The children love coming to the Centre and eagerly take part in activities. They sustain their interest well and show high levels of independence. Children's relationships with adults and each other are excellent and their behaviour is very good. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. Attendance is also satisfactory.
Curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well planned and includes all the areas of learning of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. It is stimulating, interesting, broad and balanced, and meets the needs of children of all abilities well. Very good resources are used imaginatively to enhance the children's learning. Information communication technology (ICT) is used soundly to support the curriculum.
Provision for children with special educational needs in the nursery.	Very good. The management of the education of children with SEN is very strong. It is very well organised and planned. Children who have particular needs are identified as soon as they enter the nursery so that they receive very effective support. Parents are regularly informed and consulted about how well their children are progressing and what they need to do next.
Jigsaw Unit	Very good. The unit provides very effectively for pre-school children with social communication disorders including autism. Detailed observations of each child's learning and development are used on a daily basis to effectively plan the next steps in their learning. This ensures that all children make very good progress. Links with parents are effective and they receive very good support and advice from the staff at the Centre.
Care, guidance and support	Good. The Centre places children at the heart of its community and provides effectively for their care, health, safety and well being. The assessment procedures to track children's achievement are sound. They are very good for children with SEN.

² The early learning goals (elgs) are standards expected by the time children reach the end of the Foundation Stage. This corresponds with the end of the reception year in primary schools.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CENTRE

Links with parents and community.	Very good. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning. They work confidently in partnership with staff because the Centre seeks and acts upon their views. Links with the community are good, particularly through staff visits to local groups of refugees and asylum seekers.
Toy Library	The Toy Library provides an invaluable resource for children with special educational needs because it provides regular access to good quality equipment for parents and others to support children's development.
The Drop-in service	Very good. The Centre provides a very effective drop-in service for parents, babies and toddlers where parents can play with their children in a stimulating environment. Its warm and welcoming atmosphere builds the confidence of parents so that they value the advice and support provided.
Rocking Horse Club	Good. It is well organised and provides a social occasion for children to eat their lunch. They receive good supervision and are provided with a range of activities that interest children.
Leadership and management	Good. The headteacher provides good leadership through effectively sharing with the staff and governors a clear vision for the Centre's development and a strong drive to raise achievement. The governing body provides effective support. It receives good information overall about where the Centre is successful and what it needs to improve.
Advice to others working with young children	Good. The Centre provides effective support for the LEA Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership's (EYDCP's) targets for improvement in provision. It disseminates its work effectively locally, nationally, and internationally. It is in the process of developing its work further with maintained schools that have children aged three to five years.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS ABOUT THE CENTRE

Parents are delighted with the progress their children make and the way in which the Centre works closely with them. The children enjoy being at the nursery and find the activities exciting.

PART B: COMMENTARY

ABOUT THE CENTRE, ITS CHILDREN AND USERS

1. Windham EEC was established in 1999 and opened its new accommodation in September 2002. The new accommodation allowed all its services to be brought together under one roof. The Croft Centre shares the same building with the EEC and forms 'Windham – A Partnership for Children'. This partnership enables all agencies, including education, social services and health, to work together to provide co-ordinated services for children with social needs, special educational needs and disabilities.
2. Very few children in the nursery are from ethnic minority backgrounds or are at an initial stage of learning English. At the time of the inspection, the majority of children were just three years old. The nursery also caters for fourteen children with SEN including five who have statements of special educational need.

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS AND HOW EFFECTIVE ARE TEACHING AND LEARNING?

3. Children's standards on entry to the nursery are generally above what is expected of three-year-olds in all areas of learning except creative and physical skills which are average when they start. Overall, children achieve well above average standards by the time they move to primary school.

The table below summarises the quality of teaching, learning, the progress children make and the standards they reach in the six areas of learning.

Areas of Learning	Teaching	Learning	Progress	Attainment on leaving the nursery	Comment
Personal, social, and emotional development	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very high. Children are likely to far exceed the elgs.	Children develop excellent relationships with others, are highly independent and concentrate very well.
Communication language and literacy	Good overall, very good in speaking and listening and reading	Good	Good	Well above average and children are likely to far exceed the elgs in speaking, listening and reading.	A significant number of children <i>already</i> know sounds, letters and can write their names. They speak very confidently.
Mathematical development	Good overall, very good in mental mathematics and problem solving	Good	Good	Well above average and children are likely to far exceed the elgs in mental mathematics and problem solving.	Most children <i>already</i> count reliably beyond ten, recognise shapes, sort by size and solve simple problems.
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good	Good	Good	Above average. Children are likely to exceed the elgs.	Children's knowledge of nature is good. They use computers competently and understand time well.
Physical development	Good	Good	Good	Above average. Children are likely to exceed the elgs.	Children are agile and develop large and small-scale movements well.

Creative development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Average. Children are likely to meet the elgs.	Children use a range of techniques and media well. They sing with enthusiasm. They express their ideas well in role play but are less confident in expressing them through art, music and dance.
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4. Teaching is good overall. Teaching in over a third of sessions was very good and during the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Staff plan together and teach well-thought-out, interesting activities. These are well balanced between those led by adults and those chosen by children. All the staff know the children extremely well and have a good understanding of how young children learn.
5. The staff expect children to try hard. The children behave well, settle and concentrate for long periods of time. The staff are quick to intervene when, on a few occasions, children find it difficult to share or work alongside each other. They constantly praise and encourage children to do their best, and the children respond well.
6. The teaching is very good in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, number work, speaking and listening and early reading. This is because in these areas staff have greater knowledge and expertise and are more confident in extending the children's learning. This was best illustrated when a child was playing with pairs of cards. He counted each card and easily reached fourteen. The teacher quickly intervened to challenge the child to count up the pairs rather than the individual cards. This he found much more difficult and it made him think hard.
7. In contrast where teaching is satisfactory in early writing and creative development staff miss a few opportunities to fully challenge the children through questioning. For example in a creative session when children were printing with string there were missed opportunities to extend the children's understanding of colour and texture and for children to enter into discussion about their work. Similarly staff did not intervene enough to help the older more capable children form letters correctly or help them record their mathematical findings.
8. The staff make very good use of high quality resources to support their teaching. Equipment is well labelled and accessible. There is a clear expectation that children will select and put away resources independently. This they do well. The indoor learning environment is rich and attractive.
9. Children with special educational needs receive very good teaching and support. Staff liaise well with other professionals, such as speech therapists and physiotherapists, to ensure children receive what they need. Sessions are carefully planned to cater for children's needs. Children experience real success in what they do. A good example of this was when a child was learning to understand the words 'on' and 'under'. Her special support assistant used the information and advice from other professionals to provide a combination of simple sentences, sign language, eye contact, encouragement, and appealing resources to motivate her. Very quickly, the child made good progress in developing her communication skills because the task got progressively harder.

10. The staff have sound procedures in place for assessing standards and progress. They regularly observe children. Detailed notes are recorded but they are not consistently linked to what children are expected to do at various stages of development or to what they need to improve next. The annotations and entries on the records are not always dated. This makes it difficult to track whether a child is improving and making significant progress. There is insufficient clarity about how significant achievement will be recorded especially for one or two more capable children. This means that some staff are uncertain about challenging these children to do more.

Jigsaw Unit

11. The unit provides very good education for pre-school children with social communication disorders including autism. Children's individual education plans identify the next small steps they need to take in each area of learning. Therefore children do very well and meet their targets. They make significant gains across all areas of learning especially in language, social and emotional development.
12. Teaching is very good. The staff aim to make teaching and learning fun – and they succeed. Children spend the sessions responding to well-paced rich and varied tasks where well-established routines give them security. There is a very good balance between moments of calm and excitement – sound and silence - and this keeps children interested. Children are constantly praised for their efforts. Behaviour management is very good. It is calm and unobtrusive. Staff show a sensitive regard for children's individual needs, safety and care. They are acutely aware of children's behaviour and language patterns. They skilfully respond and provide repetition and support at just the right moments. This was well illustrated when a child was encouraged to extend his language so that he successfully practised saying "*put it up*", "*lift it up*", and "*wind it up*". A range of inspirational resources, including visual cues, such as signing are used to attract children's attention during focused sessions. For instance, during one activity a colourful ball on elastic was thrown backwards and forwards from the teacher to the child. This promoted very good eye contact.
13. Teaching is very well managed. The three staff (a teacher, speech therapist and early year's educator) work seamlessly and effectively as a team. The children receive specialist support and their individual needs are well met. Each of the staff take it in turns to either take the lead, monitor the progress of children, or to demonstrate activities. There is a real sense of enthusiasm and commitment in all they do. At the end of the session they meet together to discuss each child's progress. They make very good observations and are highly skilled at noticing significant progress; pin pointing strengths and weaknesses; and identifying what is needed next. This is used in the next day's teaching and is the key to the success of the unit.
14. Children make very good progress at the unit. Parents described how the children can hardly communicate when they start. During the inspection, children were seen making eye contact, playing in pairs, calling other children by their names, recognising their own photographs and those of others, and speaking in short phrases.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN'S PERSONAL QUALITIES DEVELOPED?

15. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted very well because the quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a thorough knowledge of individual children, their achievements and how they learn. Consequently, they ensure the next challenging steps are planned for each child's learning. These are communicated to all staff who

constantly adapt each activity to take account of them. Therefore, all children achieve very well. The children reach standards that are well above those expected for their age.

16. The children like coming to nursery. The calm and reassuring approach of staff develops the trust and confidence of the children. Relationships are excellent between children and adults. All staff present exemplary role models to the children. They play alongside the children and demonstrate the appropriate behaviour. They listen to the children's views and respect them. The staff show children, by example, how to take their turn, wait politely to ask questions and listen to each other just as they expect the children to.
17. Attendance is satisfactory. The Centre has sound procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Attendance registers are kept meticulously.
18. Children are interested and enthusiastic. They enjoy getting involved with the many interesting activities planned for them by the staff. Children were excited when they discovered sap coming from a tree and confidently talked about what it could be and how it got there. They tried cutting stretchy material and had no hesitation in asking adults for help to hold it while they cut it to the size they wanted.
19. The staff expect children to learn to do things for themselves and this means that children are confident to experiment and try out new ideas. For example they used electrical components to make buzzers and lights work, and were happy to ask adults for help and talk to each other and adults about how they were getting on. Equally they were happy to ask for help when they needed it.
20. Staff encourage children to express their views clearly. Children show good levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. They speak clearly in well-structured sentences. They tease staff by pretending to speak in a different language, much to everyone's amusement! They will say politely, but firmly if they don't like something when playing with each other.
21. Children's social skills are very good. There are frequent opportunities for children to develop their social skills. At the end of sessions adults encourage them to take turns offering fruit and drinks and make sure they say "please" and "thank you" politely. In the Rocking Horse Club, adults help children to develop good manners as they eat lunch with their friends in an enjoyable social setting. Children show that they have high levels of negotiation skills as they happily resolve who will play in the play house and how to take turns fairly when using the computer.
22. The staff manage behaviour very well and this makes a significant contribution to the children's very good moral development. Children behave very well and there are hardly any instances of inappropriate behaviour. Children are very well taught to understand fully the difference between right and wrong and how they should behave. The staff intervene swiftly if there is a hint of inappropriate behaviour. Their consistent interventions diffuse situations before they have time to escalate. This enables staff to discuss the child's actions with them and helps them to resolve their difficulties.
23. Children's spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. Children are given opportunities in the nursery for children to experience the wonder of the world, cultural and religious festivals. For example, the children were thrilled by the sight of the tree in the garden being decorated for Christmas and the snow scene created outdoors. Visitors to the Centre help to celebrate a variety of religious festivals and cultures. They provide a sound range of opportunities to explore food and clothing from other countries. A visit to Kew Gardens provided opportunities for children to explore their locality and enjoy the wonders of the plants and trees growing there. Jubilee celebrations helped to develop an

awareness of the history, customs and culture of Britain. The Centre is currently developing ways to further raise the children's awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE CURRICULUM MEET CHILDREN'S NEEDS?

24. The curriculum is well planned. There are good plans that provide details of broad and balanced learning opportunities across all areas of learning over the year, terms and weeks. The curriculum is stimulating, interesting and appealing to the children.
25. The Centre offers a good range of extra activities that enrich the curriculum. For example, the book library and maths packs are well used by parents to extend their children's learning at home. The Rocking Horse Club provides a social setting for children to eat their lunch. This enriches the development of their social skills and encourages healthy eating. Visitors to the Centre help children to develop their understanding of other cultures and religions through celebrations such as Hanukah. Visits to places of interest such as Kew Gardens effectively enriches children's knowledge and understanding of their local area.
26. In the Jigsaw Unit the curriculum is well structured. There is good emphasis on promoting communication and social interaction. This is at the heart of the work of the unit. These elements permeate all areas of learning. The staff demonstrate very good knowledge of how children learn. They are very clear about the purpose of the activities and the methodology they will use – for example telling children what to do, showing them, doing things and explaining verbally. The curriculum is well designed to promote learning through play.
27. Equality of opportunity and inclusion of children with special educational needs is very effectively promoted throughout the Centre. Children in the Jigsaw Unit join activities in the nursery at appropriate times each day and children from the nursery spend some time in the Jigsaw Unit. Targets are set in each area of learning for each child. Therefore, staff know how to plan for the children's learning, and modify activities to meet their needs so that they are successfully included in all activities.
28. The Centre is well staffed, and makes the most of all its resources to enhance the children's learning. The range and quality of resources both indoors and outside are good. They are organised and stored well so that they can be used effectively to support a rich and stimulating curriculum. Outside, the play area has been imaginatively developed to make the most of the limited space available. For example, raised plant beds and areas to dig have been created to develop children's understanding of the natural world. A larger area is used to provide opportunities for physical development. The equipment is changed daily to provide a variety of activities and challenges. This ensures that outdoor play supports children's development in all areas of learning effectively. Information and communication technology is used soundly to support children's learning. For example, they click and drag the correct size of shoes to the small, medium and large character on the screen. This area is being developed by staff across all areas of learning to enhance the children's learning even further.

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN CARED FOR, GUIDED AND SUPPORTED?

29. The Centre provides good care, support and guidance. Staff place a high priority on providing a calm and safe environment. They are constantly vigilant and ensure that the children play in a safe environment. For example, when builders arrived to continue with Centre development, the staff checked the play area before allowing the children to go

outside. All staff deal calmly with any situation such as a child's distress or accidents so that children are confident and reassured by their presence.

30. Child protection procedures are very effective and staff are well aware of the correct procedures to follow. All staff receive training in first aid and child protection procedures at regular intervals.
31. Children are consistently encouraged to know and understand about a healthy life style. Parents are encouraged at the Rocking Horse Club to send their children to the Centre with a healthy lunch box. Children eat their lunch at set out tables to promote social skills. The staff make sure that children get enough opportunities to exercise, and reinforce healthy eating by providing a drink and fruit at the end of each session.
32. Staff monitor children's personal development very well and provide very good guidance and support through careful observation and planning. Achievement in other areas of learning is monitored satisfactorily overall. There are a few occasions when some staff do not consistently provide sufficient guidance to challenge the older, more capable children.
33. Procedures to prepare children for nursery and when they transfer to primary school are very good. The nursery provides very good support through a well thought out induction programme that includes home visits. This ensures that children and their parents are comfortable and confident about starting in the nursery. The nursery makes considerable efforts to keep parents fully informed about the Centre and the procedures when children transfer to primary school. Parents know the systems well and feel at ease with them by the time children join their new school.

HOW WELL DOES THE CENTRE WORK WITH PARENTS, CARERS AND THE COMMUNITY?

34. The Centre's links with parents and carers are very good. Parents are extremely positive about all aspects of the Centre. They are welcomed and valued by all staff and their views are sought and acted upon. The Centre anticipated the needs of parents by introducing services such as baby massage classes, the book library and mathematics packs, which parents value. They receive useful and straightforward written information. In particular they appreciate the guidance about 'How to help your child before starting school' because it includes sections on language and mathematical development. Parents are well informed about what is happening at the Centre through newsletters and a regularly updated notice board.
35. Parents are very involved in their child's learning. There is a successful 'settling in' programme; home visits take place and children visit the nursery before starting. This helps children get off to a good start. Parents are fully involved in knowing how well their children are doing. Staff have daily contact with parents when they bring and collect their children. They make a point of sharing with parents what their children have been learning. There are also opportunities, at other times, for more formal meetings with staff where parents discuss children's progress and how they can help them at home. The home-school mathematics and book loan systems are highly effective in supporting parent's involvement with their children's education. The mathematics packs provide parents with guidance about the purpose of the activity, what the children are expected to learn, what vocabulary to use and different ways of playing the games. Similarly, the book loan system helps parents to develop their children's reading skills at home.
36. Parents who use the Jigsaw Unit receive very good support and advice from the staff at the Centre. Parents are delighted with the provision. One parent described the unit as a 'life line'. Parents tap into other services offered at the Centre, such as Portage, speech

therapy and the toy library. They appreciate the convenience of going to one place to have access to all the services they and their children need. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress through day-to-day contact with staff, parents' meetings and termly reviews of individual educational plans. Regular workshops take place on themes such as 'pictures and symbols'. Parents find these useful in helping them understand their children's special need and knowing how they can help at home.

37. The Centre actively seeks parents' views and acts on them well. Parents are usually consulted by questionnaire about facilities that the Centre offers and their quality. For example, they were asked about 'wrap-around' care and the quality of workshops they have attended. In response to parents' views, the Centre started the 'Rocking Horse Club' in 1997 to provide lunchtime support. They are confident that they can approach the staff with worries or concerns. The Centre receives very few complaints, but acts swiftly when it knows parents have concerns.
38. The Centre is developing very good links with the local community. The Centre's staff are fully involved in developing the co-ordinated use of the building, which is shared with the Croft Centre. Already the facilities are well used by support groups for after-school provision for children with disabilities and for the toy library. There are many visitors to the Centre and a room is used for regular meetings for parents and toddlers. In the three months since the new accommodation opened it has increasingly been used as a training venue for early years providers in the EYDCP. This enables good nursery practice to be disseminated across the borough.
39. Outreach work is developing very well at the Centre. Recently, staff based at the Centre have been involved in taking toys to a mother and baby support group for refugee and asylum-seeking women and children. This activity has developed, and staff now provide helpful advice to the mothers about managing behaviour, sleep patterns and healthy eating. Effective work has also taken place through visits to a local Travellers' site by staff. Toys and books are taken into trailers for children, and adult literacy courses are held. This has resulted in greater involvement of parents in their children's learning.
40. The Centre provides a very effective drop-in service for parents and carers with babies and toddlers. The atmosphere is warm, welcoming and emanates from the cheerful friendly approach of the outreach worker. She gains the confidence of parents by providing advice and support through a well-organised session, which takes very good account of the specific needs of babies and toddlers. Activities for very young children are well planned and babies are safely accommodated in an enclosed area within the room. A strong feature of sessions in the Centre is that all parents play alongside their children; children learn from the activities in a calm, secure environment. Parents value the provision highly. They appreciate the high quality of activities, resources, advice and the opportunity to meet and share experiences with other parents. The children giggle with delight as their parents join the outreach worker in singing a welcome song and action rhymes. Consequently children and their parents receive very good support and a positive introduction to the nursery.

Rocking Horse Club

41. The well-organised Rocking Horse Club provides a good social occasion for children to eat their lunch. They receive good supervision as the staff encourage children to develop personal hygiene by ensuring they wash their hands before and after eating. They encourage good manners and social skills as politely they sit at tables while they eat their lunch. Staff usually provide a range of interesting activities. Children's interest is maintained when staff intervene at the right time and ask questions to develop the

children's learning. The provision enables children to take part in extended sessions or full-time nursery provision and offers a valuable service to children and their parents.

Other Services

42. Good links with social services and 'The project for children with special needs' mean that 'hard to reach' families and children with special needs and their parents receive very good support and advice from the Centre. This is because they are able to identify and provide ready access to the most appropriate services to meet the needs of these families and their children. This is particularly evident in the work of the outreach worker and the toy library, which is highly regarded by parents and their children.
43. The toy library is very good. It lends to children with special educational needs a huge range of good quality toys, and a wealth of other materials such as books, videos, story sacks, software and other apparatus. These resources help to develop children's speech and physical skills. Sessions are very well attended. There is plenty to interest everyone. Children are well supervised and are provided with good opportunities to play alongside other children and their parents. The sessions offer more than just a toy library. For example, there is a new multi-sensory room, and fun activities are organised each week such as sing-a long sessions, a silly socks day, and drumming with a didgeridoo man! Everyone joins in and celebrates in the success of others. Parents find this a supportive, welcoming and non-threatening environment in which they chat over cups of coffee whilst they receive good advice from staff and from other parents in similar circumstances.

HOW WELL IS THE CENTRE LED AND MANAGED?

44. Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, senior management team and governors have a clear, shared vision for the future direction of the Centre. This has been successfully communicated so that all staff strive to provide an inclusive education that promotes high achievement for all.
45. The headteacher leads and manages change very effectively. She has enthused and motivated all the staff by involving them in her vision for raising standards and developed the services offered by the Centre. She has created a senior management team (SMT) and delegated appropriate tasks to them. In this way she has made best use of their expertise. The Centre's headteacher chairs the development group for the 'Windham - A Partnership for Children'. This is central to the management of change at the centre and ensures effective collaborative work with professionals from other agencies such as Social Services and the Health Authority. The result is that families and the community have access to well co-ordinated services that meet their needs.
46. The senior management team provides very good role models for all staff. The quality of their teaching is consistently very good and this sets high standards for their colleagues to emulate. Staff meetings for the nursery team ensure a shared understanding of what is to be achieved and how this will be done. It is evident from these meetings that the SMT values the contributions and strengths of all members of staff.
47. There is a good understanding of how effectively to establish and develop the right priorities. In consultation with the governors and LEA, the headteacher established the priorities of maintaining effective nursery provision, developing the Jigsaw Unit and building links with the community. Despite major building work she showed determination and resourcefulness in successfully achieving these priorities. The current development plan builds upon them.

48. The governing body provides good leadership and support for the Centre. It is a driving force and proactively leads the search for support and funding to fulfil the plans for the Centre's continued development. It is well organised and devolved funds are managed effectively. Appropriate committees such as one for finance are in place. These fulfil their responsibilities well and ensure performance management procedures are followed. Governors have a good understanding of the Centre's strengths and areas for improvement. For instance, they are reviewing the effectiveness of the management structure, and developing plans for the use of the building.
49. The Centre has good procedures for monitoring its performance through self-evaluation and review. It has successfully identified the most important issues to pursue such as improving provision for creative development. Performance management procedures are very good and implemented well to further develop the individual skills of all staff through training and support.
50. The Centre's relationship with the LEA and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) is strong. The deputy head of Centre is also an LEA advisory teacher and this enables close links to be maintained. The Centre features in the early years development plan and much of the work of the deputy head of Centre is linked appropriately to local and EYDCP's targets. She works closely with the LEA to train and advise others interested in the learning of young children in the private, voluntary and maintained sectors. Other staff at the Centre are also involved, for instance in running training on autism. The courses are highly valued. A strong emphasis is placed on monitoring the quality of this work and evaluations show that the training inspires other professionals. The Centre is thus well used to provide advice and support to the voluntary sector.
51. The Centre has effectively disseminated information about its work locally, nationally and internationally. It attracts many visitors, some from as far afield as Korea. The Centre is particularly effective in providing advice to private and voluntary settings. The deputy head of Centre visits settings to ascertain training needs, provide information and to offer effective support when necessary.
52. The Centre is now well placed to extend the dissemination of its good practice to the maintained schools.

WHAT SHOULD THE CENTRE DO TO IMPROVE?

The head of Centre and staff should further improve:

- assessment and record keeping procedures for early writing, mathematical and creative activities so that all staff have enough information to identify and plan what children need to learn next, particularly the older more capable children;

The Governing Body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents.

WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN AGED 3 TO 5?

53. The provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional development is evaluated and reported in paragraphs 15-23. Personal, social and education development is one of the areas of learning.

Communication, language and literacy

54. Teaching, learning and children's progress in the area of communication language and literacy are good overall. They are very good in speaking, listening and reading. In these areas children reach well above average standards and are likely to far exceed the early learning goals.
55. The staff are good at providing a language-rich environment where words and books are important. This means that these very young children make good progress and develop well as speakers, listeners and readers.
56. The staff teach speaking and listening skills very well. They are very good role models as they demonstrate listening, initiating conversations, taking turns and giving children time to explain. Children make rapid progress and develop very good listening skills. They listen attentively to adults as they share stories and interact well during the discussion that follows. A good example of this was seen when children sat enraptured as a story was told. They showed respect for each other's responses as they pointed to pictures, explained what happened and predicted what might happen next.
57. Staff value talk highly and concentrate on improving children's spoken language. This means that children's oral skills are similarly high. They talk confidently and clearly, often using complex sentences for example: *"I like satsumas, they're squishy."* *"Must hurry – we're going to a dinner party!"* *"I am sitting here. There is no-one sitting on this one."*
58. Effective teaching of talk takes place when staff are actively involved in imaginative play. They offer support at just the right time and appropriately guide events. This was well illustrated in the 'baker's shop' when a member of staff helped children sequence the events of making biscuits. The children talked through how they made the biscuits, how they put them in the oven for fifteen minutes, how the biscuits burned and they had to have a piece of toast instead! Staff often plan collaborative tasks that take place in the home corner and these are very successful in developing children's talk.
59. Books feature prominently in the nursery. Children choose books independently to take home and can talk about why they have chosen them. One girl explained that she liked the picture on the front and could anticipate what was inside. There are regular opportunities for children to enjoy rhymes, non-fiction books and stories. Adults often share books with children in groups or with individuals.
60. The teaching of early literacy skills is good. The staff model good reading styles in a lively way, which interests the children. For example the story of 'Alfie's feet' was used very well to teach sounds, word recognition, vocabulary and prediction. No time was wasted as good attention was paid to the title, author and illustrator, pointing to the pictures and words, and deciding what might happen next. The teacher read the story with good expression, and children joined in with the refrain enthusiastically *'stamp, stamp, stamp and splish, splash, splosh'*. Children were challenged to think hard about the initial sounds of their names and to describe their boots – *'My boots are pink and sparkly'*.

61. Adults provide children with good opportunities to write for a purpose. Children enjoy using the writing area, which is set up as an office. The majority can hold a pencil well and write confidently as they send letters to their friends and make lists in the baker's shop. They know that print conveys meaning as they glance at the recipe card when making Christmas cake. Children are not afraid to put pencil to paper. A significant number of the children can write their own name because they are frequently praised and encouraged to use their cards with their names on to practise writing them.
62. Children with special educational needs are taught very well. Their progress is discussed regularly and small targets are set. The staff work effectively as a team to help children achieve these targets. Signing is used very well to help children respond and access texts. Parents are very pleased with the progress children make and they described the big difference they had seen in their children's spoken language.
63. The staff have sound procedures in place for assessing standards and progress. They regularly observe children. Detailed notes are recorded on ongoing records but they are not consistently matched to what children are expected to do at various stages of development and what they need to improve next. The annotations and entries on the records are not always dated. This makes it difficult to track whether a child is improving and making significant progress. There is insufficient clarity about how significant achievement will be noticed and recorded especially for the more capable children. This means that some staff are uncertain about challenging these children to do more. For example during the inspection staff did not intervene to help older more capable children to form letters correctly or to write at more length, although a few are quite ready to do this.

Mathematical development

65. Teaching, learning and children's progress in the area of mathematical development are good overall. They are very good in mental mathematics and problem solving. In these areas children reach well above average standards and are likely to far exceed the early learning goals.
64. The staff teach number skills very well across all areas of learning. Staff take every opportunity to ensure that children recite numbers and count. Staff use numbers in stories, songs and action rhymes, such as the leaf song where they counted forwards to and backwards from ten. During a baking session they helped children to count how many spoonfuls of flour they used. Staff made a number line and children used cut out shoes to create a number chart from '1' to '10'. Outside, staff encouraged children to order and write numerals in a hopscotch pattern and counted them as they jumped in the squares. This developed the children's understanding and use of number very well.
65. Very effective teaching of problem solving takes place when staff incorporate it into their daily group sessions. An example was when children shared fruit at the end of the day. The teacher asked the children to count. They counted 16 pieces of fruit and 7 children. The teacher challenged them to predict how many pieces they could each have. Children quickly worked out that it could be two each. They suggested they should try having one each at first just in case they were wrong. Of course, when the fruit was given out there were two each and two were left over. The teacher challenged an older, more able child to think about what they could do. He suggested they should cut these into half. Then, realised it would not work out fairly and suggested they should keep them in case someone else joined the group.
66. Mathematical language of shape, space and measures is consistently well developed across all areas of learning. The staff plan a wide variety of activities to develop the

children's use of mathematical language. Children compared the size of their shoes with each other as a part of their work on the story of the Elves and the Shoemaker. They put the shoes in order of size, small, medium and large, using a computer programme. They learn to use the language of position and length correctly, for example when they sing Peter Pointer with the staff who put their hands behind their back or find their longest finger. Staff make the most of opportunities to compare similarities and differences and to make patterns. Two children were encouraged to compare the patterns in their shoes with the ones on display while another child used shape dominoes to match shapes to complete a pattern. Staff used correct mathematical language as children constructed a train track using 'straight' and 'curved' pieces. In the art areas staff encouraged children to talk about the edges and corners of the three-dimensional boxes used to make gifts for their mothers. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to discuss the names of 3D shapes such as cubes and cylinders to extend children's mathematical vocabulary further. This happened when children used cardboard shapes to make gifts for their parents.

67. Children with special educational needs are taught very well. Their individual needs are well planned for and made known to all staff so that the activities are adjusted to meet their needs. Consequently they make very good progress.
68. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. The records which track children's progress do not go far enough in extending the more capable children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Teaching, learning and children's progress in the area relating to knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Children reach above average standards and are likely to exceed the early learning goals.
70. The staff are very good at using resources to create exciting activities. These entice the children so that they can't help being curious. They want to investigate and explore the world in which they live so they enjoy their learning.
71. The staff play alongside the children, effectively introducing new words and posing questions. This extends children's knowledge and understanding and helps them to make good progress. A good example was seen when children played with the small figures in a snow scene outdoors and the teacher helped them to recall the changes that had taken place in their locality when trees were blown down in a storm. Mathematical language and knowledge were well developed through discussions about which animals might have made the tracks that left large paw prints on the floor.
72. Staff encourage children to explore with all their senses so that they investigate and compare similarities and differences. On a small number of occasions, staff do not pose open ended questions to make the most of learning opportunities. For example, when children were playing with water they were not asked to predict how, why or where they thought the water might come out or what would happen if they held the tube higher as they used it to syphon water.
73. Children are provided with a good range of opportunities to join construction pieces to build models. There are many opportunities both inside and outdoors for children to use large and smaller blocks to construct imaginary buildings or one copied from a picture. For example, they used wooden blocks to create Noah's Ark and large boxes to build a castle to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. When the roofers arrived to do some work on the Centre, the children were able to observe what they were doing and practised their own 'building skills' using large wooden blocks. The children even copied the men's health

and safety message! They wore 'hard hats' to protect their heads as they constructed a wall.

74. Staff make sound use of ICT but this is still developing. The staff make good use of programs to develop children's mathematical understanding. For example, in one program children matched the correct size shoes to the size of the character. They predicted how far a programmable toy would travel and improved their commands as they identified the effect of their instructions. However, ICT is not used consistently to support all areas of learning. Recent staff training is being used to develop further the effective use of computers to support the children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.
75. The outdoor area is well developed to provide a good range of activities for children to explore the natural world. Staff used the garden area to dig and to plant bulbs. They pointed out the roots and where shoots will grow from so that children notice changes over time. Children are provided with exciting opportunities to dig and to hunt for mini-beasts in the soil. They identified changes, for example to the tree where sap oozed from the bark.
76. Children have a good knowledge of the passing of time because staff provide frequent opportunities for them to talk about what happened yesterday and what will have happened in a few months time. Artefacts are used well. For example, to provide opportunities for children to talk about what shoes were like in the past. Children compared and discussed when they might wear different types of shoes, for what types of weather and on what sort of occasions. One child recognised the difference between shoes and the "shoe stretchers" which are put inside shoes.

Physical development

77. Teaching, learning and children's progress in the area of physical development are good. Children reach above average standards and are likely to exceed the early learning goals.
78. The staff do as much as they can to ensure that children have every opportunity to explore indoor and outdoor environments safely. It is currently not possible to allow children to move in and out freely because of continuing building work. However, staff exploit opportunities to use the indoor entrance hall to provide opportunities for children to enjoy physical activity through games and action rhymes.
79. The staff plan very carefully to ensure that children are provided with access to a good range of outdoors activities each day. The staff make the best use of the space available to develop children's large movements. They carefully arrange equipment to make sufficient space for children to climb as well as to hop on one or two feet using a hopscotch grid. Climbing frame equipment is changed daily so that children are challenged to climb by finding different ways of moving. There are parallel bars for children to use and toys to wheel or ride on.
80. Staff provide activities to develop the children's confidence in using tools and equipment. Outside, children use binoculars to look at planes flying overhead. They peered through both ends of the binoculars and discovered the different effects that this had on the image. They used trowels efficiently to dig soil as they planted bulbs, and handled different tools confidently to make patterns when they play in the sand. Indoors they can spread glue confidently and carefully when they decorate boxes to make presents. Scissors are used very well. They can cut stretchy material or shapes to the correct size.
81. The staff provide small and large equipment for children to develop their skills of building and of balancing objects. For example they fixed a train track together and made a

Noah's Ark by sliding and fitting pieces together. They took great care as they balanced the animal figures side by side. Similarly outdoors, they carefully re-positioned the small world figures of people, trees and houses in the tray after a "snow storm" was created.

82. Children with special educational needs are taught physical skills very well. The next steps in learning are identified for each child and are clearly communicated to all staff through meetings and individual education plans. Consequently, children are provided with activities that are carefully adjusted and with resources that enable them to achieve very well.

Creative development

83. Teaching, learning and progress in the area of creative development are satisfactory. Children are likely to reach the early learning goals.
84. Staff use singing effectively in all areas of learning so that children sing well and with enthusiasm. The adults have good subject knowledge in this area. Songs permeate the curriculum and are used to promote rhythm, rhyme and number. Children enjoy singing and are building up a good repertoire of songs. They explore musical instruments by tapping out simple rhythms using the tambour and drum. However, the instruments are not freely available to them and this limits their investigations.
85. Staff provide good opportunities for role-play and children's creative ideas are developing well. All children take part in role-play happily and are not afraid to make mistakes. During the inspection children were seen acting out their own stories about building an ark and deciding whether fish should go inside it, looking after someone who was ill, and acting out the role of a postman.
86. The staff plan a wide range of art activities. Children have free access to paint, paper and glue and are able to use scissors, brushes and glue well. They can paint, print, model with dough and create collages. On educational visits they are given sound opportunities to observe and draw the plants and buildings that they see. However, during the inspection, an opportunity was missed for children to use their observational skills and draw a shoe for themselves, when the adult drew the outline of the shoe for them.
87. Children are taught well a variety of techniques and skills in art well. During these sessions adults explain clearly what children have to do. Most staff provide opportunities for children to discuss and explore materials and skills for themselves. Occasionally opportunities are missed for example, when printing with string; the children were too closely directed and not encouraged to investigate the texture and colour or to talk about what they had done.
88. Dance is taught soundly and is available to children on wet playtimes when they use the shared entrance area. Occasionally visiting dancers come to teach the children. However, the Centre is rightly developing ways of teaching movement and dance more regularly, and staff training is planned for the near future.

ANNEX 1

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Questionnaire return rate

52%

Number of questionnaires sent out to parents and carers

66

Number of questionnaires returned

34

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know N/A
My child likes coming to Windham Nursery School.	97	3	0	0	0
I am happy with the way the staff handle behaviour.	79	18	0	0	3
Staff talk to me about my child's progress.	75	25	0	0	0
I would approach staff if I had a problem or a question about what was happening.	97	3	0	0	0
Staff care about my child and want him/her to do well.	88	12	0	0	0
I believe that Windham Nursery School is well managed and well led.	94	6	0	0	0
Windham Nursery School is helping my child become confident and make friends.	79	18	0	0	3
I think Windham Nursery School provides lots of good learning experiences for my child.	100	0	0	0	0
Windham Nursery School provides good support for children with special educational needs.	75	6	0	0	19
I feel involved in my child's learning.	75	25	0	0	0
I feel that my child is safe and well cared for.	90	10	0	0	0

Notes

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