

Inspection of Willow Tree Preschool

Barn Cottage Pavillion, Barn Cottage Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3QN

Inspection date: 6 May 2022

| Overall effectiveness | Inadequate |
|--|-------------------|
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Inadequate |
| Leadership and management | Inadequate |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not applicable |

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Significant weaknesses in the manager's understanding of robust recruitment processes compromise the overall safety of children who attend the pre-school. The manager does not ensure that all necessary checks are completed to ensure the suitability of staff who work at pre-school. This compromises children's safety and welfare. Furthermore, not all required records are available for inspection.

Children demonstrate that they feel secure in the care of staff members, who are attentive and caring. They build strong bonds with their assigned key person, who supports children's personal, social and emotional development. Children show a determination and a willingness to build on their own self-care skills. For instance, they are encouraged to put on their own shoes and jackets for outside play and pour their own drinks at snack time. This helps children to increase levels of self-esteem and confidence in their own achievements. Children are given time to explore their own interests. For example, they are able to build on their imaginary skills as they play with dinosaurs. They create a habitat for them with the range of wood and grass mats provided by the staff. However, the layout of the learning environment does not provide children with enough space to fully investigate in their play. Within the pre-school, areas that are popular with children to play in, are located close to entrances that are in constant use. This means that, at times, children are disrupted in their learning.

Children are engaged and excited learners. They choose their favourite items from the good range of resources available to them. Children behave well. They show an increasing understanding of sharing and playing well with others. This supports children to gain important social skills to build friendships. Children use good manners and are able to express their own needs and requirements with ease. They are learning about making healthy choices in the foods they eat and how to take care of themselves. For example, children recognise and talk together about the need to wear a hat and sun cream in hot weather.

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

- The manager, who is also the nominated individual, lacks knowledge and understanding of safer recruitment processes. For example, she does not check the identity of the staff she employs or gain references to help verify their suitability to work at the pre-school. This does not safeguard children from potentially being cared for by staff who may not be suitable to work with them. This puts children at risk of harm.
- The manager has not ensured that required documentation and records relating to current members of staff are available for inspection, as required. This includes qualification certificates, to ensure that the provider is meeting the

qualification requirements for caring for children. The manager does not keep on file criminal record check numbers for members of staff. This is a breach of requirements of the Early Years Register.

- Staff know the children well. They have a good understanding of each child's level of development and how to quickly identify gaps in their learning. This helps children to have access to additional support, if required. Staff use children's own increasing abilities and skills to plan for the next steps in their learning to help them to reach their fullest potential.
- Staff feel valued and supported by the manager. They have daily discussions to express their own suggestions and ideas. However, they have not benefited from regular training or supervision meetings to help strengthen their knowledge and improve their practice even further.
- Children have lots of opportunities to build on their physical development and spend time outdoors in the fresh air. They use a climbing frame to help them to manage simple risks in their play as they carefully move around. This also helps children to build on their problem-solving and estimation skills. Children are starting to use mathematics in their play. For instance, they measure the water they pour through funnels into jugs and recognise patterns and shapes as they complete jigsaw puzzles.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills well. They give children time to build on and use their increasing range of vocabulary. Staff introduce more complicated words to expand on children's awareness of different movements the body can make. For example, they discuss 'rotating' their hands as they take part in action songs.
- Children are building a love of books. They are able to access an exciting range of stories and props that help them to build on their early literacy skills. Children show increasing concentration as they read stories independently. They intently listen to a group story time and are quick to ask questions. They recognise parts of the story that come next. This helps to support children's increasing recall and memory skills.
- Partnerships with parents are strong and are a particular strength within the setting. They feel valued and included in their children's successes and achievements. Parents have regular meetings and discussions to ensure they are aware of their children's progress. They comment on the 'dedication' and 'genuine love' each staff member displays towards the children who attend the pre-school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The manager has not checked the suitability of staff who work at the setting. As a result, staff have been working directly with children without appropriate references in place or having their identity checked. New members of staff are supervised through an appropriate risk assessment process, however, which helps to minimise potential harm towards children. Staff are confident in how they would identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures they would use to

report any concerns. They know to record accidents and incidents to protect themselves against allegations. The manager and the staff team risk assess the environments where children play and this helps them to have the freedom to learn and develop.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

| | Due date |
|---|------------|
| implement effective and safe recruitment procedures to ensure that vetting of staff is robust and confirms the suitability of those who work directly with children | 20/05/2022 |
| ensure that all required documentation is readily accessible and available for inspection. | 20/05/2022 |

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

- review the structure of the learning environment, to help children to have more space to fully investigate and not be disrupted in their play
- develop systems for staff training and supervision, to further support staff in their professional development and practice.

Setting details

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number | 2532038 |
| Local authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 10208491 |
| 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 | 2 to 4 |
| Total number of places | 24 |
| Number of children on roll | 28 |
| Name of registered person | Pile, Louise |
| Registered person unique reference number | 2532037 |
| Telephone number | 07861612492 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |

Information about this early years setting

Willow Tree Preschool opened in 2019 and operates in Haywards Heath, West Sussex. The setting is open term time only, from Monday to Friday, 9am to 3.30pm. The setting employs four members of staff. Of these, two staff members hold appropriate level 3 qualifications and one staff member holds a level 2 qualification. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Gwendolyn Andrews

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed how the curriculum for the pre-school is organised.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager and held a leadership meeting with the manager. The inspector held safeguarding discussions with all members of staff.
- The manager and the inspector discussed plans for evaluating and areas identified for improvement. The inspector held an in-depth discussion about the recruitment and vetting procedures used by the manager.
- The inspector observed the teaching and learning in both the indoor and the outdoors and the impact this has on the development of the children. The inspector spoke directly to parents and took their comment and written comments into consideration.

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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