

Inspection of Willow Pre-School Playgroup

King George V Pavilion, Blackthorne Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 7BJ

Inspection date:

30 January 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children arrive happy and keen to explore activities on offer and leave their parents with ease. Children new to the pre-school receive appropriate attention, cuddles and reassurance to help them settle. They are greeted by attentive, happy staff, who are genuinely pleased to see them. The large hall is bright and welcoming. The curriculum is influenced by the children's interests and seasonal themes such as acknowledging Chinese New Year. Initially, children are busy at their chosen activity and spend time exploring a wide variety of resources readily available to them. However, children are not offered sufficient challenge to extend their learning. For example, staff's knowledge about how children learn is variable they do not consistently consider potential learning opportunities when planning activities, which has an impact on children's progress. In addition, the lack of challenge means some children lose interest in activities quickly and wander, finding their own amusement.

While there are some weaknesses in promoting children's learning, children demonstrate they are confident, and feel safe. The caring staff know the children and their families well. Children have established close bonds with their key person. They offer praise and reassurance when needed, and are positive role models for the children who understand the expectations and routines of the pre-school. Overall, children behave well.

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

- The management team does not use staff supervision and monitoring systems effectively. Therefore, weaknesses in practice are not identified swiftly. As a result, not all staff have the best knowledge and understanding of how to provide children with rich learning opportunities and challenges to extend their learning. This has an impact on the progress children make.
- Management do not have a good knowledge and understanding of reporting significant events to Ofsted. However, in this instance, the impact on children is minimal.
- Parents speak highly of the 'wonderful' staff. They say they feel fully supported by the friendly and welcoming team. They comment their children are keen to attend and have made progress in their speech and language development since attending. Many say they feel reassured their children are in safe hands.
- Children have some opportunities to express their imagination as they access play garages, train tracks and dolls house. They have access to writing materials and make marks using white boards or paper during play. However, children's creative activities are led by staff and children are guided as to how creations should look rather than be encouraged to have a go, express themselves and develop their own creativity.

- Children are confident speakers. They are interested in visitors to the pre-school and ask lots of questions. Children talk about their interest in dinosaurs and discuss their names and habitats. However, they do not receive sufficient challenge to extend their learning to the highest level. Children make friendships with others attending. Calm staff support children how to negotiate and solve conflicts among themselves, and children show kindness to one another.
- Children learn the importance of staying healthy through daily routines. For example, they know to wash their hands before eating and after visiting the bathroom. Children make some decisions, for example, when they are thirsty, and they can access water independently throughout the session and manage this well. However, while some skills children need to be independent learners are supported, this is not yet consistent, for example, during snack and mealtimes.
- Children enjoy opportunities to develop their physical skills as they ride bicycles indoors. They sit and follow instruction as they participate in an adult-led obstacle course developing a sense of balance and learning to hop and jump. While the pre-school does have an outside play area, it is not currently being used. However, staff have not planned for children to have other routine opportunities for fresh air or planned activities to help them learn about the natural world and community around them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
improve supervision and monitoring of staff practice and seek professional development opportunities for staff that improves their knowledge about how children learn and how to provide an ambitious play environment	27/02/2026

develop the curriculum to ensure that it clearly identifies what it is that children need to learn, how this reflects their individual needs and offers appropriate challenge, to help them make at least good progress.	27/02/2025
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- help staff to provide opportunities for children to develop higher levels of imagination and creativity
- enhance staff's understanding and practice about how to help children develop the skills they need to be independent
- provide children with regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise and opportunities to explore the natural world around them.

Setting details

Unique reference number	402298
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10368111
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	30
Number of children on roll	46
Name of registered person	Willow Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP520657
Telephone number	07951283082
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2019

Information about this early years setting

Willow Pre-School Playgroup registered in 1999. There are four members of childcare staff. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The pre-school operates from Monday to Friday, 9.30am until 3pm, term time only. The pre-school provides funded early education for eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lynn Hartigan

Inspection activities

- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum and what it is that the team want the children to learn.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- Parents provided the inspector with oral feedback at the inspection.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- The inspector spoke with the staff team during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation.

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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