

Inspection of Willows Pre-School

28 Wilton Grove, Wimbledon, London SW19 3QX

Inspection date: 16 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

The learning and development experiences for children are poor. The curriculum that staff provide across the setting does not meet the learning and development needs of the children that attend. Staff do not understand the current learning and development levels of the children and staff do not consider the age of children when carrying out their activities. As a result, children are exposed to activities that are too difficult, unengaging, and mundane. During 'focused time', children who are aged under two years are required to sit for long periods of time while staff hold up flash cards and expect the children to call out the colour of the card. This activity does not capture the attention of the children, leaving them disengaged and wandering aimlessly.

Children are not permitted to follow their own ideas and thoughts during activities. For example, when playing with the play dough and adding flour, staff tell children how the dough changes, without discussion or exploration to find out for themselves. Some children ask to have two spoonfuls of flour. Staff respond to their request by saying 'no, you will have one spoonful, like everyone else'. This significantly impacts on children's attitude to their learning as they stop participating and begin to fiddle with the resources.

Children behave generally well and demonstrate respect for each other and the nursery environment.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The learning environment does not reflect the diverse backgrounds of children and staff who attend. For example, resources do not show a range of cultural and racial backgrounds. Staff do not promote equality, diversity and inclusion well. They use books to teach children about feelings, using colours to represent different types of emotion. However, their poor awareness of the possible impact of using colour negatively to depict emotions risks teaching children harmful racial stereotypes. Furthermore, when staff talk to children about families, they fail to acknowledge the wide range of possible family structures. This means that not all children are able to see positive representations of themselves in the setting. In addition, children's opportunities to learn about people and families that are different to their own are limited.
- The activities provided for children do not support their learning and development needs. Staff do not consider what children already know and can do to enable them to plan purposeful opportunities for the children. All children, regardless of their individual skill, have the same activities, with no differentiation for their different abilities or level of understanding. These activities are often too difficult for the oldest children, yet are provided to all. For

example, young children are asked to cut pieces of wool with scissors and glue them to paper to replicate the Van Gogh 'Starry Night' painting.

- Staff lack the ability to recognise when their activities are not effective. Despite children not participating and not being able to meet the intended outcome because the activities are too difficult, staff express that their activities were a success. As such, children's experiences, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are poor because they consistently receive a curriculum that staff are unable to identify as being weak.
- Older children play well together in the garden during free play. However, staff interrupt their play by joining in and offering ideas and suggestions that do not follow what the children have been doing. As a result, children stop playing together and wander around the outdoor space.
- Staff do not demonstrate good hygiene practices. They often wipe their own runny noses and cough on their hands and then touch resources and the children's hands. This increases the risk of the spread of infection and compromises children's health and well-being.
- Parents are generally happy with the setting. Some have found the adjustment to not entering the setting a challenge but understand that, at present, this is in place to keep them and staff safe due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. They do not feel that they get enough communication from the setting when there are changes in the staff team, particularly when staff are leaving.
- The new manager has a vision for how she intends to develop the nursery and the staff's practice. As yet, she has not been in the position long enough to have an impact on the poor practice of the setting's staff. She recognises the weaknesses shared with her but needs to take swifter action to address them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of safeguarding practices. They confidently discuss signs and symptoms that would give them cause for concern that a child may be at risk of harm. This includes wider safeguarding areas, such as risk that children may be exposed to radical or extremist views. There are clear risk assessments in place to promote the safety of the environment.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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improve systems for staff's professional development to provide staff with the skills and knowledge they need to provide children with an appropriate and effective curriculum	29/10/2021
ensure that staff understand their role in promoting an inclusive learning environment, particularly focused on the language that they use to avoid teaching children racial stereotypes	29/10/2021
improve staff's hygiene practices to promote the good health of all children	29/10/2021
implement a curriculum that is suitable and appropriate to the individual needs, interests and development stages of all children	29/10/2021
improve staff's teaching in line with the characteristics of effective learning to ensure that they are able to adjust their practice to the differing rates at which children develop	29/10/2021
ensure that systems for monitoring staff's performance are effective enough to swiftly address instances of poor practice.	29/10/2021

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY391694
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10206867
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	38
Number of children on roll	54
Name of registered person	Willows Pre-School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP528892
Telephone number	020 8540 2388
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2018

Information about this early years setting

Willow Pre-School registered in 2009. It is situated in Wimbledon in the London Borough of Merton. The pre-school serves the local community and is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. The pre-school receives funding for early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are 11 childcare staff, two housekeepers, two kitchen staff and a staff member responsible for maintenance. Of the 10 childcare staff, five hold qualifications at level 6 or higher; the remaining are qualified at either level 2 or level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Danny Lydon

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- Parents spoke to the inspector and shared their views about the strengths and weaknesses of the setting.
- The inspector observed staff and children at play and spoke to staff about their activities and interactions.
- The manager and inspector held discussions about safeguarding and the curriculum for the setting and how this is embedded in practice.
- The inspector reviewed documentation relevant to the inspection process.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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