

Inspection of The Windmill Pre-School

The Windmill Pre-School, Bolford Street Hall, Thaxted, Dunmow, Essex CM6 2PY

Inspection date: 31 October 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

Staff encourage children to settle and feel safe and happy in their care. As children arrive, they appear cheerful and excited. Staff greet them by name and engage in discussions about what they have done at home and what they are excited to do that day. Parents are delighted at how quickly their children settle and how much they enjoy attending. Children are extremely interested in the very good-quality learning environments, inside and outside. They are resourceful as they extend their play. For instance, children use their imagination to build walkways using tyres, planks, and crates. They show pride in their creations as they point out the 'bridge' they have made.

Children's behaviour is extremely good. Staff have high expectations of their abilities. From their first day, children learn to take turns. Tools, such as sand timers, provide visual reference points to help them as they learn to share fairly. Children show high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment in their learning. Staff are good role models, who teach children how to communicate effectively. They introduce language to children in context. For example, as children learn about different colours, staff encourage them to find examples in the environment and help them to name each one. Staff monitor children's progress, responding to their emerging needs and guiding their development through positive interactions combined with secure routines for play and learning.

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

- Children learn to manage their self-care needs independently. For example, they put their coats and wellingtons on before going outside to play. Where younger children need help, staff continue to encourage them to do as much as possible by themselves. Staff provide descriptive praise that raises children's confidence and encourages a positive, 'can-do' attitude towards learning. Children are encouraged to use their voice to make their needs known. They develop positive relationships with staff and each other. Initially, children play alongside one another and as their social skills increase they learn to play collaboratively. Children help with small tasks, such as clearing up after snack and lunch. Combined, these learning opportunities enable children to gain a sense of responsibility and develop their physical, social and communication independence in readiness for school.
- Children learn about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. They make choices to play indoors or outdoors. Staff use the outdoor area extremely well to support children's physical development. Children learn to move their bodies in different ways, developing their coordination as they busily construct, or have fun rolling balls or pouring water down pipes and guttering. Children make decisions and demonstrate their growing ability to problem solve, as they

try different ways to balance objects or work out that by standing on a crate they can reach the top of the guttering to roll the ball from a higher point.

- Children's understanding of the wider world is supported. They enjoy regular trips in the local community, exploring secret gardens, windmills and visiting local shops. Children's previous experiences are taken into account as staff plan learning opportunities to build on what each child knows and can do. However, there are currently inconsistencies in provision for children whose home language is not English. The provider has not ensured there are regular opportunities for children to use their home language or explore their customs in play and learning.
- The provider continuously evaluates the performance of staff and takes into account the views of parents. Staff feel they are managed well and receive meaningful support and training. The provider and staff recognise when aspects of the setting require further development. For example, they are currently developing opportunities for children to engage in riskier play.
- Staff realise when children need extra help with their learning. They are skilful in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff provide one-to-one support where needed and work closely with other professionals to ensure children receive the early help they need, as soon as possible.
- Staff plan and deliver a broad curriculum and support for children is very good. Funding is used well to meet all children's individual learning and development needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to identify possible signs that a child may be at risk of harm and how to report concerns regarding a child's welfare. Staff are clear on the procedures they must follow should they have concerns about the suitability of colleagues working with children. Children are closely supervised by staff, who also deploy themselves well to support the ongoing and changing interests of children throughout the day. Staff check all child-accessible areas of the setting to ensure these remain safe for children. Records are maintained well, such as monitoring children's attendance and ensuring that any accidents or administration of medication are completed and notified to parents.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop inclusive practice further, to ensure that the backgrounds of all children are celebrated and reflected in play and learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	402985
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10305950
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 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	24
Name of registered person	The Windmill Pre-School
Registered person unique reference number	RP901771
Telephone number	01371831457
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2018

Information about this early years setting

The Windmill Pre-School registered in 1998 The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and one holds a qualification at level 2. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 9am to 2pm. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Clements

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 provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed activities indoors and outside and assessed the impact these have on children's learning.
- The provider and the inspector completed a learning discussion together to understand how the early years provision and the curriculum are organised.
- The inspector had conversations with staff at appropriate times during the inspection. She took account of parents' views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including how information about children is recorded and evidence of staff's suitability checks.

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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