

The Windmill Pre-School

Bolford Street Hall, Bolford Street, Thaxted, Essex, CM6 2PY

Inspection date

05/12/2014

Previous inspection date

15/06/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Teaching is good because staff effectively observe and assess each child to provide an accurate picture of their development. This information is then used to plan for their individual learning, to support them to make good progress.
- Children's emotional well-being is supported well by staff through the fully embedded key-person system. Children develop warm, responsive relationships and staff know them well, which means their individual needs are fully met.
- Relationships with parents are good. Parents provide positive feedback about the pre-school and confirm that they are very pleased with their children's progress.
- Children are safe and secure as staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and implement effective policies and procedures to support this.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not fully extend children's interest in books, so they enjoy an increasing range of literature and discover that information can be relayed in the form of print.
- Staff do not maximise all opportunities to strengthen children's awareness of good hygiene routines.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environments and accompanied children and staff on an outing to the grounds of the nearby windmill.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff, children and two members of the committee.
- The inspector viewed a sample of the children's development records.
- The inspector saw evidence of suitability and qualifications of the staff, self-evaluation, risk assessment and policies and procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Patricia Champion

Full report

Information about the setting

The Windmill Pre-school was registered in 1998 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school is situated in a village hall in Thaxted, Essex. It is run by a company with a management committee. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from the main hall and a smaller room, and there is an enclosed courtyard garden available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, four staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one member of staff holds a qualification at level 2. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during school term times. Sessions are from 9am to 12 noon on Monday to Thursday and from 9am to 2pm on Friday. Afternoon sessions run according to demand on Tuesday and Thursday from 12.30pm to 2.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 35 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- extend opportunities for children to look at books for pleasure and discover that information can be relayed by print, for example, by providing books and reading materials in the popular activities that particularly interest them
- strengthen children's awareness of good hygiene routines, for example, by reviewing the arrangements for children to wash their hands after art and craft activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children demonstrate a very positive approach to learning. They clearly enjoy learning through play, eagerly choosing what they wish to do from the varied range of resources offered. Staff have high expectations for children. They use their ongoing observations and assessments to successfully identify children's capabilities and what they need to do to progress. They use these together with information gathered from parents on entry, to identify the next steps in children's learning and to plan challenging and purposeful activities. Staff complete the progress check for children between the ages of two and three years. They share these assessments with parents and other professionals to ensure that children's needs are quickly identified when progress is less than expected. This

means that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very effectively supported through individual plans, devised with parents and health professionals, such as speech therapists. Children who speak English as an additional language quickly start to understand their friends and are supported in acquiring a good standard of English by staff who use visual prompts to accompany their speech. Consequently, all children make good progress from their varying starting points.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff achieve high standards across every aspect of their work. They support children well and use a good mix of adult-planned and child-initiated activities to extend children's thinking, interest and learning. Staff create a well-organised indoor learning environment to support children in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Low-level partitions are used creatively to provide quieter zoned areas where children can concentrate as they play. For example, there is a computer area where children enjoy engaging with child-friendly software. Staff show children how to use the equipment and guide them when necessary to support their learning. The equipment in the learning zones is changed throughout the day to continually provide interest for children. However, although there is an area equipped with a variety of books, puppets and comfortable furniture, this is not consistently well used by all children. Staff have not fully considered how to extend children's literacy skills further, for example, by having books available in other popular play spaces, such as the role-play and construction areas.

Children are successfully acquiring the skills, attitudes and dispositions they need in readiness for starting school. They are eager to discover new things, learn to carefully listen and capably follow instructions. There is also a sharp focus on helping children to develop their communication and language skills. During an activity where children make Christmas biscuits, staff extend their vocabulary and understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, staff ask carefully formed questions that encourage children to talk about numbers, shapes, weight and measurements. A wealth of opportunities are freely available for children to draw and make marks, both indoors and outdoors. Staff support children in developing their early writing skills through helping them to write their names on their work and developing appointment lists in the hospital role-play area. The pre-school is committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure they are fully involved in their child's learning and aware of their child's achievements. Parents and carers are encouraged to continue children's learning at home in a range of ways. For example, they give staff an account of the adventures their children have when they take home the pre-school's travelling teddy bear. Parents also have opportunities to contribute to the assessment and planning process through their comments in children's termly reviews, informal chats with staff and pre-arranged consultations with key persons.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are happy and settled because the pre-school fosters a strong sense of community and belonging. An effective key-person system helps children to develop strong emotional bonds and secure trusting relationships with a special adult. Staff successfully meet the needs of each child and value them as individuals. They ensure children settle into the pre-school by talking to parents during the settling-in process, to find out about children's likes and dislikes and they incorporate this information into their

planning. As a result, all children are included in activities. There is a strong focus on developing children's personal and social skills. The wide range of toys and resources cover all areas of learning and are attractively displayed, so that children can independently access them. This helps children to become independent learners. Children also relish the opportunity to choose between indoor and outdoor play. This means they can follow their preferred learning styles and take part in a variety of activities in the fresh air.

Staff effectively promote healthy lifestyles. Children are provided with good opportunities to develop their physical skills and exercise. They run with enthusiasm and play racing and chasing games in the fresh air. Space is also created inside the hall for children to use a wide range of movements as they play with the parachute and take part in action rhymes. Staff provide healthy snacks of fresh fruit, vegetables and toast, with milk or water to drink. Staff talk to children about the benefits of eating healthily and children develop their independence skills as they pour their own drinks and wash up their cups and plates. At lunchtime, children manage their own lunch boxes and open containers or unwrap sandwiches by themselves. Overall, children are developing a good understanding of hygiene routines, such as, putting used tissues in the bin or washing their hands before cooking activities and after using the toilet. However, after completing art and craft activities, children sometimes share the same towel and do not always have access to fresh water to clean their hands. This means that the opportunities for children to independently manage their personal hygiene needs are not fully maximised.

Children's behaviour is good because staff have a positive approach towards behaviour management. They calmly deal with any minor disagreements and act as good role models. Staff promote friendships between children by encouraging them to play alongside each other, take turns and to recognise the importance of sharing. This means that children are learning to respect and have regard for the feelings of others. Staff remind children how to keep themselves safe, for example, by encouraging them to consider the risks when they go on outings. They hold onto a rope as they walk across the churchyard to the windmill and talk about the need to walk carefully if the path is muddy. Children also go on visits to the local primary school to prepare them for the move into full-time education. Staff work closely with teaching staff to support children and talk enthusiastically to them about what to expect. As a result, children become familiar with the host school environment where most of them will attend and are emotionally well prepared for their move to school.

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

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are effectively understood and met by the managers, committee and staff. As a result, staff understand policies and procedures and implement them effectively, ensuring all children are kept safe from harm. Staff have a clear understanding of the child protection procedures and follow these rigorously. They complete safeguarding training so they are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and are confident to report concerns. The recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and background checks are carried out for

staff and members of the management committee, to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Security is given high importance and staff are efficiently deployed to ensure the safety of children both indoors and outdoors, or when they go on outings. Risk assessments and daily checks are appropriately carried out to ensure the premises, play equipment and activities are safe for all children attending. There are effective systems for recording accidents and meeting children's dietary requirements, and all staff are clear about these procedures. The majority of staff hold first-aid and food hygiene certificates so they can deal with minor accidents and safely prepare food.

The managers and staff share a strong commitment to improvement. The recommendations from the last inspection have successfully been addressed and practice has improved. As a result, children have increased their understanding of information technology because they now have regular access to computers. In addition, they practise fire drills more frequently so they know how to swiftly evacuate the premises in an emergency. Self-evaluation is accurate and staff actively reflect on their practice to evaluate what they do well and identify where they could do better. All staff are actively encouraged to offer comments and suggestions through regular meetings as well as informal discussions each day. Staff also recognise the importance of continuous professional development and relevant training is cascaded to all staff to improve their already good knowledge and skills. As a result, staff work very effectively as a team creating a safe, harmonious and stimulating learning environment for children. The managers and key persons monitor the quality of teaching and have a good overview of the progress children are making through the comprehensive tracking system. Any identified gaps in learning are discussed with parents and the other settings children may attend. As a result, strategies and additional support, if needed, are then planned for and shared to ensure children's needs are consistently met. This also means that children benefit from the positive partnerships with the local schools and links with other settings in the area, when they transfer and start the next stage in their learning.

Good quality information is provided for the families that use the pre-school. Notice boards and newsletters provide parents with a wealth of information about the Early Years Foundation Stage and forthcoming events. All policies and procedures are shared with parents and are available on the dedicated website. This ensures that parents are aware of the standards to which the pre-school operates. Parents become involved in the running of the pre-school by joining the committee or volunteering to help at successful fundraising events, such as the Christmas fair. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection comment on how much progress their children have made, especially in relation to their confidence and language development.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	402985
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	868986
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	35
Name of provider	The Windmill Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	15/06/2011
Telephone number	01371831457

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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