

Inspection of Little Willows Pre-school

Walsham Primary School, Wattisfield Road, Walsham-le-Willows, Bury St Edmunds,
Suffolk IP31 3BD

Inspection date: 3 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thrive at this nurturing and stimulating pre-school. Staff greet the children with extreme warmth as they arrive. They take a genuine interest in what the children are saying and listen to their experiences. Children show that they feel safe and secure. They have strong bonds with the staff, who are calm and kind. Staff model good manners, such as saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Children share, take turns and play cooperatively together.

Staff offer a well-planned and sequenced curriculum that ignites children's motivation to learn. As a result, children become active learners. They learn about 'capillary action' and engage in exciting experiments, such as making rain clouds, using cotton wool and jars. Staff weave mathematical language into all aspects of children's play. For example, as children play a fishing game, staff model counting and adding. They support children to learn about the world around them. Staff help children to plant seeds and grow vegetables in the garden. They deepen children's understanding that seeds and vegetables need water and sunlight to grow. Staff engage children in rich and meaningful discussions. For example, children learn how tractors cut the grass in the fields and what ingredients they need to make a cake. Children listen attentively as staff read their favourite stories. They read to children in a way that encourages their enjoyment of books and learning.

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

- The manager and staff have an excellent overview of the curriculum. Staff have a clear vision of what they want children to learn. They plan around what children already know and can do. The inspiring environment enables children to re-enact their past experiences. For example, they enjoy playing in the role-play kitchen and shop. Children set up the area for the breakfast club. They pretend to buy cakes and fruit. Children give money to the shopkeeper, who puts it in the till. The children then put the items in the basket. This shows they have developed life skills that will benefit their future learning.
- The garden challenges children and gives them the opportunity to move freely in various ways. Children have access to a forest school environment, where they explore, learn about the natural world and develop life skills. For example, children build confidence as they problem-solve and manage risks.
- The pre-school is extremely inclusive. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is effective in her role. She works closely with other professionals and implements tailored teaching and care. This helps to improve outcomes for children. The pre-school uses additional funding effectively to support children's individual needs. For instance, one-to-one support, additional sessions and resources are provided. As a result, children make the best possible progress in their learning.

- Staff manage children's behaviour well. They are quick to address negative behaviour and support children to learn what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Children are helpful and respectful to each other. During snack time, they ask their friends if they would like some milk. Staff praise children's achievements, which helps to raise their self-esteem.
- Staff encourage children to be resilient and have a can-do attitude to their learning. For example, children pour their drinks and take themselves to the toilet. However, at times, staff do not make the best use of opportunities to encourage children to do more for themselves. For example, staff carry out simple tasks that children could do themselves, such as wiping their nose and serving their snack. This does not support children to develop their independence.
- Staff support children's communication and language skills well. They introduce new words as children play, which helps to build on their vocabulary. Staff repeat words and sentences back to the children so that they hear and learn the correct pronunciation.
- The manager is passionate and has a clear vision for the pre-school. She recognises and builds on the strengths of her team to create success. The dedicated team strives to offer the best quality care and education for the children.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents speak positively about the pre-school and comment on how supportive and approachable the manager and staff are. They attend parents' evenings, which helps them to feel fully involved in their children's next steps of learning. Parents say that the pre-school offers a nurturing environment where children thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have attended child protection training. They can identify potential abuse and know where to record and report their concerns. They have a written policy in place with the contact details of external agencies. In addition, staff have a noticeboard that includes the same information for quick reference. Staff are aware of wider safeguarding risks, such as county lines. The manager and committee have effective processes in place to monitor staff's practice through regular supervision. Recruitment procedures are robust and ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. The premises are safe and secure, and staff deploy themselves to ensure that children are well supervised at all times.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen opportunities for children to develop their independence.

Setting details

Unique reference number	251564
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10295217
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 11
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	Little Willows Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP523457
Telephone number	01359 258702
Date of previous inspection	18 December 2017

Information about this early years setting

Little Willows Pre-school opened in 1974. It operates from the grounds of Walsham-le-Willows CEVC Primary School, Suffolk. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications from level 3 to level 5. The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am to 2.45pm. The pre-school offers a breakfast club from 8am to 8.45am and an after-school club from 2.45pm to 5.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Diane Middleton

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the pre-school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the pre-school.
- The manager and the inspector had a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The SENCo spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspector carried out joint observations with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the pre-school with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.
- The inspector met with the manager, to discuss the leadership and management of the pre-school.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager and staff to help establish their understanding of how to safeguard the children in their care.

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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