

Windmill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sonjia Nicholson

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Windmill Pre-School was registered at its current site in 2010, although there has been a pre-school in the village since 1960. It is managed by a committee and operates from a purpose built building in the centre of Ivinghoe in Buckinghamshire close to the local school and Children's Centre. Children have use of a main playroom and access to two enclosed play areas for outdoor play. The pre-school is open on Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 1.00pm during term times only. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and may care for a maximum of 30 children at any one time. There are currently 37 children on roll some of whom receive government funding for nursery education. The setting has systems in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language. Children are cared for by seven members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications, and of these six, hold a National Vocational Qualification at level 2, 3 or 4. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance, '0 to 7 Alliance' and receives support from Buckinghamshire Early Years and Childcare Service.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children have fun and are purposefully engaged in all areas of this dynamic setting. They make excellent progress as staff recognise them as unique individuals and tailor their learning and care to meet their needs and current stage of development. The staff and committee are extremely proactive in their approach to improvement and have a substantial number of plans for the future. These include developing the area to the front of the building to create more play space and a vegetable patch, purchasing new equipment, such as, a play kitchen for the role play area and a shed to store outdoor equipment and implementing a new assessment system to monitor children's progress.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- review how tidy up time is organised so that all children take part.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a thorough knowledge of safeguarding procedures gained through on-going training. They have an excellent understanding of their role and responsibility to observe and report concerns about children's well-being to the

setting's designated Safeguarding Officer so appropriate action can be taken; she has a high awareness of maintaining confidentiality in such matters. Staff have access a range of relevant child protection information including the group's own comprehensive policy and a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The Chairperson leads the committee in following robust recruitment procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. This involves taking up both written and verbal references, undertaking Criminal Record Board checks and inviting potential candidates to spend time in the pre-school where their interaction with the children is closely observed. A comprehensive induction programme along with regular supervision meetings means all staff develop consistent practice and rigidly adhere to the setting's policies and procedures which means children's safety and welfare remain paramount at all times. The committee places a high emphasis on staff gaining a recognised childcare qualification and offer support for them to develop their knowledge by working towards gaining an Early Years Foundation degree. Staff are exceedingly vigilant in their supervision of the children and use the many security features installed within the building to keep them safe, for example, the key pad entry system. They ensure all visitors sign in and out as they enter and leave the building and consistently implement the 'no mobile telephone' policy in place. There are a number of well established procedures in place to cover collection times, a parent failing to collect their child and if a child becomes lost. All staff wear a uniform with embroidered logo and their photographs are on display which makes them easy to identify within the setting.

Children practice the fire evacuation procedure on a regular basis and those spoken to know they must leave quickly and where to congregate. Staff are also fully aware of what to do; they check the fire alarm system each week to ensure it is working order and use this to alert the children before leading them safely outside. Details of drills are recorded for future reference and the building is fully equipped in the event of a fire with extinguishers, a fire blanket and illuminated exit signs. Staff encourage children to play safely, for example, a member of staff reminds a child how to hold a pair of scissors to avoid injury. All aspects of the setting are led and managed to a very high standard. The Chairperson is very involved and actively contributes by taking responsibility for ensuring legal requirements are met, for example, informing Ofsted of significant changes and events. She and other members of the committee are enthusiastic in their approach to gaining funds and raising the profile of the pre-school within the local area, for example, they work closely with the Parish Council and local businesses to gain donations and funding. The committee have recently liaised with a national construction company who gave a generous donation towards the Easter egg hunt. The Chairperson holds regular meetings with the pre-school Manager to ensure her progress is monitored; similar meetings are also held between the Manager and staff. Children benefit from the many visitors to the setting which helps extend their knowledge of the world around them, for example, the vicar visits regularly, parents come in to help, most recently to make pancakes for Shrove Tuesday and representatives from the local authority provide support and guidance regarding practice issues. Staff have developed good relationships with the Children's Centre and have recently implemented a 'staff swap' where a member of staff spent the morning at another setting and vice versa to increase their understanding of how others work. There are excellent strategies in place for staff to build exceptional relationships with parents and carers which contributes significantly to children's

well-being. Staff provide an extensive range of information to parents both on entry and throughout their time at the setting through newsletters, a detailed notice board and a comprehensive collection of policies and procedures relating to all aspects of the provision. Each key person completes a 'What have we been up to this term?' sheet which they share with parents to keep them informed about their child's achievements; this includes a section for them to share their thoughts and observations from home and means they are fully involved in their child's learning and development. Parents spoken to during the inspection are extremely happy with the service provided. They particularly like the comfortable facilities, feel staff are very friendly and make children feel settled and comfortable. Parents say staff provide 'fantastic' support for those who don't settle well and would not hesitate to speak any of them if they had concerns. They enjoy the opportunity to speak to their child's key person, like the planned events, such as, the Easter morning and feel they get good feedback from the staff about their child's progress. There is an abundance of meaningful documentation covering all areas that exceeds requirements; it is professionally presented, accurately completed and stored confidentially to protect children's identity.

Children are cared for within a brand new purpose-built setting which offers exceptional accommodation. It includes a main playroom which is set out into areas linked to the early learning goals, for example, creative development and mark making. Children's artwork is on display along with posters and labels which creates a very stimulating environment. The foyer area is hugely welcoming and the office provides a confidential place for staff to speak to parents. Staff are very successful in creating an exciting outdoor classroom which contains an outstanding selection of equipment. They are highly imaginative and resourceful in creating new things for children to explore, for example, they fill tyres with different sensory materials, such as, bark chippings, pebbles, coloured shingle and sand. Children have great fun as they use water from the water tray to paint the playhouse and water the flowers, play inside the tee pees and observe the snails using magnifying glasses. Inside there is a vast array of high quality toys, furniture and equipment which form part of the daily check that is undertaken by staff to ensure children play safely. The committed staff team are very clear about their roles and undertake their daily tasks with enthusiasm; as a result the sessions run very smoothly. Staff recognise children as individuals and tailor their care and learning accordingly. They fully support children with special educational needs and provide learning in small groups or on a one to one basis using a variety of techniques, including the Structured Activities for Language and Literacy in the Early Years (SALLEY) programme designed to develop their listening skills and awareness of phonics. Staff engage closely with parents if they have any concerns and encourage them to seek support and advice from health professionals, many of whom are based at the nearby Children's Centre. The committee and staff are highly motivated in their desire to continually enrich the service they provide and have many plans in place, including; developing the outdoor area to the front of the building to provide further play and gardening opportunities, extend the opening hours to provide afternoon sessions once this becomes financially viable, add further resources, such as a shed for outdoor toys and introduce new assessment records.

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

Children make excellent progress in all areas of their learning and development because staff plan an outstanding range of activities based around a theme which is currently 'Mini-beasts'. Staff have a first rate knowledge of the aims and objectives for each activity and are enthusiastic in their delivery of them. Each member of staff plans a session during the week involving some or all of their key children depending on their needs, for example, a small group play a matching game where the focus is to learn how to take turns and recognise and name shapes. Children's achievements are recorded by staff using a variety of observational styles and supported by photographic evidence and examples of their work. This information is skilfully used by staff to inform the next stages in children's learning. Each child has a Learning Journey which contains this information and there are plans to introduce a 'Tracker Book'; staff share these records with parents at the end of each term and provide a 'What have we been up to this term' sheet which allows parents to share their observations and thoughts about their child's progress so they feel fully involved in their child's education. The atmosphere is lively and children are highly motivated in making their own choices about what they want to do, for example, some join in the adult-led activity to make a spider's web picture using glitter and glue while others are busy re-creating real-life situations in the role play area, such as, vacuuming, cooking and driving a car. There are excellent opportunities for children to develop their independence and gain self-help skills as they go to the toilet and wash and dry their hands and put their own coat on before outdoor play. Snack time takes place throughout the morning and children are very involved in pouring their own milk or water from jugs and using small knives to spread cream cheese onto their crackers. Children enjoy a tremendous variety of snacks incorporating all the food groups, such as, lemon and raisin pancakes, bagels with cream cheese, brioche loaf and scones with jam accompanied by a selection of fresh or dried fruit. Parents are reminded via the newsletter of the importance of healthy eating and are asked to review the content of their child's lunchbox to ensure it does not contain foods with high sugar/fat content or nuts. Children's good health is protected as staff follow vigorous routines, for example, they wear plastic aprons when preparing food or changing nappies, wipe tables using anti-bacterial spray and implement guidance gained from attending Food Hygiene training, such as, recording details of where food was purchased and using different colored cloths to prevent germs spreading.

Children appear happy and very settled. They demonstrate they feel safe as they confidently move around the setting approaching known adults and initiating conversations. They are familiar with the daily routine and become very excited when the door is opened for outdoor play. Music is played to indicate that it is tidy-up time but this is mostly ignored by the children so staff provide verbal prompts to encourage them to participate. Children's behaviour is managed consistently by staff. They provide a positive role model to children and reward good behaviour with 'Helping Hands' stickers and lots of praise and encouragement. Listening skills are actively encouraged and staff help children develop a respect for one another by reminding them to listen and not interrupt when someone else is talking.

Children's language development is promoted at all times as staff interact freely with them, chatting, asking questions and commenting about what is going on. Children respond by recalling past events, for example, one child tells a member of staff she went to the supermarket to buy mince with her mum and another remembers going on a snail hunt. Children are developing a love of books as they explore the book corner that contains a variety of fiction and non-fiction books; they turn the pages, follow the text with their finger and 'read' out loud. Children also enjoy having favourite stories read to them by staff, for example, one about a witch and her broomstick which a child is able to continue when she is called away suddenly. He reads the story to the others and afterwards says very proudly 'I remembered that!' Mark making is evident throughout the setting and children use a variety of tools to do so, for example, they use whiteboard pens on the whiteboard outside, large brushes to paint with water and pencils and pens to make a birthday card in the mark making area.

Children sing a selection of songs and rhymes during large group times many of which help develop their ability to count to five and beyond; there are plenty of resources to encourage children to count, match, sort and recognize numerals. Children initiate some wonderful imaginary role play; they pretend it is the Manager's birthday and create presents for her using toys wrapped in paper from the creative area and organise a party for her with play food in the role play area; she makes a note to plan more party role play in to the sessions at a later date as children show such enthusiasm for it. Children develop, practice and extend their physical skills as they pedal ride-on toys, slide down the slide and throw and catch balls. They manipulate the play dough using a range of tools and their hands to roll, stretch and cut it. Many of the planned activities help children learn skills for the future, for example, they take part in cooking activities, grow flowers and vegetables in the garden and gain basic Information Communication and Technology experience as they use programmable robots, cameras and torches. All in all, children thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting.

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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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	2
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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