

Inspection of Willow Tree Nursery School

Chingford Avenue, Clacton-on-sea CO15 4US

Inspection date: 23 October 2024

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enter the nursery cheerfully and part from their parents and carers with ease. Staff greet them with a smile and welcome them into their base rooms to begin their busy day of learning. Children develop confidence in their abilities from a young age as staff help them to become strong and independent. For example, babies are provided with opportunities to learn how to drink from an open cup, use their cutlery to eat and select resources to extend their learning. Toddlers and pre-school children serve their own meals, pour their own drinks and very quickly learn how to put their coats on and off when they freely access the many outdoor garden spaces.

Children are keen and active learners. They confidently move around their base rooms and outdoor areas. They are effectively supported by staff who know them well and focus all planning around the children's individual interests, likes and dislikes. Children are well behaved and understand the nursery routines as staff provide them with clear directions, use praise and encouragement to get the best from children and help them to develop respect for each other. Babies who need support are provided with cuddles and comforted by kind and caring staff.

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

- The nursery is one of a chain of nurseries under the same company. The company has a strong and effective senior management team in place. The team visits the nursery regularly to check on compliance, to support the day-to-day managers and to review corporate policies and procedures. There have been a number of changes to the staff team over the recent months, which has resulted in some inconsistencies in the delivery of teaching. Although the senior management team is working on ways to strengthen the staff team and create more consistency in the delivery of teaching, it is not yet embedded.
- Parents who contributed to the inspection, speak highly of the care their children receive and comment that they feel that their children are safe and well cared for. Many recommend the nursery to friends and family and speak of the core strengths being the effective methods of communication between staff and parents.
- Staff encourage children's speech and communication as they share conversations, ask questions to extend their learning and encourage them to 'have a voice'. Children engage in discussions with their friends and tell visitors about their nursery day and the things they enjoy doing.
- Key persons know the children they are responsible for well. They work effectively with parents and other professionals to help to identify and close any gaps in children's development. Staff receive appropriate training to help them to further develop their understanding of meeting the needs of children with

special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Staff generally make good use of the very large nursery and outdoor areas to create a well-organised and interesting environment where children thrive. However, they place less emphasis on using the local community around the nursery as a teaching opportunity. For example, children are not routinely taken out for walks to explore and extend their learning. Staff do not always think carefully enough about the presentation in the rooms. For example, photos of children's family members are displayed too high for them to be seen by babies.
- Children develop an understanding about numbers, shapes and colours through both planned activities and child-led play. Staff encourage them to develop skills such as cutting shapes out of paper and identifying shapes in the environment. They use appropriate language to enhance the children's knowledge.
- Children thoroughly enjoy freely moving between the base rooms and garden areas. Outdoor learning is promoted effectively in all of the garden areas, enabling children to explore natural materials as well as to develop their physical abilities. They proficiently transport toys and resources from one area to another to enhance their games. Children are imaginative and use the resources in whichever way suits their particular play. Staff are on hand to facilitate children's ideas and help them to develop their games further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture of safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen and embed the programme of professional development to support staff in further developing their knowledge, confidence and skills to a consistently high level
- make the best possible use of the environment in the nursery and surrounding areas to fully promote and extend children's learning opportunities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2715179
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10370135
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 5
Total number of places	190
Number of children on roll	189
Name of registered person	Storal Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP524868
Telephone number	01255 221473
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Willow Tree Nursery School registered in 2023. The nursery employs 31 members of childcare staff, one of whom holds a qualification at level 6, and 23 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Lynn Hughes
Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- The inspectors spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the interactions between staff and children.
- The inspectors spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors looked at relevant documentation, including in relation to the suitability of staff.
- The inspectors and managers completed a learning walk and discussed the curriculum.
- The inspectors and management team met to discuss leadership and management.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024