

# The Windmill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	402985
<b>Inspection date</b>	15/06/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Jo Rowley
<b>Setting address</b>	Bolford Street Hall, Bolford Street, Thaxted, Essex, CM6 2PY
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<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	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**

Windmill Pre-School registered in 1998 and is run by a management committee. It operates from the village hall in Thaxted, Essex. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding areas and has strong links with the local primary school. The pre-school is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed small outside area available for outdoor play with an additional enclosed field which is accessible on a regular basis.

The pre-school opens during school term time, from 9am until 12pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 2pm on a Friday. Two afternoon sessions operate from 12:30pm to 2:30pm on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 27 children may attend the pre-school at any one time and there are currently 59 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage age group. The pre-school also offers care to children aged over five years and is registered on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of child care staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 3 or above. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff create a warm and welcoming environment where children are happy and settled. Effective safeguarding procedures are in place and staff demonstrate a good knowledge of each child's interests and needs which enables them promote an inclusive environment. Planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with activities covering the areas of learning and staff organise a range of interesting resources, to ensure that children receive experiences that promote good progress overall. Partnerships with parents, carers, other settings are very well established and these help to promote continuity of care and learning for all children attending. Effective steps are taken by staff to evaluate the pre-school's strengths and areas for improvement with all staff working together on the setting's formal self-evaluation tool. Parental feedback from questionnaires and day to day discussions are also taken into account, therefore, the nursery is responsive to the needs of those using their setting.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- practise regular evacuation drills and record details in a fire log book of any problems encountered and how they were resolved
- increase opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of information technology.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children's welfare is promoted as the setting has robust safeguarding procedures in place. For example, staff regularly complete additional safeguarding training to ensure that they are fully up-to-date and aware of their role and responsibilities in working together to protect children. In addition to this the committee carry out stringent checks to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Risk assessments are completed along with a daily check of the nursery to ensure that hazards to children are minimised. All outings that children take part in are also risk assessed and this further promotes their safety. Children gain a good understanding of safety issues through regular discussions and effective routines. An example of this is children and staff go to the adjoining field for some outside physical development. Children are fully aware of the boundaries and are able to clearly explain the rules when on the field, in order for them to stay safe.

The daily implementation of the setting's policies and procedures further supports children's safety and all required safeguarding documentation is in place to support their well-being. However, although there is an emergency evacuation procedure in place, it is not practised regularly. The joint managers and team of staff are well established, work well together and demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for their work. All staff are encouraged to complete further training and improve their practice through regular staff meetings and appraisals. This helps to promote an environment where staff develop positive attitudes to learning. Resources are used well to promote children's learning and development and children have regular opportunities to make choices about their play.

All staff have a good understanding of anti-discriminatory practice. This enables them to review their policies and practice to ensure that the service they provide is inclusive to all children and their families. They work effectively with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's background and needs, and consider this information sensitively when they are planning activities and play opportunities. Parents receive excellent information about their children's progress and how their time is spent at the setting. For example, staff regularly display and share photographs, updated newsletters are shared, daily discussions with staff and regular parent consultation sessions are promoted. The setting also works very well with others to ensure that the continuity of children's care and development is well promoted. For example, they work very closely with the local primary school so that they can help prepare children for this transition and they welcome other professionals into the setting, such as, speech therapists and the area special educational needs coordinator, enabling them to work together and therefore, benefiting each child.

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

Children make good progress in their learning because staff have an effective knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They implement clear procedures for assessing children and utilise this information to inform activity planning, ensuring that children are offered activities that promote their development. The effective use of the key person system means that staff know the children well and can therefore provide appropriate support whenever needed. They confidently encourage children to explore and develop their own play, intervening appropriately to extend children's knowledge and understanding. This enables children to take an active role in their learning and develop positive attitudes to this. However, children's development of knowledge and understanding of the world, with particular reference to understanding information technology, is not as well developed because they have a limited access to these resources and activities. Children's learning journeys are informative and incorporate the activities children have taken part in as well as identify the next steps in their learning which are used to inform future planning. Therefore, children's individual learning needs are met. Children feel valued and their play is encouraged by staff, as their ideas are extended. For example, when the climbing frame is out children make a 'den' beneath it. Staff use this idea and cover the frame with material so that it becomes a 'den' and children use this as they sit and chat with friends or look at books together. Children's enjoyment is enhanced as staff use their interests to plan enjoyable activities, for example, as part of the current topic the nursery welcome in an owl foundation so that the children can watch them fly and learn more about these creatures. Children's knowledge is extended further as they learn about the life cycle of a butterfly by growing one from a caterpillar. The children regularly look at the caterpillars and are keeping a growth and size chart, promoting their understanding of maths development.

Children's overall development is promoted as they demonstrate that they feel settled, having clearly built secure relationships with staff, and friendships with each other. The children enjoy taking turns in looking after the nursery's 'chatty bear'. They get to take him or her home and clearly like sharing what 'chatty bear' did at their house with their friends the next day. Children develop a good understanding of appropriate behaviour because they are offered clear explanations by staff. They learn about sharing, cooperation and negotiation as, for example, they work out turn-taking when using resources in the home corner and help with tasks such as tidying up. Children have limited opportunities to learn about the uses of information and communication technology, therefore valuable skills for the future are not always promoted. Children are developing a good understanding of the wider world around them as they participate in a range of activities and play experiences to support this, such as, when they celebrate festivals including Diwali, and Chinese New Year as well as others throughout the calendar year. Their emotional development is encouraged as staff promote their self-confidence and self-esteem through regular praise. Children's sense of belonging is promoted as they self-register by finding their individual name cards on arrival. The highly effective procedures for working with parents and other professionals mean that children who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language are offered consistent and continued support to enable them to participate and make good progress. Staff incorporate children's individual interests into the planning, capturing their interests, extending their knowledge and providing them with opportunities to develop early skills. For example, they participate in songs and rhymes to help them identify letters and enjoy mark-making as part of their play. Children are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and their understanding of the relevance of healthy eating is promoted through snack time. Children's independence is well-promoted as they choose their own plate and cup, serve their own snack and pour their own drinks.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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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