

# Willow Tree Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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EY413991

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**Inspector**

Susan Marriott

**Setting address**

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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

Willow Tree Pre-School was registered in 2010. It is a committee-run pre-school which operates from the site of Deanshanger Primary School, in the village of Deanshanger near Milton Keynes. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to provide a maximum of 30 places for children in the early years age group, of whom none may be aged under three years. The children have access to a secure enclosed outside play area and have the use of the school grounds. The pre-school is open on weekday mornings during term time only, from 8.30am until 11.30am, with the facility to stay for lunch from 11.30am to 12 noon. Afternoon sessions run from 12 noon to 3pm Monday to Thursday. Friday afternoons are reserved for staff meetings and staff development. There are currently 55 children aged from three years to under five years on roll, all of whom receive funding for early years education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are eight part-time members of staff, of whom four hold appropriate early years qualifications. 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.

This is a very friendly and inclusive setting where the developing staff team work hard to capture the true essence and spirit of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff sustain consistently good quality interaction with children to guide learning from play and promote positive attitudes to learning. Children make good progress in their learning and development and have tremendous fun in the process. Most aspects of children's welfare are promoted well, observation and assessment systems are evolving and there are good partnerships with parents and carers. Enthusiastic, strong leadership and honest, realistic self-evaluation secure the pre-school's good capacity for continuous improvement.

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

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

- increase the frequency of fire drill practise to secure the safety of all children and staff in an emergency
- provide further practical opportunities for children to make progress towards the early learning goals relating to calculating
- improve the accuracy of tracking and link planning and observation more closely, for example, by using the criteria in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, to fully secure children's good progress towards the early learning goals.

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

Children feel secure and happy in this positive environment created by staff who hold appropriate levels of qualification and work very well as a team. Children's welfare is properly promoted as the pre-school has effective safeguarding procedures. Staff attend regular training and review their procedures to ensure that they keep up to date with this area of work. Good physical security prevents intruders entering the premises and an efficient record of visitors is kept. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that all staff and committee members are suitable to work with children and full records of checks are kept on the premises. Regular risk assessments and daily checks are appropriately recorded and ensure that hazards are minimised. Good daily practice, such as ongoing explanations from staff, reinforces children's understanding of safety issues. For example, children's attention is drawn to the raised wooden step near to the vegetable growing plots in the school nature reserve to prevent them tripping and falling. Fire evacuation procedures are practised and recorded, but these are insufficiently frequent to ensure that all staff and children practise regularly.

The indoor and outdoor learning environments promote children's progression towards the early learning goals. The space inside the premises is bright and thoughtfully set out, with distinct play areas which reflect the six areas of learning. The doors to the outside area are open throughout most of the session, enabling children to enjoy free flow access to outdoor play in the fresh air. Staff consistently exploit the potential of the outdoor space throughout the year to promote children's wider experiences across the six areas of learning.

Staff observe each child at play in order to understand and support their individual well-being and development, enabling each key person and family to work together. The staff are alert to the early signs of needs of the children that could lead to later difficulties. They respond quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as necessary, to promote consistent and appropriate care for children. Staff have a good understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement effective policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. They work with parents and carers to ensure that they understand each child's background and culture, and are therefore able to meet their needs and promote children's awareness of individuality. Parents are actively encouraged to share their culture, skills, knowledge and interests with the children, enabling them to learn about other cultures from first-hand experiences.

Management is committed to raising the quality of outcomes for children through effective self-evaluation. The manager and her staff have begun to complete a formal self-evaluation document and demonstrate a good awareness of the pre-school's strengths and areas for development. Parents and children are becoming involved in the process of self-evaluation and are invited to contribute their own views and ideas for improvement. These actions secure the pre-school's good capacity for continuous improvement. Partnerships in the wider context are valued by the staff and liaison with the local school and other providers is good. Good transition planning and strong networking are in place and records are shared with

parents and other settings, supporting smooth transitions and continuity of care for children. Parents receive thorough information about the setting and their children's progress, for example, through newsletters, daily talks with staff and consultation meetings with their child's key person.

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

Children experience an enjoyable programme of learning and development at the setting. They are well supported by the friendly and caring staff, who work hard to meet their individual needs. The staff are exceptionally aware of the social and emotional needs of very young children and they give priority to the promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development. Staff strive to develop highly positive relationships, observe children and get to know them really well as individuals. They tune into children's interests and thoughts, tapping into what they know and are interested in, enabling them to respect and stimulate the children's learning effectively.

The day of inspection coincides with a natural science event, in partnership with the on-site school. An 'owl man' is visiting with various species of owls, and children are able to study these at close quarters. They handle and stroke them under close supervision from staff and the experience provides lots of opportunities for children to learn new vocabulary and to ask questions. Children are then allocated to parent helpers and staff in small groups to participate in the various science activities which have been set up in the school hall and in the school grounds. Children are free to explore the tables set out with old nests, honeycomb habitats, skulls, plants, various types of snail, leaf rubbing, woodlice and bugs. The adults move around the activities according to the levels of interest and concentration shown by the children. Outside activities include pond dipping under safely managed conditions, bug hunts in log piles and observations of vegetable growing. For example, children look at turnips, courgette flowers and the bees pollinating flowers.

Group story time at the end of the morning is centred around a non-fiction book about mini-beasts. This provides children with the opportunity to contribute their own knowledge about the life cycle of the frog and they remind staff that their surviving tadpole turned into a frog and is now living in the school pond. Children know that snails have a 'spiral shell' which goes round and round. Staff consolidate and introduce excellent vocabulary through discussion and this includes words, such as, 'slippery', 'sliding', and 'antennae'. Staff interaction is very good. They work well as a team and make the most of spontaneous opportunities which arise during the day to develop children's learning experiences. For example, children are alerted to the sight of the school caretaker and the owl man flying one of the hawks across playground at lunch time. Outside in the garden, a member of staff follows child-led play, readily responding to their requests to come and play in the water trough. She supports play by ensuring that guttering is available to channel water into the floor tray.

Staff clearly spend a lot of time and effort completing detailed planning sheets,

and identified learning intentions are suitably matched to the criteria in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Information is gathered on entry to provide staff with a good quality baseline from which to measure children's progress. The children's folders contain delightful photographs and comments about their learning for parents to read. However, staff do not track children's progress effectively to show the full extent of the good progress made during the children's time at the pre-school. This is especially evident in the aspect of calculation. Although staff identify the next steps in children's learning through observations fed back into their planning, the assessment records do not fully support staff in ensuring that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

Children learn about the relevance of healthy lifestyles and develop skills for the future as they become independent, share ideas and work together. For example, staff encourage children to try to put on their boots rather than doing the task for them. A well-organised rolling snack time provides some good opportunities for children and adults to interact in small groups. Children serve themselves water or milk and choose two pieces of cheese and two crackers, according to the numerals indicated on the signs on the wall. Children bring a packed lunch from home and staff support them in managing the various forms of packaging, again promoting independence in preparation for transition to school. Children's behaviour is managed well by the staff and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs. Children's self-esteem is promoted as they are offered opportunities to talk about themselves, their families and recent experiences.

## 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	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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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