

Inspection of Willow Children's Centre

Willow Children's Centre, 1a Holbrooke Court, London N7 0BF

Inspection date:

29 May 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive in this exceptionally warm and happy nursery. Staff are skilful in responding to children's individual needs. On arrival, children happily know the routine of finding their pegs to hang up their coats and bags before joining their friends in play. Staff are fully aware of children's interests. For example, they plan the garden to provide children with joyous learning in nature. Children express their need to feed the birds, and staff join children in the large planting area. Children pick berries for the birds and share that they must not eat them as it will give them a 'sick tummy'. Children learn about the consequences of their actions throughout the day. They learn how to take risks, such as through climbing and exploring the exceptionally well-structured garden. Children have excellent attitudes to their learning.

Leaders are passionate about providing children with rich learning experiences within the nursery and during regular outings. Leaders and staff prioritise children's curiosity and love of learning. Children learn to be independent learners through resourceful staff who provide an exceptional learning environment. Staff give children lots of choices throughout the day. For instance, older children are responsible for supporting to arrange activities in the room each day, based on their previous learning and children's interests. Children remain deeply engaged in their play throughout the day, which supports their confidence and learning.

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

- Leaders are exceptional in their passion for every child to reach their full potential. They provide regular and varied training for staff. This ensures that children's learning excites and engages them, while also meeting their individual needs. Leaders ensure that staff observe children effectively to assess their needs precisely and identify their next steps in learning accurately.
- Staff ensure that children receive excellent learning experiences. Leaders and staff have high expectations for all children. They recognise opportunities for children, rather than barriers, and create a curriculum that meets the specific needs for every child. Leaders continually evaluate the environment and practice. They ensure that the staff team works together to provide exceptional and broad learning for every child.
- Staff support children's speech and language to an excellent standard. They talk to children throughout the day at eye level. Staff give children time to process information. Children often recall information that they have previously learned. For example, children learn about the weather and share, as they look up at the sky, 'There is a storm coming.' Staff teach children new words throughout the day, such as 'beetroot' and 'magnifying glass', as they explore the compost bin. Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, learn to

become effective communicators.

- Staff plan for children's physical development exceptionally well. Children climb the wooden wall and use the tree house to explore. They enjoy balancing on logs, which supports their balance and coordination. Staff encourage children to experiment. Children use the mud kitchen to mix mud and make cement to build walls. Children use their imagination well and build their gross motor skills.
- Staff provide children with risk-taking opportunities to build their confidence. Children learn to put safety glasses on and use hammers to create mosaics from recycled tiles. Staff and children have two-way conversations about how to handle tools with care. They discuss the shapes that are newly created by the broken tiles. Staff talk to children about how to identify new shapes that have formed by counting the sides. Children engage in alternative ways of learning mathematics from these well-planned activities.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have gaps in their learning receive expert care and support. Leaders work closely with health and educational professionals to individualise their teaching to support children's individual needs. Staff provide parents with excellent advice and guidance to help them to access specialist services where needed.
- Staff build strong relationships with children and their families. Staff understand how to support and respond to babies. This helps babies to feel safe and secure, ready to begin their learning. Staff have a deep knowledge of how to sequence babies' learning before walking. For instance, they provide tummy time and cruising opportunities to build their core strength prior to starting to walk. Babies demonstrate confidence in the room to explore and experiment, as they are provided with expert care.
- Parents speak with enthusiasm about the excellence of leaders and staff. They praise how leaders and staff understand the uniqueness of their children and embrace any interests with enthusiasm. Parents appreciate the inclusiveness of the nursery and the richness of the learning their children receive to help them thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	131749
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10380659
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	70
Number of children on roll	80
Name of registered person	The London Borough of Islington
Registered person unique reference number	RP905313
Telephone number	020 7527 1990
Date of previous inspection	18 June 2019

Information about this early years setting

Willow Children's Centre registered in 2006 and is located in Holloway, in the London Borough of Islington. The setting is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm, all year round. Of the 25 staff who work directly with children, 24 staff hold relevant childcare qualifications. The provider offers the government funded places for childcare and receives specific funding for disadvantaged children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jacqueline Halpin

Inspection activities

- The executive headteacher and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The inspector observed interactions between staff and children.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they enjoy about the setting.
- The executive headteacher and the inspector completed a joint observation of a focused activity.
- The inspector spoke to staff and took their views into account.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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