



WILLOW DEN

Children's Outdoor Nursery
at Spartans Edinburgh

SENIOR EARLY YEARS
PRACTITIONER
OUTDOORS

Background

Willow Den Scotland is a fully outdoor nature-based early learning and childcare (ELC) organisation. Located in Ainslie Park Football Stadium, Willow Den at Spartans offers a unique woodland setting based in the heart of urban Edinburgh, for children from age 3 up to when they join primary school.

Our nature-based nursery has access to a hidden garden through our 'secret gate'. It is the perfect environment to connect with nature – do some climbing, swinging or even build a den or have fun in our mud kitchen.

Children can see some of Scotland's top female sporting athletes in training, and if your wee one chooses, they can engage in play-based sport.

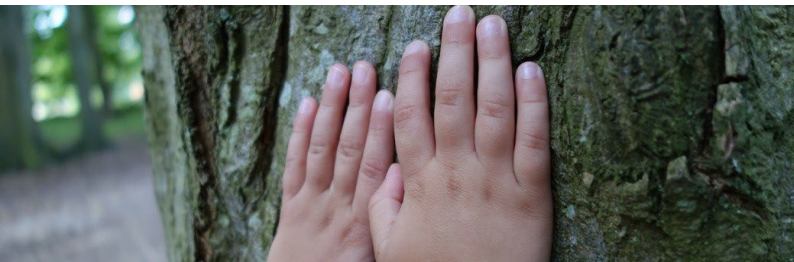
We are a funded partner provider to City of Edinburgh Council so you can use some or all of your 1140 hours with us. We accept a wide range of childcare vouchers as well as Tax Free Childcare for payment of non-funded sessions or additional hours.

Willow Den was founded in 2020 by Inspiring Scotland to increase the availability and accessibility of outdoor nurseries across Scotland, enabling more children to thrive outdoors. Inspiring Scotland has been

supporting the development of outdoor play through its various funds since 2008, establishing Willow Den as a trading arm is a continuation of this work.

Our **vision** is for every family to have the choice for their child to play and learn outdoors.

Our **mission** is to improve children's health and well-being in Scotland through access to fully outdoor Early Learning and Childcare.



Role Description

The Outdoor Senior EYP will work with the Manager playing a key role in embedding quality at Willow Den. We are seeking an enthusiastic, highly organised senior confident in early years practice with the ability to plan and oversee tasks, time and resources to ensure children experience exceptional outdoor early learning and care.

A passion for delivering fully outdoor play-based learning for young children is essential. But that is not all. We are looking for a Senior who will 'walk the talk', who can support the creation of play and learning experiences that are high quality and child-led.

This role is perfect for someone who leads by example and isn't afraid to roll up their sleeves outdoors. You'll keep on top of the essential checks and tasks that keep the nursery running smoothly, while also inspiring the team to create and respond to play that's child-led, spontaneous and deeply connected to nature. By modelling best practice you'll help children and staff feel confident to explore, take risks and thrive in the outdoor environment.

Responsibilities

- Support the Manager in planning, designing, and continually developing our outdoor spaces.
- Hold a Key Worker role providing positive experiences and interactions for children.
- Support the Manager with organising the day-to-day tasks.
- Supervise the team in the manager's absence.
(training/illness/leave/non-contact time) and ensuring standards of care and learning are maintained.
- Lead by example by providing a role model for children and staff.
- Complete and support others to carry out regular risk assessments.
- Work with the manager and staff team to create high quality provocations and positive learning experiences.
- Supervise the setting up of learning spaces and ensure implementation of the daily routine.



Responsibilities cont.

- Carry out senior administrative duties, encouraging meaningful observations ensuring children's files, learning/personal plans are accurate and up to date.
- Support the Manager ensuring planning is carried out and there is a balance of purposeful and spontaneous planning, evaluations, and next steps.
- Regularly update your professional knowledge and develop skills related to your role.
- Build relationships and clear communication with parents, families, and some agencies.
- Support the Manager in embedding planning for improvement using the Care Inspectorate and HMIE's Quality Improvement Framework for ELC matched to priorities identified in the nursery's Standards & Quality Improvement Plan.
- Proactively support EYP's, support staff, and students in their day-to-day role
- Provide a role model as a reflective practitioner.
- Use technology to communicate children's progress.
- Support the Manager to ensure policies and procedures are understood and implemented.
- Take part in and contribute to policy reviews.

Skills & Abilities

- Active listening and responding
- Problem solving and solution focussed.
- Good IT skills in Microsoft word.
- Excellent organisation and record keeping.
- Be able to demonstrate how to follow children's interests.
- Excellent communication skills.



Person Specification

Essential Criteria

- Qualified to SCQF level 7 (HNC/SVQ 3) Childhood Practice/Early Years and Young People as a minimum.
- Experienced in a Senior EYP role or similar, or, for practitioners seeking promotion see desirable skills.
- A passion for outdoor play-based learning
- Good understanding and knowledge of Realising the Ambition
- Full, clean PVG membership.
- Must be able to register with SSSC as Lead Practitioner
- Experience ensuring compliance with regulations, policies and procedures (staff/students/volunteers).
- Understand the need for self-evaluation for improvement using HGIOELC and/or the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework for Daycare.
- Good understanding of the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare.
- Experience with Health and Safety procedures and Benefit/ Risk Assessments.
- Competent with online communication and completing children's learning journals to a high standard.
- Highly organised and able to sustain completion of regular tasks over time.

Desirable criteria

- Practitioners seeking promotion should demonstrate experience taking responsibility for specific pieces of work (Fire Warden, CP Depute Co-ordinator, Outdoor Play Champion).
- Understanding the impact of positive interactions.
- Able to create experiences and spaces that provoke curiosity with children outdoors.
- Knowledge of reflective planning/planning in the moment. CPD demonstrating skills and knowledge of outdoor play (fire building/risky play/messy maths, etc.).
- Able to build and maintain a fire for heat and warmth.
- Experience supporting the nursery with Care Inspectorate inspections.



Personal Qualities

- Confident in providing feedback to staff and families to ensure the best outcomes for children.
- Approachable and friendly. Caring and nurturing.
- Good verbal and written communication skills. Positive, 'can-do' approach.
- Passion for outdoor learning.
- Collaboration and team working comes naturally.

Term of Engagement

Reporting to: Nursery Manager

Hours of work: Full time – 40 hours per week

Contract Basis: Permanent

Salary: £26,500 - £28,000 (based on skills and experience)

Employer pension contribution: 7%

Location: North Edinburgh

How Do I Apply?

Please email a completed Application Form to the HR team at jobs@willowden.scot by 12 noon Friday 29th August 2025.

For more information or if you have any questions about the role or to speak to us of any reasonable adjustments you require please contact Kathie at jobs@willowden.scot

Closing date: 29th August 2025

Interviews: 11th /12th September 2025

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