

The Willows

Willow Brook Centre, Bowmont Water, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7GA



Inspection date

9 June 2015

Previous inspection date

15 November 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Requires improvement	3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Requires improvement	3
The setting does not meet legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The provider does not effectively monitor the quality of teaching or provide support and mentoring for staff. As a result, the quality of teaching is variable and activity planning does not always meet the specific needs of some groups of children. Staff assessments of children's learning are not used well enough to support children to make good progress.
- Recruitment procedures are not robust enough to ensure the suitability of staff.
- Staff do not maintain an accurate record of children's attendance, as required.
- Arrangements to reflect on the quality of the provision are not effective in identifying where action needs to be taken to ensure good quality teaching and care practices.

It has the following strengths

- Staff establish warm, nurturing relationships with the children. As a result, children are settled and happy to lead their own play.
- The outdoor environment provides interesting and challenging opportunities for children to play and explore. This engages the children and provides them with opportunities to develop across all areas of learning.
- Staff understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection and know what action to take to take should they have a concern about a child.
- Parents and carers are adequately informed of children's progress and are suitably involved in their learning.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- implement an effective recruitment process to ensure staff suitability, with specific regard to gathering full and relevant information about previous employment history, and maintain records of vetting processes, including checking references
- use effective supervision to target inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and provide coaching and training to ensure staff assess where children are in their learning and plan activities and experiences to promote further learning and well-being
- ensure the daily record of attendance contains the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their actual hours of attendance.

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

- make better use of ongoing self-evaluation to identify areas of practice that need improving.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor areas.
- The inspector spoke to members of staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and held a meeting with the manager of the setting.
- The inspector looked at children's records, evidence of staff suitability, and a range of other documentation including policies and procedures to safeguard children's welfare.

Inspector

Melissa Cox

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This requires improvement

Children have access to a broad range of activities. However, they make steady rather than good progress in their learning because play opportunities are not tailored to their specific needs. Staff do not always interact purposefully with the children or adjust their teaching to suit their learning needs. For example, they do not recognise the chance to help children to count as they hop on the stepping stones outside. In addition, staff do not encourage children to work out if there is a space at the snack table by counting the children already there. Staff use small group times to focus on promoting children's communication skills. However, while the children enjoy taking part, a lack of thorough planning means that the activity is not aimed at meeting children's specific needs. As a result, children simply follow the actions of others as they have not understood the directions.

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

Children's well-being is not fully promoted. Staff supervise children and remind them how to stay safe, for example, guiding them off the slide. However, are not as vigilant indoors as some children slip over in sand that is spilt on the floor because staff have not cleared this away promptly. Children's independence is encouraged some of the time as staff remind them to wash their hands before snack. However, children do not receive the chance to further develop self-care skills by helping to prepare snacks or to put on their own coats for outdoor play. The outside area is particularly well resourced and there are opportunities for daily exercise outside in the garden. Children enjoy watering the herbs or balancing on blocks. Staff suitably support them to share resources and take turns. As a result, children behave well.

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

Recruitment procedures are not sufficiently robust and staff do not keep an accurate record of children's attendance. However, as new staff are not left unattended with children and the manager has taken immediate action to amend the attendance record, the impact is limited. However, this demonstrates that the manager does not have a secure understanding of the safeguarding requirements. In addition, the manager does not effectively monitor staff's teaching or how well they complete assessments of learning. Therefore, she does not identify weaknesses in the activities provided or in the progress some groups of children make. This means that changes are not made to ensure children always make good progress. Training has not been used to good effect, as ideas such sign language and visual timetables are not consistently implemented to support some children's additional needs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY246158
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	826497
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	58
Name of provider	Willows Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2011
Telephone number	01235 810136

The Willows Pre-School registered in 2002. It operates from Didcot, Oxfordshire. The pre-school is open each weekday during school term times from 8.50am to 11.50am and 12noon to 3pm, with the exception of Thursday when it is only open in the morning. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs seven staff. The manager holds a Early Years Professional Status and, of the remaining six staff, five hold relevant qualifications from level 2 to level 3.

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