

Willow Tree Nursery and Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	650008
Inspection date	07/12/2010
Inspector	Patricia Champion
Setting address	Chingford Avenue, Great Clacton, Essex, CO15 4US
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Willow Tree Nursery is privately run by Willow Tree Day Nursery Limited. The nursery operates from seven rooms in purpose built premises, situated in Great Clacton, Essex. The nursery opened in 1988 and the premises were extended to establish a children's centre in 2006. Children share access to secure, enclosed outdoor play areas. A maximum of 143 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week for 50 weeks of the year. Operating times are from 7.45am until 6pm.

There are currently 331 children aged from three months to 11 years on roll. Children aged two, three and four years receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions, out of school care or full day care. The nursery offers a creche provision for the children of parents attending meetings or courses in the children's centre. The nursery serves the local community and wider areas. The setting supports a number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language.

The provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The nursery employs 53 staff to work directly with the children, of whom 40 hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are four staff currently working towards recognised early years qualifications. There are two qualified teachers working in the setting, one of whom also holds Early Years Professional Status. The nursery also employs administrators, cooks, maintenance workers, sports coaches and a Spanish teacher. There are bank staff employed to cover staff absences or emergencies. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are provided with an exemplary and invaluable start in their learning and development by dedicated staff members who effectively and enthusiastically implement the Early Years Foundation Stage. A rich, varied and imaginative programme of play opportunities is offered within an exceptionally well-organised, safe and inclusive environment. Successful engagement with parents and good partnerships with other agencies support progress and ensure that staff usually have an in-depth understanding of children's needs. Self-evaluation is collaborative, thorough and highly comprehensive. The staff are reflective practitioners who successfully sustain consistently high standards by continually striving to improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person

should consider:

- developing further the partnerships with other settings that children attend within the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in relation to sharing observations about the children attending the out of school club.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All documentation, including an extensive range of detailed and well written policies and procedures contribute to providing an excellent environment to safeguard children's well-being and safety. Robust safeguarding procedures are effectively implemented by designated persons who have an expert understanding of their role and responsibility should they have any concerns about the children in their care. Rigorous recruitment procedures and comprehensive background checks using the Criminal Records Bureau ensure that children are always cared for by suitable adults. The staff's ongoing suitability is constantly addressed through regular appraisals, supervision meetings and monitoring observations of their performance. Thorough risk assessment and daily safety checks are completed in all areas used by children to ensure that hazards are successfully minimised. Any potential risks are quickly identified and speedily addressed by maintenance staff. Everyone is vigilant about the security of the children. There are CCTV cameras in operation, key pad entry systems in many areas of the nursery and all visitors are very closely monitored.

The proprietor, manager and administrators provide outstanding leadership and management. They are all exceedingly knowledgeable about each other's roles and very capably step in to cover when there is an absence in the management team. Everyone is passionate about the service they provide to ensure that all children receive the highest quality of care and education. Actions taken to improve are extremely well targeted. Exceptionally close links exist with the development teams within the children's centre to enable vibrant and innovative improvements. Effective systems are in place to obtain suggestions and feedback from parents and children, who are regularly consulted. This information not only informs the nursery action plan but also the self-evaluation process. Impressive professional development and regular meetings enable the cascading of knowledge obtained from numerous core and specialised subject training events attended by staff members.

Consistent staffing ensures that staff have an exceptional knowledge of each individual child's developmental progress. This allows them to plan and deliver activities in tune with each child's needs. Invaluable work with multiple agency workers ensures that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are superbly cared for. The nursery also has effective links with other early years providers and schools as the importance of helping children with the transition to their reception year is strongly recognised. However, the new system for sharing observations between settings for children attending the out of school club is not yet fully embedded to enhance further the continuity and coherence in children's learning.

Ongoing written, verbal and photographic communication provides parents with a wealth of information about their children's care, learning and all aspects of nursery practice. Parents become involved in their children's learning when they are welcomed into the nursery for special events such as nativity plays or meetings about the Forest School programme. Some parents have made significant contributions to the learning journey records and have supplied photographs and observations of their children's learning on special family occasions at home or while on holiday. The majority of parents speak positively about the setting and really appreciate the efforts of the staff team.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children really relish their time in the nursery. They are very happy, confident and independent individuals who truly benefit from the extremely supportive care and stimulating play experiences. The staff have an expert understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how young children learn best and this is effectively promoted in each room. Staff speak clearly and respectfully to the children and ask them carefully framed questions to check their understanding. Babies form strong bonds with their key person, who is fully aware of their individual needs and interests to support them to achieve high outcomes. Baby signing is promoted so the youngest children can communicate with others. A wealth of natural materials and everyday household items are provided within treasure baskets and staff allow young children to make sense of objects in their own time and in their own way. Children are competent in number, shape and colour recognition which is skilfully extended through activities. Books are well loved and children understand that they can be used to retrieve information and often chose to look at books for pleasure with the staff or their peers.

The staff are highly skilled, and observation and assessment is intrinsic in their practice. Their observations effectively help identify the next steps in learning and ensure that activities successfully consolidate knowledge and offer challenge for every child. Careful analysis of children's progress and achievements ensure that there are no gaps in learning. Each child has a beautifully presented learning journey record containing a wealth of photographs and examples of artwork. Children enjoy sharing these records with staff and visitors, remembering what they have done and showing pride in their achievements.

Children enjoy an extremely broad range of activities everyday. There is a strong focus on activities that promote investigation, exploration and experimentation and children demonstrate confidence using technology. Consequently, they effectively develop the skills they need for future learning. The learning environment is exceedingly conducive to learning. There is an abundance of superb resources and significant innovative improvements have been made to the outdoor area to enhance children's development. There is an extremely good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities each day. The organisation of the environment ensures that children are able to participate in activities at their own level of understanding and ability. Extremely good use is made of any spontaneous

events. For example, the children experiment with different ways to melt the ice in the outdoor area on cold winter mornings.

Children develop an exceptional understanding of how to keep themselves safe through simple explanations from staff during play opportunities, direct instruction, visual prompts and regular safety practices. Healthy living and enjoying a healthy lifestyle is a major strength of the nursery. Children learn about the importance of exercise, healthy eating and good hygiene practices. Nappy changing is hygienically and sensitively undertaken in an area away from the space used for play, sleep or eating. Extremely nourishing snacks and wholesome, freshly cooked meals are provided.

Children learn a high level of control and responsible behaviour through the staff's positive, consistent approach. They take account of each child's level of understanding, have realistic expectations, speak respectfully to the children and encourage politeness and good manners at all times. Communication skills are activity encouraged through discussion and debate. The children are effectively learning to listen to others and wait for their turn. For example, during the nativity play the older children speak confidently and clearly into microphone and sing a wide repertoire of Christmas songs with gusto.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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