

Little Willows Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	200674
Inspection date	30 November 2007
Inspector	Anne Felicity Taylor
Setting Address	Whitnash Primary School, Langley Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 2EX
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Registered person	Little Willows Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Willows Pre-School opened in 1998. It operates from three open plan rooms and an office in a building adjoining Whitnash Primary School. It is situated in the residential area of Whitnash, Leamington Spa. A maximum of 34 children may attend the setting at any one time. The group opens on week days during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 87 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 40 children receive funding for early education. Children generally come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

Seven staff and the manager work with the children; two are part time. All staff hold appropriate Early Years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish and their health and well-being is successfully promoted because physical activity indoors and outdoors is a prominent part of the daily routine. There is easy access to the extremely well-resourced and well-planned outdoor area which reflects and augments all the areas of learning. Children consolidate their understanding of the Nativity story as they use the 'stable' outside, with straw and props, to act out their own Christmas story. They enjoy looking at books with friends in the open air and dig enthusiastically in the extensive sand area. Children are inspired to develop their own play, setting up 'a picnic' and playing running games. They develop physical skills, pedalling bicycles and during catching and throwing games. Through Forest School visits and the monthly Welly Walk, children observe and learn about nature and the seasons while enjoying the fresh air and exercise. Songs and music inspire the children in action songs, practicing for their Christmas presentation. Children are offered a marvellous variety of activities to help them develop increasing finger and hand control, for example, puzzles, arts and crafts and construction.

Children are protected from the risk of infection because the staff are excellent role models for the children on hygiene practice. They learn the importance of very good personal hygiene routines as they are encouraged to wash their hands and wipe their noses. Thorough and clear nappy changing and nappy disposal routines are in place ensuring children stay clean and comfortable, with first-class arrangements to prevent cross infection in place. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy, including, a sickness policy and information about infectious diseases. Parents are very well informed about any events during the day, as appropriate procedures are carried out, for example, accident and medication recording. Children are cared for with concern and expertise if they have an accident or become ill as many of the staff are first aid trained and a fully-stocked first aid box is available.

Children are very well nourished and hydrated, and enjoy the healthy and varied snacks provided, for example, milk or water and fruit and vegetable sticks. Children are delighted as they choose their own snack and are fully involved in counting the pieces of fruit or vegetable they can have and helping themselves to a drink. They tidy up their plates and cups, and therefore, develop very positive attitudes to healthy eating and food hygiene. The first-class exchange of information with parents regarding dietary needs and preferences ensures all individual needs are fulfilled. Valuable independence and social skills are developed during snack as children sit together and chat as they enjoy their food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a safe, stimulating and welcoming environment, therefore, they settle down quickly to play and learn. Security is a high priority and the main door is always secure and visitors are carefully monitored. Excellent staff deployment means that children are supervised at all times. There is plenty of play space for the children and they are able to move freely to different areas of interest. Children are offered a very broad range of appropriate play equipment, much of it at child height and clearly labelled, enabling children to make independent choices and organise their own play. The strong example set by the staff, supported by the superb range of books, posters and play equipment, ensures that the children see images of wider society. This effectively develops a positive attitude to others. Extensive and appropriate

procedures are in place for checking and cleaning all equipment and toys regularly, ensuring it is all suitable and safe for the children. All equipment is of a very high quality.

Children are offered excellent opportunities to understand fire safety and evacuation procedures because they discuss and practise it regularly. Therefore, they become familiar with the procedure. Fire drills are recorded and well-maintained fire safety equipment is in place. Children are kept safe because the staff have an excellent understanding of health and safety issues and are vigilant, supervising the children well at all times. They play and learn happily in safe indoor and outdoor areas. The children's understanding of keeping safe is commendable because the staff are skilled at explaining the need for any rules that are in place, for example, when they prepare for nature walks. Accurate registers are completed daily.

Children are very well protected from abuse or neglect as the staff have a thorough and professional understanding of child protection issues. They have completed appropriate training and are clear about their responsibility to report concerns. Parents are made aware of the comprehensive policies and procedures that are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are comfortable and flourish in the pre-school rooms and the outdoor area, which are organised to be exciting, stimulating and interesting for them. They develop independence as they choose from the broad range of quality activities set out for their arrival. All the learning areas are extremely well resourced and allow the children to make lots of choices. All indoor learning is reflected outdoors, sometimes extended with additional large equipment and resources to stimulate the children imaginations and creativity, for example, a large digger in the sand area and planks, crates and wood in the construction area. Children's work is displayed effectively indoors and outdoors which makes the children very proud of their achievements. Children are confident and secure within the setting, with the strong key worker system offering lots of individual support and care. Children display warmth and affection for staff, with staff reciprocating appropriately.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and children are making impressive progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Children benefit from the excellent understanding and knowledge staff have of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is evident in the planning, which is comprehensive and covers all the areas of learning, and from the staff's considerable understanding of what children are learning from play and activities. Staff display great skill tailoring activities to a child's individual learning needs, challenging the children and making learning interesting and lots of fun.

Children settle-down well in the child-friendly surroundings, responding positively to the staff team. They are happy and confident and behave very well. Children are excited and motivated to learn as they listen to staff telling them what activities are available for the session. With the support of the staff, the children sit quietly and concentrate as they use sign language to say 'good morning' to each other and as they look carefully at the pictorial routine which gives them guidance and confidence. With the constant support of staff, children learn to be considerate to others, for example, 'good sitting', so that everyone can see. They are learning to help others as they assist a friend with their shoe laces, and do some tidying up. Children

gain a significant understanding of others through visits to the adjoining school for assembly and to a local church for a Nativity performance.

Children appreciate the wide variety of books available to them and they use books carefully. They enjoy group story time, joining in enthusiastically with Jesus' Christmas Party and are proficient using the tape story player, with headphones, as they listen intently to 'The Very Noisy Night'. Linking sounds to letters is completed successfully through formal activities, using phonics, or in routines as children complete self-registration on arrival and at snack time. Writing for a purpose is introduced in many interesting ways with children writing letters, post cards and envelopes and they look at the ways words are used to inform, for example, with leaflets and vouchers. They complete 'shopping lists' and 'diaries'. Many children are writing their names well with properly formed letters. They are encouraged by clear labelling throughout the setting and letters and prompts being easily available in the graphics area. Speaking and listening skills are a high priority and children speak confidently telling their news to the group, and they are learning to be considerate when listening to others.

Children are offered interesting opportunities to develop their mathematical skills. They compare length using ribbon, string and tape measures, and weigh, measure and estimate with pasta. Children are encouraged to solve problems using maths as they consider the weight that will make the boat sink or float. The significant number displays throughout the setting ensures that children become familiar with numerals. They count confidently at register time and sort equipment by size, shape and colour. Planned and routine activities are used consistently to build upon the children's learning in counting and completing simple sums as staff introduce mathematical language, for example, 'how many more do we need?' and 'how many does that make?'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world is a particularly strong area of learning in the setting. Children benefit from a 'Welly Walk', once a month, around the school grounds when they can look at changes in nature, effectively developing their understanding of their local surroundings. This is enhanced further in the Spring and Summer terms as they go to a local wood for Forest School. They explore and investigate the exciting outdoor environment. At pre-school they use natural materials in the construction area, creating a wonderful car from wood, crates and tubing. Children ensure that the plants have been watered and learn about growing food and healthy eating as they grow runner beans. They are thrilled as they use torches in the dark discovery area, creating rainbows using a kaleidoscope and experimenting with light and colour. With regular use of the computer and comprehensive staff support, children increase their skills using the mouse. They enjoy running the 'catalogue shop' with telephones, tills and keyboards, allowing them to become more familiar with everyday technology.

Children are offered a wonderful variety of creative activities to stimulate their imaginations and express their feelings with confidence. They create colourful and interesting cards using lace, sequins, tinsel and feathers, and use clay to make Diwali lamps. Interest is sparked by play dough with glitter and buttons and children use tools and equipment to make a 'birthday cake' with 'candles'. Children respond to music with enthusiasm as they practise their Christmas production. They create loud and soft sounds when they are 'camels', creating great rhythm. Musical instruments outside, develops the children's understanding and exposure to different levels of sound. Imaginative play is very well resourced and organised and children play happily in 'the café' outside, making 'menus' and 'taking orders' from friends.

Children's achievements and progress are observed and recorded. Planning records are clearly linked to the stepping stones and observations are used to plan the next steps for a child's learning. Individual learning objectives are clear from children's records and staff deployment ensures children are very well supported and challenged appropriately. Staff are skilled at adapting learning to meet the needs of the individual child, ensuring that children with learning difficulties, children with disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language are all given wonderful support.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued as individuals and are offered many very effective play opportunities to gain an understanding of others through looking at positive images, discussion and activities. The fascinating display of 'Celebrations' is of constant interest to the children. They are eager to handle items of traditional dress from Asia and are thrilled at the Christmas display, including, copies of stained glass windows and stockings for Santa to fill. Colourful books and posters successfully add to the marvellous display. They use musical instruments from around the world and equality issues are addressed honestly and openly. Therefore, children develop a commendable positive attitude towards others, following the fine example set by the staff team.

Children's personal needs are constantly discussed between the staff and the parents, ensuring children are cared for appropriately and have a strong sense of belonging. There are first-class procedures in place to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, working alongside parents and others involved in the child's care. The setting displays a commendable commitment to inclusion. A comprehensive policy is in place regarding special needs which details how the service will be provided to children. The extremely high levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive a high level of individual attention so that their needs are met effectively. The children's behaviour is consistently of a high standard and children display a mature understanding of right and wrong. They share and take turns with minimal prompting and respond positively to clear boundaries that are in place. Staff deployment ensures that children are given quiet, constant reminders of acceptable behaviour. All the children are encouraged to share and to be considerate and helpful, effectively developing a very good awareness of the needs of others. The children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development is fostered. Children respond positively to the praise offered as they help to tidy up. Attending the Awards Assembly in school gives a fantastic boost to the children's self-esteem.

The partnership with parents and carers is excellent. The effective key worker system creates impressive lines of communication between the staff and the parents, effectively supporting the involvement of parents in all aspects of their child's care and learning. Parents contribute items and artefacts for projects, themes and displays and attend coffee mornings and open evenings at the pre-school. This ensures that parents have a thorough understanding of the extensive and interesting care and education their children are offered, and enables them to contribute effectively to development and assessment records. Prospective parents also attend settling-in sessions and have the opportunity to read all the policies and procedures that are in place and meet the staff, therefore, increasing their confidence in the care offered. Certificates and planning information are displayed clearly on the notice board and an additional board is used to extend the information to parents, including, community and health information.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leader and the staff team display great skill and experience, meaning that they have an excellent understanding of providing high quality care and learning for young children. This care and learning is significantly enhanced by the exceptional organisation. Detailed policies and procedures that fully support the professional childcare practice are in place. Staff have an excellent attitude towards keeping up-to-date with developments in early years and take advantage of many courses, including, 'Being a Good Team Player' and 'Planning and Assessment'. Children feel secure and are confident in their key worker groups, where they are offered a high standard and variety of well-planned activities, including, having lots of fun.

The welfare and safety of the children is the highest priority for the staff, and ratios over and above the requirement have a positive effect on the children. The marvellous organisation of the pre-school rooms and the outdoor space ensures that children are stimulated and keen to extend their experiences and learning. The leadership and management is outstanding and inspirational. Senior staff, supported by the committee, are forward thinking and innovative, planning for individual and group needs. Therefore, children make excellent progress.

Children and parents benefit as their families are involved in their child's learning and development. The children thrive in the caring and stimulating environment. The quality of care and learning is constantly evaluated and monitored, effectively supporting all the children in reaching their full potential. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the setting was asked to review the complaints procedure and the child protection procedures.

There are now suitable child protection procedures in place and the complaints procedure is clear, therefore, children are kept safe and parents are well informed.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk