

Little Birch Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Anne Mitchell

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Little Birch Pre-School opened in 1976 and operates from a purpose built unit in the grounds of Blandford St. Mary C of E Primary School, Blandford, in Dorset. It is a committee run group and the pre-school are the sole users of the building. The group have use of a playroom with separate entrance hall, and adjoining toilets and kitchen area. Children have access to secure fenced areas surrounding the building for outdoor play, and access to the school playground and playing field when not in use by school children.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register, as well as on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A total of 16 children aged from two years may attend at any time and there are currently 50 children on roll including three and four-year-olds who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The group is open each morning from 8.45am to 11:45am, and from 12:30pm to 3.30pm on Monday to Thursday and from 8.45am until 11.45am on Fridays during term time. The pre-school serves the local area, and welcomes children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs a team of five staff all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are making good progress in most areas of learning and enjoy their time at the pre-school. Links with other early years providers and with schools that children will attend are strong and ensure a consistent approach to children's care and education. Children enjoy a good balance of indoor and outdoor play, both child initiated and adult planned. They are well supported by sensitive and friendly staff who participate in children's play and learning with enthusiasm. There are successful systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision to ensure continuous improvement in outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop opportunities for children to be independent, particularly in creative play, to ensure they are able to use their own imaginations to make and create artwork
- encourage children to use mathematical and positional language to develop their understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children safety and welfare is important to staff. They have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and many have attended training. Parents are provided with clear information about the pre-school's safeguarding policy and the staff's duty to ensure children are safe. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place ensuring all areas of the pre-school are safe and secure. These assessments are reviewed regularly to adapt to changing situations. There are secure and robust systems in place to recruit suitable staff. Management and staff work closely together to evaluate their practice. The pre-school works closely with the feeder school to ensure that any gaps in children's learning are identified and improved. Weekly planning meetings provides staff with opportunities to review practice. They are committed to ongoing training to update their skills and knowledge.

A broad range of good quality resources and equipment supports children's learning and development effectively. For example, props are used to illustrate stories such as The Hungry Caterpillar. Staff are deployed well to support children inside and out. The playroom is inviting and child orientated playroom. Bright posters are displayed, many providing positive images of cultural diversity and disability. A pictorial 'time line' showing tidy up time, group time, snack, outdoors and washing hands supports children's understanding, especially for those less able or with communication problems. Resources are fully accessible enabling children to make choices in their play.

The pre-school has developed secure relationships with the feeder school. The reception teacher visits the pre-school to read stories and talk to the children. Older children visit the reception class regularly and are buddied with an older child to make them feel more secure. Consequently the transition to school is good for most children. The pre-school liaises closely with other early years' provision that children also attend through contact books or informal discussion to ensure a consistent approach to their learning and development. There is a strong partnership with parents. They receive comprehensive information about the pre-school routines as well as their child's individual development. They state that they are very happy with their children's progress and enjoy contributing to their 'Learning Journeys'. One parent states that 'The pastoral care the children receive is second to none'

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children arrive at the pre-school with enthusiasm, finding their picture to self-register. The high level of interaction supports their language and vocabulary well. Printed words around the room and on storage drawers enables children to learn that words carry meaning. Children use boxes, recycled tubes and cartons boxes to make models. One of the children makes a dinosaur telling the adult 'Look, I have clever hands'. Another child uses the scissors with increasing confidence saying,

'I've got blue scissors like you'. However, at times adults are quick to help the children, limiting their independence, and when a child is asked to choose children to go and wash their hands, the adult signifies which children to choose. In other aspects of their personal independence, children do well. They are keen to put on their own boots or button their cardigans, for example.

Children move freely between the outdoor and indoor area. They determine how to place the bucket so the balls on the drainpipe run fall into it, or play with the sand, finding 'treasure' buried within. Children enjoy singing together, participating well in action and number songs. However, staff miss opportunities throughout the session to introduce mathematical language and counting to support children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. In the larger outdoor area, children run and use balls and bikes. They are learning to use their bodies in a variety of ways and accurately kick the ball to each other and to adults. A child sits on the ball laughing saying 'I've laid an egg!' The staff and children find worms in the garden. Children handle them gently looking at how they move. Indoors they are fascinated as they listen intently to the story of The Hungry Caterpillar. The props used help children to understand the life cycle of the caterpillar and bring the story to life. They participate with enthusiasm, remembering that the caterpillar makes a cocoon before turning into a butterfly-.

The staff team meet weekly to examine 'next steps' for each child's development and plan how to incorporate these into meaningful and enjoyable activities. Regular observations are used to inform planning and are included in children's 'Learning Journeys' which provide a clear picture of their progress.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles through projects and daily activities. They enjoy healthy snacks such as toast, and fruit fromage frais with water or milk. They help themselves to drinking water throughout the session from low level jug and cups. Children follow good hygiene routines, washing their hands thoroughly before snack. A member of staff explains that it is especially important to wash them well with soap as they have been handling worms in the garden. Staff sit with children as they eat their snack. This prompts discussion, about the importance of healthy foods and how they are growing so their boots are now too small for them. A visiting health professional talks to the children about healthy eating, looking after yourself and staying safe. Written policies are followed by staff and parents supporting children's health and safety effectively. Children are safe as they play because the premises are secure and staff supervise children well. Staff reinforce safety throughout the day, reminding children not to run indoors and sitting carefully on their chairs. They give good explanation about why, so children are aware of their own welfare and that of others.

Children are polite and well behaved. They are quick to help at snack-time and tidy up time. Adults speak to each other and to children with respect providing good role models for children. Children are eager to help each other. Together two children tidy up the equipment into a drawer and carry it between them. Another child shows them where it goes. A positive behaviour management policy is shared with parents from the outset to ensure a consistent approach.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met