

# The Windmill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	402985
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynn Clements
<b>Setting Address</b>	Bolford Street Hall, Bolford Street, Thaxted, Essex, CM6 2PY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01371 831457 Mob 07952 559885
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Windmill Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Windmill Pre-School opened in 1998. It is a committee run provision. It operates from the village hall in Thaxted. The pre-school serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children from two to five years at any one time. There are currently 43 children on roll and this includes 33 children in receipt of nursery funding. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. The group has strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00. On Fridays the session is extended to 12.30 to allow for a lunch club.

Six members of staff work with the children. Five members of staff including both managers hold relevant early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 2 and 3. The setting receives support from the local authority. They are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to develop their understanding about the importance of personal hygiene through the satisfactory daily routines in place. Hand washing is encouraged at relevant times and paper towels are used to prevent cross contamination between children. Children are learning how to keep their bodies healthy, for example, they join in topics which include caring for their teeth or learning about the affects of exercise on their bodies. All health related documentation is in place and updated as required to meet children's changing needs. However, written permission from some parents regarding the administration of medication is not clear and the systems in place to record the administration of medication or accidents does not provide confidentiality for children or their parents. Staff have completed relevant first aid training enabling them to care for sick or injured children appropriately.

Adequate opportunities for children to learn about healthy eating are in place, such as, snack and lunch time discussions, simple cooking activities and topics. Members of staff encourage children to think about foods which are good for them and those which are not so good. Healthy snacks are provided each day and parents support is sought regarding healthy options during the Friday afternoon lunch club, to maintain the pre-school healthy eating approach. Children have access to drinking water at all times to ensure no one remains thirsty. Parents share information about their child's individual dietary needs and this is recorded by staff, enabling them to meet and respect children's individual needs.

Children move freely around the pre-school. They are able to join in activities according to their individual needs and interests. They have opportunities each day to engage in physical play. Children enjoy walks in the village or running off steam on the large adjacent playing fields. They develop their co-ordination and spatial awareness as they use a variety of apparatus including footballs, climbing frame and wheeled toys. They manipulate play dough and use single handed tools such as scissors, cutters, pens and paintbrushes with increasing competence and control. All children are able to rest or be active according to their personal needs.

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

The provision is good.

The very good organisation of the play space along with thorough daily checks of all child-accessible areas ensures the environment remains safe for children. Toys and resources are regularly checked and cleaned so they remain in good condition for the children to use. The provision of excellent child accessible storage encourages children to extend their own play and learning. Staff support children, encouraging them to tidy away when they have finished playing, thereby keeping the play space free from tripping hazards and helping children to learn about the importance of doing things for themselves.

Children are supervised at all times. Staff take positive steps to help children understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they practise fire escape routines so everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency. Children learn about the importance of 'road safety' when out and about, they also talk about the importance of being careful in the pre-school car park to avoid getting hurt. Clear child collection procedures are shared with parents and carers and implemented in practice to keep children safe. Staff ensure written agreement is in place from parents and carers naming adults who can legitimately collect their child, to prevent

children leaving the premises with strangers. Security systems are in place with alarms on the fire exits to alert staff to children trying to leave or intruders trying to gain entry. All visitors are checked prior to entry to protect children from harm.

Staff have completed relevant safeguarding children training and this is updated as required to ensure staff remain aware of legislative changes. They have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures and clearly know how to make referrals to social services if they believe a child is at risk. Staff act in the best interests of the child at all times to ensure their welfare remains paramount.

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

The provision is good.

Children are very confident in the pre-school and in their relationships with each other and staff. They are greeted warmly by staff as they arrive each day. Children are secure in the setting and develop a sense of place as they make friends and move with confidence around the pre-school, freely selecting activities and games to explore. They negotiate small world and role-play scenarios based on real and imagined experiences, busily making pretend meals in the home corner or ironing the dressing up clothes. Staff plan a stimulating range of activities and learning opportunities for children. Children play confidently on their own or in small groups.

Children enjoy opportunities to engage in free flow play and investigation, extending their own play and learning as they examine tadpoles or explore the different textures of feathers, felt and cotton. However, there is a weakness in the daily routines with regard to extended large group times which rely heavily on adult-led experiences which impact on child-led learning time.

Children are keen to explore and construct as they co-operate with each other to link train tracks or problem solve as they complete puzzles and games. They communicate well, sharing their ideas while they play and seeking out others to join in their games. Younger children are encouraged to become vocal through, for example, imitation and use of appropriate language and gestures to communicate their needs. Older children communicate their thoughts, ideas and experiences, using language appropriately. Children respond to new challenges by questioning and using their own initiative. Staff have strategies in place which reflect the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support their practice with children under three years.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. Overall, staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how young children learn through play. They organise a wide range of high quality varied activities for children which promotes independence and decision making skills. Staff are interested in what the children say and do, taking time to listen and respond positively to their ideas. Children begin to develop confidence in their relationships with each other and staff as they move freely around the hall selecting activities which interest them.

Key workers make observations of all the children which they use to assess their progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. However, some key worker files and observations are not maintained on a regular basis to clearly plot progress over time. Written planning systems are in place and implemented in practice. Planning is clearly linked to learning

intentions. However, differentiation in planning enabling staff to adapt activities to challenge the more or less able children effectively is limited. Information about children's educational development within the pre-school is very good and actively shared with parents and carers through scrapbooks and stepping stone assessment records.

Children enjoy what they do and are clearly able to sustain interest in a range of activities. Overall, they concentrate very well at activities. Their self-esteem and confidence increase as they share stories from home and proudly seek out others to show off their finished creations, such as, their play dough 'duck models' and 'drip' paintings.

Children become increasingly independent when dealing with their own physical needs. For example, they collect their name cards on entry and know where to put their belongings such as coats and bags. They take the initiative to be self-sufficient in their learning because they have access to equipment and resources stored at their level. Children are confident communicators seeking out adults to share their ideas and suggest different activities they are interested in exploring.

They are developing their understanding of letters and the printed word using books independently. Children use writing for a purpose during creative activities, writing their names or making their marks on their creations or taking messages as they play. They explore print in different forms including Braille, using the machine in the pre-school to make their own Braille documents. Children join in large group story time, using the pictures in the book as clues to the story line as they discover all about the 'Big Blue Whale' and discuss if they can hold their breath to swim under the sea.

Children begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore and investigate wildlife such as birds of prey and tadpoles. They use battery operated toys, such as, remote controlled cars, laptops, cameras and calculators with competence and increasing understanding. Children learn about the changing seasons of the year and what the weather is doing. They observe change when mixing paints to make different colours or watching how clay dries out when making 3D model bird nests.

Children use number language as they play, counting how many times they can kick the football or score a goal. Opportunities for them to build on their calculation skills are encouraged and number rhymes and songs help them to consolidate previous learning. Children enjoy a range of physical activities which help to develop confidence and skill, they move around safely demonstrating sound co-ordination and control while using large or small apparatus. Children develop their fine motor skills as they use single handed tools and utensils with increasing competence. They are beginning to learn about the importance of physical exercise and how it can help them to stay fit and healthy.

Children express their individual creativity through a wide range of craft activities, musical instruments and singing simple songs from memory. For example, they freely paint and create pictures which are displayed around the hall, or joining in making 3D models using junk, clay or play dough. Children enjoy developing their pretend games based on real and imagined experiences as they move around the hall becoming 'barking pet dogs'.

Staff work closely as a team, praising and encouraging children to develop their personal independence and support learning.

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

The provision is good.

Staff work closely with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are included. Staff ensure that there is no bias in their practice in relation to gender race or disability. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs during topics and discussions as they examine artefacts and play with resources which reflect diversity. Displays provide positive images for children.

Staff have clear and extremely effective procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They take a multi agency approach in the very best interests of the children. Individual education plans are in place and regularly reviewed with families to support their child and ensure they make good progress. Close links with the local primary school provide ideal opportunities to the pre-school staff to work with their colleagues to provide smooth transitions for all children, but in particular to ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully assessed to build on the existing support systems which have been established. Staff work closely with families and other agencies to support children who speak English as an additional language. This enables children to build and feel confident and settled in their own language, then slowly develop their understanding of English over time as they play and learn.

Staff work together to provide a consistent approach to behaviour management. Children learn to share, take turns and negotiate with each other, while younger children are supported by staff to share toys fairly. Children develop a sense of belonging as they make their own choices and select resources independently. They show care and consideration for others making room at activities or including others in their imaginary games. Staff create an environment which encourages children to behave well, fostering their confidence and self-esteem appropriately. Staff work closely with parents maintaining an incident record which is shared with parents or carers to promote a unified approach to dealing with any behavioural issues.

The pre-school develops positive relationships with parents providing verbal feedback about their child's development and day at the pre-school. Parents, carers and children are greeted warmly as they arrive and leave the setting. Notice boards are in place providing information about forthcoming events, funding, and general pre-school business. Parents are encouraged to share their skills in the pre-school and are received warmly when they volunteer to help during sessions. Parents and carers views are listened to. Relationships are developed from the outset as staff seek information from parents about what their child can do at home, enabling them to plan activities and support continuity of care as children move between their home and the pre-school.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery funding is outstanding. Parents have plenty of excellent opportunities to share in their children's records of assessment, making observations at home of what their children enjoy and can do and completing comment sheets to help the key workers maintain records of assessment based on the whole child; this is an ongoing process enabling parents and carers to take an active role in their children's pre-school learning and formative years. Staff have excellent relationships with the local feeder primary school. Transitions for children moving to school are smooth as staff prepare them through discussions and visits from the receiving reception class teacher. Questionnaires are used to gain an insight into parents and carers needs and expectations of the setting and work together to adapt and continue to build on the pre-schools exceptional facilities.

Children are learning to share and help each other. They encourage others to join in their games and make room for them at activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Staff maintain documentation appropriately and all policies and procedures are in place. However, the registration systems do not currently include times of arrival or departure for children and members of staff, to ensure everyone can be safely accounted for at all times. Robust vetting systems are implemented to ensure that children are protected. Staff induction procedures are implemented to support new members of staff. An operational plan has been set up and is available to parents and carers to support the smooth running of the setting.

Both manager's have completed relevant training. The majority of staff hold appropriate qualifications to support children appropriately. Appraisals are in place to identify training needs and support existing members of staff. Managers use information obtained from appraisals to identify staff interests and skills and this information is used very well when defining roles and responsibilities within the group. The organisation of the setting ensures that children are well cared for and are developing positive attitudes towards their learning. Overall the needs of children are met.

Leadership and management of the nursery funded provision is good. Regular meetings take place to discuss the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensure planning is in place to support all children. Key worker's share information about children's next steps for learning and this is used well in planning to ensure children make good progress during their time at the pre-school

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last care inspection the provider has improved outcomes for children. The child protection policy was updated and now includes information for staff regarding allegations of abuse, to protect children from harm.

Since the last education inspection the provider has developed the systems for assessing children's achievements and increased opportunities for parental participation. Staff and parents now work together sharing observations and comments from home which are used by the key workers to support children in their formative years.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### 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):

- ensure prior written permission from parents regarding the administration of medication is clear; develop the current systems for recording the administration of medicines or accidents to ensure confidentiality is respected at all times
- increase opportunities for children to engage in child-led activities, with particular reference to the extended adult-led group times
- develop the current registration systems to include times of arrival and departure for all children and members of staff.

#### 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 the current systems for assessment to ensure that all records are updated on a regular basis
- further develop the current planning systems to include adaptation of activities enabling all children to be appropriately challenged.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)