

# The Willows Daycare Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221551
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Veronica Sharpe / Emma Bright
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Willows Day Nursery, Mereside, Soham, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5EE
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Willows Daycare Nursery
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Willows Daycare Nursery is a privately owned provision that opened in 1993. It operates from purpose built premises in Soham, Cambridgeshire. A summer play scheme, breakfast and after school club operate in a mobile building within the same grounds. The nursery and out of school provision serves the local area and surrounding villages.

The setting is registered to accept no more than 68 children aged between birth and eight years. There are currently 68 children on roll in the nursery and 53 on roll in the out of school club. This includes four children who are eligible for nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children with English as an additional language.

The setting operates five days a week for 51 weeks of the year with the exception of bank holidays. Opening times are from 07:30 until 18:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions. School children are transported to and from the two local primary schools using company vehicles.

Seven full-time and thirteen part-time staff work with the children. The majority of staff have early years qualifications. There are three staff currently working towards early years qualifications.

The setting is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association. The same owner also operates two out of school clubs in the nearby villages of Fordham and Burwell.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted adequately in most areas by efficient nursery procedures, for example, staff wear disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies. Tables are wiped before meals and younger children have their hands and faces cleaned after food. However, older children are not always encouraged to wash their hands appropriately before meals and they sometimes sit on the washroom floor to wait whilst their peers wash their hands. This potentially puts them at risk from cross-infection.

Appropriate procedures for recording accidents and the administration of medication help promote children's health and safety. Most staff have current first aid training, which means children receive suitable treatment in the event of an accident. Staff are conscientious about recording allergies or medical needs and therefore protect children from harm.

Babies benefit from daily walks in the outdoor area, and sometimes enjoy walks further afield in the local community. Other children have daily opportunities to exercise in the fresh air, although adherence to nursery routines sometimes limits children's access unnecessarily. Indoors children sing action songs and games, such as 'heads, shoulders knees and toes' so they stay active in inclement weather. Children in the out of school club visit the local park for energetic games and use the nursery play areas daily. Children in all areas have regular chances to use resources such as small construction toys, scissors and brushes, which help to develop their hand-to-eye coordination.

Food is healthy and nutritious. Children have cereals and bread for breakfast and enjoy a mid-morning snack of fresh fruit, which keeps them well nourished until lunch. Meals are cooked on the premises each day, with most fruit and vegetables locally sourced so they are fresh and appealing. Children sit together to eat, which encourages social contact. Children sometimes wait in their high chairs or seated at the table unnecessarily before food is served, which occasionally leads to some unsettled behaviour. Some children access water freely whilst the youngest children are well hydrated because staff offer water on an hourly basis. Comprehensive records are kept of allergies and special dietary needs; staff who prepare and serve food are well informed so children eat safely.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe and secure environment, which is risk assessed daily. External doors are alarmed and monitored to prevent unauthorised access whilst appropriate precautions keep children out of potentially hazardous areas, such as the kitchen. Staff are vigilant and supervise the children carefully as they play, both indoors and out. All areas of the nursery are bright and cheerful so children, parents and visitors feel welcome. Photographic displays of the children

at play make the environment attractive and give the children a sense of belonging. The nursery is well equipped throughout with suitable furniture and resources so children play in comfort and safety. Toys and equipment are reasonable in quantity and quality and generally meet the needs of the children.

Children practise the emergency evacuation plan frequently, which promotes their safety. Records of fire drills are kept as part of the risk assessment so any necessary improvements can be identified. Vehicles used to transport children are driven by experienced drivers who carry appropriate insurance, which helps to keep children safe and provides reassurance to parents. Daily registers are completed consistently to make sure both children and adults are accounted for.

Staff attend child protection training to develop their knowledge and understanding. They are aware of the nursery procedures, which helps to keep children safe. Child protection policies and procedures are in line with guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are secure and mainly content. They part with their carers confidently and most settle to their activities with enthusiasm. They play together and show good relationships as they sit to share a book, or help each other with small construction toys. Staff are kind to the children and offer them a lap to sit on, or give them a cuddle when they are tired or upset.

In most areas of the nursery children have access to a reasonable range of age-appropriate resources. Boxes are clearly labelled, which guides children in their choices. Activities are varied so children enjoy, for example, painting, drawing or singing on a regular basis. However, their ability to develop their activities and make independent choices is inhibited by the functional routines of the nursery. Much of the children's time is taken up with adult routines, such as tidying away for snack time, making sure children are available for toileting or nappy changing and preparing for outdoor play. Although staff sometimes, for example, read to the children during these times generally children are not involved or engaged in other activities, which means they sit and wait unnecessarily.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities for younger children, which ensures children benefit from an adequate range of experiences. However staff do not use their knowledge of what children can do effectively in order to plan new activities that offer challenge and interest. As a result some of the activities lack purpose, for example, flash cards, whilst others do not take into account children's individual interests and ideas. This means children sometimes become distracted and aimless in their play. Arts and crafts are mainly adult-led and do not enable children to explore colours and textures freely. This inhibits their creativity and their ability to express their own ideas.

Children enjoy singing sessions with adults, they happily join in action songs, such as 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes' and choose favourite songs like 'twinkle, twinkle little star'. They listen with interest to stories and snuggle up to staff to share a well-known story one-to-one.

Children in the out of school club benefit from an interesting programme of activities. They enjoy a wide variety of art and craft and have good opportunities to express their imaginations. Resources are well organised so children make independent choices. Staff listen to children,

discuss their day at school and make them feel valued. Children's sense of belonging is promoted well as they display their art-work, writings and drawings round the room.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Planning is in place, which provides a range of activities over a period of time so that children access suitable learning opportunities. Staff carry out regular observations of children and use them to chart children's progress and assessment records show that children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. However, staff currently working with funded children lack experience and knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They do not fully understand how the activities they provide contribute to children's progress towards the early learning goals and some activities, such as the use of work sheets are inappropriate. This affects children's learning.

Children's independence is developing and they tend to their personal needs, such as dressing themselves. They are enthusiastic and interested in what they do in activities that excite them. However, children are not able to independently access the full range of activities and resources that support their learning and enable them to develop their play. Children concentrate and persevere in tasks that stimulate them and they demonstrate pride in their achievements. They are developing good negotiating skills as they learn to share and take turns, which encourages respect for others. However, some activities lack challenge for older and more able children who are ready to move on to the next stage in their learning. Children confidently communicate with adults and each other, and they form good relationships with one another. They initiate conversations, asking questions to seek information. Although some children use their early writing skills to represent their ideas, they do not readily use the range of resources to practise this skill in a variety of everyday situations.

Children demonstrate an understanding of numbers, counting and calculation and know there are 'more girls than boys' at the table. However, this is not consistently supported in a range of practical or everyday activities to help children develop and practise this skill. Children use mathematical language to describe length and size in their play as they compare 'long and short socks' and they competently label simple shapes. Children have opportunities to develop their technology skills as they use the computer and a range of appropriate programmes. Children use their imagination in the role play area and enjoy painting and drawing. However, they do not have rich opportunities to express their imagination in design and in creating for enjoyment as art and craft activities are mostly adult-led, which impinges on children's creativity.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Settling-in procedures for younger children ensure they are content and have their needs met. Staff discuss children's needs with parents and carers and they follow routines familiar to the child. Activities and resources are mainly suitable for the age and stage of development of children attending, although the structure of routines sometimes means children have few opportunities to make independent decisions about their play.

Children learn about other cultures and lifestyles through activities such as tasting food for Chinese New Year or making lanterns for Divali. A satisfactory range of posters, pictures and books helps children develop their understanding of diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

In most areas children's behaviour is adequate. Older children are beginning to work together cooperatively, such as helping one another to tidy up. Staff encourage children to learn social niceties, such as 'please' and 'thank you' and offer praise when children behave well. However, children are not always helped to learn positive patterns of behaviour because staff do not always take time to explain to them why some behaviour is unacceptable, such as running indoors. This limits children's ability to develop their understanding of good behaviour.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is satisfactory. Staff meet regularly with parents to discuss their child's progress and they receive information about nursery activities. However, parents have less information on the Foundation Stage and few opportunities to support their child's learning at home. This means they are not always aware of how activities help children learn and make progress towards the early learning goals, and children do not benefit from the sharing of activities with their parents that further enhance their learning.

Parents and carers speak positively about the provision and the staff. They receive regular daily feedback about their children's health and well-being. Parents of younger children benefit from a daily sheet which records, for example, food intake or sleep patterns. This gives them a reasonable understanding of their children's activities and routines when at nursery. Good use is made of digital photographs to show parents and carers what their children enjoy and displays of these promote children's self-esteem. A parents' handbook means they find out about the setting's policies and procedures whilst regular newsletters keep them informed about changes and events.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Suitable systems are in place to ensure staff are safe and suitable to work with children. New staff and students have a sound induction programme so they know about the policies and procedures, which helps to promote children's welfare.

Most staff have appropriate qualifications in either childcare or play work according to their responsibilities, which means they have the skills to care for children adequately. Although staff have some opportunities to attend necessary training, such as first aid they have fewer opportunities to learn about current good practice, for example, by visiting other settings, reading or researching new ideas. For some of them this means they have not kept up to date with what constitutes good quality childcare. As a result children have structured sessions where the main focus is often on what adults want or need rather than the children. This in turn leads to children often waiting unnecessarily, for example, children seated for fifteen minutes before lunch arrives or being disrupted from enjoyable activities in order to prepare for snack time. Many art and crafts activities are adult-led and completed for the end product rather than for the experience.

Children and parents have no identified key worker, which potentially impacts on children's well-being as staff are not given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of particular children. This means they are not always fully aware of children's individual likes and dislikes, which leads to some activities lacking challenge and interest.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. The acting manager is committed to improvement to ensure that all children have access to good quality learning experiences and has begun to identify areas for improvement.

However, there is no system in place to monitor and evaluate the provision, which means the impact of the teaching on the children's learning is not effectively assessed. Overall children's needs are met.

Documentation is comprehensive and includes all the elements required by the regulations. Confidentiality is considered and children's personal information is kept secure. Records and parental consents are updated to ensure information is accurate and relevant, which promotes children's health and safety.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the registered person was asked to ensure that 'Badger 1' has sufficient toys, furniture and equipment for the numbers of children. This room is equipped with a reasonable range of furniture, equipment and accessible toys in order to meet the needs of the children attending.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider agreed to develop planning, children's assessments and the programme for communication, language and literacy. Planning is in place and provides a range of activities over a period of time so that children access suitable learning opportunities. Children's assessment records have been developed and are beginning to enable staff to plan for the next steps in each child's learning. Although resources are available for children to make marks this has not been effectively addressed and is reflected in this report.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve hygiene routines to promote children's good health, for example, ensuring children wash hands before eating and do not sit on the toilet floor
- continue to improve the range of activities which gives children time to explore freely, extend their play and follow their own interests

- improve children's opportunities to express themselves in child-led creative activities where the emphasis is on the experience and not the end product (this also applies to nursery education)
- continue to develop staff understanding of positive behaviour strategies
- develop an effective key-working system.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and children's learning
- develop activities and everyday routines to ensure that children are consistently challenged to enhance their independent learning
- provide further information for parents on the Foundation Stage and develop opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning
- develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the provision for early education to ensure that children benefit from a rich learning environment.

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