Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Willow Tree Nursery

190 Llantarnam Road Llantarnam, Cwmbran, NP44 3BH

01633863312

www.willowtreenurseries.co.uk

The inspection visit took place on 17/06/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Willow Tree Nursery
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	50
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	Yes
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider is not promoting the Welsh language and culture needs of people, and this requires improvement.

Ratings:

Well-being	Good
Care & Development	Good
Environment	Adequate
Leadership & Management	Good

Summary:

Children are content and settled at the setting. They interact positively with other children and staff and play cooperatively together or alongside one another. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop and learn, and their independence skills are developing as they participate in a range of experiences.

Staff provide good care and support that helps children thrive. Staff are warm, nurturing and responsive, creating a caring environment where children feel respected and supported. They provide engaging experiences that reflect children's interests and encourage them to learn and develop with confidence.

The environment is clean, welcoming and suitable for children. Areas are organised to support children's play and learning. The setting provides an appropriate range of resources, giving children opportunities to make choices and engage in different activities.

Leaders are motivated and dedicated to delivering good quality childcare. They provide beneficial

encouragement and support to staff. Leaders and staff work closely with outside agencies to ensure the children get good quality care and support. Parents speak positively of the service and its staff and the care their children receive.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children are happy, settled and enjoy attending the setting. They choose activities and access resources independently. Children are listened to and staff respond positively to their ideas. For example, when children show an interest in building rockets, staff adapt a planned activity to follow their interests. Babies also communicate their preferences successfully through gestures, facial expressions and by bringing resources to adults to share.

Children feel safe and secure and have developed warm relationships with staff who know them well. They confidently seek comfort, reassurance and support when needed. Children approach staff for cuddles and encouragement, and staff respond with kindness and patience. They are regularly praised for efforts and achievements, helping them feel valued and respected. Children are relaxed and confident, chatting happily with staff and friends during play and mealtimes. Babies receive nurturing care and staff respond quickly to their individual needs. These positive relationships help children develop a strong sense of belonging.

Children interact well with one another and are developing good social skills. They play cooperatively, share resources and enjoy spending time with their friends. Children work together to complete puzzles and engage in imaginative play. Older children help younger children during daily routines, for example, helping them to put on their shoes. Children are encouraged to be respectful and kind to others. As a result, they are learning to take turns, cooperate and build friendships.

Children enjoy their play and learning. They are curious and eager to explore the range of activities available. Children happily engage with books, construction toys, small world resources, role-play opportunities and sensory experiences. They show particular interest in the nursery's pet rabbit and tortoise and enjoy talking about them. Babies explore a variety of resources and frequently share their discoveries with staff. Children benefit from a suitable range of indoor and outdoor experiences that encourage exploration and learning through play.

Children are developing independence and making suitable progress in their learning. They confidently choose activities, wash their hands, tidy away resources and serve themselves food at snack time. Babies are also developing self-help skills, including feeding themselves. Children take part in activities that reflect their interests and support the development of communication, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Care & Development — Good

Staff promote children's health, safety and well-being through caring relationships and effective day-to-day practice. They know the children well, supervise them appropriately and respond promptly to their needs. Staff provide gentle reminders and reassurance to help children understand how to manage risks during play. They demonstrate an appropriate understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities to record and report concerns. However, not all staff are fully confident in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff encourage healthy lifestyles through the provision of nutritious snacks and meals, continuous access to drinks and positive daily routines. They follow clear procedures for managing children's allergies and promoting their safety. Staff generally follow appropriate hygiene procedures. However, some infection prevention and control measures are not always followed consistently.

Staff manage interactions effectively and create a calm, caring atmosphere. They develop warm relationships with children and consistently treat them with kindness and respect. Staff promote positive behaviour through praise and encouragement and help children understand expectations. Staff remind children to use *“kind hands”* and celebrate achievements with comments such as *“Da iawn!”* and *“Good job.”* They support children to share, take turns and resolve disagreements positively. Staff respond sensitively when children need comfort or reassurance and help them understand and express their feelings. They join in children's play and conversations, helping to build trusting relationships and positive experiences.

Staff support children's play, learning and development through a suitable range of experiences that reflect their ideas and preferences. For example, when children showed curiosity about natural objects outdoors, staff extended the activity by encouraging them to investigate a stone using a magnifying mirror and asking questions such as, “*Does it get bigger or smaller?*” This helps children develop their thinking and investigation skills. While planning reflects children's interests, opportunities to extend child-led free play and promote independence are not always maximised. Staff support children's awareness of the Welsh language through the use of simple Welsh phrases and songs.

Environment — Adequate

Leaders have appropriate arrangements in place to support children's safety. Access to the premises is secure, and staff follow appropriate procedures to ensure children are only collected by authorised adults. Risk assessments are in place for the indoor environment, outdoor areas and outings, and leaders review these regularly. Outcomes for children require improvement because leaders do not consistently identify and address risks in the environment, and we expect the provider to make improvements. Leaders ensure fire safety procedures are implemented effectively and complete regular fire drills to help ensure staff and children know what to do in an emergency.

Leaders provide an environment that is generally suitable for children's needs and supports their play and learning. Children have access to spaces that reflect different ages and stages of development, including a recently extended covered outdoor space. Leaders ensure toileting, nappy changing and sleeping arrangements are appropriate and are separate from play areas, helping to support children's care needs. However, leaders do not consistently monitor and record room temperatures to ensure the environment remains suitable for children. Leaders explained that thermometers had been temporarily removed during recent refurbishment work. Once they became aware of the issue, they addressed it immediately. Younger children benefit from a spacious baby room with good natural light and dedicated areas for sensory and messy play.

Leaders provide an appropriate play environment with a suitable range of resources across the setting. Furniture is of a good standard, well maintained and appropriate for the ages of children attending. For example, suitably sized tables and chairs allow children to sit comfortably while participating in activities and eating snacks. Resources are organised to promote independence, with many items stored attractively in baskets and containers that children can access easily and use as part of their play. Children's play and learning are supported by a variety of natural and man-made resources available throughout the indoor and outdoor environment. The environment also offers opportunities for active play and movement, helping children to develop confidence, coordination and a range of skills through everyday play experiences.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leaders have a clear vision for the nursery and aim to provide quality childcare. The statement of purpose provides an accurate overview of the service. Leaders have developed a good range of policies and procedures, which they review and update regularly. However, some policies do not reflect current and relevant legislation. Leaders ensure the required paperwork is in place, which is organised and monitored successfully. They give staff the opportunity to familiarise themselves with policies and ensure that parents are kept informed of any changes.

Leaders review the quality of care and use this information to help plan improvements. They complete a quality of care report which identifies what is working well along with areas they would like to develop further. The process includes gathering feedback from children, parents and staff, giving leaders a broader picture of how the service is operating. They consider this feedback alongside their own observations when deciding on priorities for the setting.

Leaders conduct effective recruitment procedures to safeguard children and ensure staff are suitable. All staff files sampled contained the required documentation. An appropriate number of staff hold suitable childcare qualifications or are working towards them and leaders ensure they keep up to date with mandatory checks. This includes Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks, safeguarding and food hygiene training. Leaders support staff with induction training and mentoring. Regular supervision and appraisal meetings take place, with targets set to support professional development. Staff told us they feel well supported by leaders.

Leaders have positive links with parents and other stakeholders. Leaders and staff work in partnership with parents to plan for each child's individual needs. There is a range of communication systems at the setting. This includes regular daily verbal feedback, an electronic nursery app, phone calls and emails. A parent commented that their "*child loves attending Willow Tree"* and that *"the staff are so friendly and caring".*

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
Children may be at risk of harm because environmental risks are not consistently identified and eliminated.	17/06/26

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 10 - Healthcare	Ensure staff consistently follow all procedures, including infection prevention and control measures.
Standard 20 - Safeguarding	Continue to develop staff understanding of all aspects of safeguarding.
Standard 22 - Environment	Monitor and record room temperatures regularly to maintain a comfortable environment for children.

Best Practice

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Recommendation(s)
Continue to provide more opportunities for child-led free play to support children's independence.
Review and update safeguarding and complaints policies and procedures to ensure they remain current.

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