

Little Birch Pre-School

Blandford St. Mary C of E, Birch Avenue, Blandford St. Mary, BLANDFORD FORUM, Dorset, DT11 9QD

Inspection date	17/06/2014
Previous inspection date	17/01/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Staff provide a welcoming and safe environment where children learn through play and exploration.
- There is a good range of play equipment and resources that children can select independently.
- Staff promote positive partnerships with parents and outside agencies in order to meet children's individual needs.
- Good links with the school leads to children developing confidence for when they start in the Reception class.

It is not yet good because

- The provider failed to provide the required information to Ofsted about changes in the committee, which is a breach of requirements.
- Staff do not always keep a record of children's accidents and injuries, which is a requirement.
- Staff interaction is not consistent to ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Staff do not always encourage children's independence in developing skills for the future, particularly at snack time.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's activities inside and outside.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector talked with the provider, staff and children.
- The inspector sampled documentation, which included children's progress records, policies and accident records.
- The inspector took into account parents' views obtained in person.

Inspector

Brenda Flewitt

Full report

Information about 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 pre-school have use of a playroom with a separate entrance hall, and adjoining toilets and kitchen area. Children have access to fenced areas surrounding the building for outdoor play, and are able to use the school playground and playing field when not in use by schoolchildren. The pre-school 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 is registered on the Early Years Register, and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school provides funded free early education for three- and four-year-old children. There are currently 36 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school support 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, most of which are at level 3.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure a record is kept of accidents and injuries
- improve supervision methods to ensure there is consistency between staff in the quality of their interaction with children to help children learn and make good progress.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- increase opportunities for children to develop independence in practical skills, with particular regard to meal times.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children enjoy the time they spend at the pre-school. Staff provide a welcoming environment and understand the importance of children learning through play and exploration. There is a good range of play equipment and resources, which staff arrange so that children can select for themselves. Staff organise the play areas so that children can choose to be inside or outside according to their preferences. This means that children

who learn best outside have the opportunity to do so. Staff implement a clear assessment system. Each child's key person completes a record that includes observations of play and achievements, with photographs and samples of children's artwork. They use the information to plot children's stage of development and plan the next steps for their progress. Staff are able to track children's progress and identify any gaps in their learning and seek any extra support needed. Staff plan a broad range of activities according to children's interests and development needs. Some staff interact effectively with the children during their activities; their enthusiasm motivates children to join in and be curious to learn. They ask open-ended questions that encourage children to think, solve problems and understand the world around them. However, this quality of teaching is not consistent throughout the team. Some staff miss opportunities for setting challenges and modelling language. Therefore, some children do not make as much progress as they could in all areas of learning.

Staff promote children's language and communication skills by talking with them as they support their activities. Staff sometimes describe what is happening and name objects, but do not always use children's spontaneous ideas to extend their thinking and knowledge. For example, children make models, such as houses and caravans from re-cycled materials, using various tools to join items together. Some staff miss the chance to talk to the children about what they know about different homes, or about the materials they are using. Staff use ideas from Every Child A Talker to encourage children's confidence in speaking. For example, children take a soft toy home with them with a diary for recording events. Staff encourage children to talk to their friends in the group about the toy's adventures when they return.

Staff provide various opportunities for children to experiment and develop an understanding of the world. During water play, they encourage children to notice what sinks or floats. Children start to learn about capacity as they fill and empty various containers with water or sand. These activities raise children's awareness of basic mathematical and scientific concepts. Staff enable children to investigate and explore the natural world. For example, children enjoy looking for insects and creatures in the garden area. Some staff spark children's curiosity by encouraging them to think about where creatures live, what they eat and how to respect them. Staff provide clip boards, paper and pencils to enable children to record their findings. This helps children understand writing for a purpose.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Staff provide a welcoming environment, which results in children being happy and settled. Staff seek information from parents about children's interests and families when children start attending. This enables them to provide appropriate resources to encourage children's involvement and initiate conversations to help them feel secure. Parents are invited to bring young children to a weekly afternoon session in the summer term before they start at the pre-school. This helps children to become familiar with the building and start to build relationships with the staff. Staff have good links with the school; older children sometimes enjoy outside play with children from the Reception class.

Arrangements to visit the school and meet their prospective teachers help children know what to expect in a new situation and develop confidence.

Children learn what staff expect of them through familiar routines and explanations. Staff use visual aids, such as sand timers, to help children understand about taking turns. Staff encourage children to help pack away toys, which encourages them to care for equipment. Staff regularly praise children for their efforts and achievements, which helps boost their self-esteem and confidence. Staff encourage children to be aware of their own safety. For example, they teach them about the dangers of flicking sand. They also remind them how to behave when gathered in a group for songs or stories. Staff involve children in identifying hazards in the environment, such as open gates, using pictures to help them.

Staff encourage children to practise good routines for personal hygiene and develop increasing independence as they use toilet and hand washing facilities. Children make choices from healthy options at snack time, such as fresh fruit, toast and yogurts. However, staff prepare the food in advance, and generally pour children's drinks for them. Therefore, children are not practising skills for the future, such as peeling or chopping fruit, and using tools for spreading and cutting. Staff provide daily opportunities for children to have fresh air and exercise. Using the large apparatus in the school playing areas provides challenge to promote children's physical skills. However, the quality of staff interaction during outside activities does not always provide good quality learning experiences for all children. They do not always provide challenge to extend children's knowledge, vocabulary and skills.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management require improvement. The provider failed to notify Ofsted about changes in the management committee. The provider has informed Ofsted about new members joining the committee or a change in their role; however, they have failed to give details of those resigning. This is a breach of requirements, however, on this occasion Ofsted do not intend to take any action, as there is no direct risk to children. The inspection was prompted due to a concern about safeguarding children's welfare, staff suitability and managing children's behaviour that can result in injury. The inspection found that, overall, staff implement policies and procedures to promote children's safety and welfare. Staff use positive methods to help children understand how to behave. Staff know the procedures to follow in the event of a child having an accident or being injured. Although the usual practice is to record accidents, occasionally staff have overlooked keeping a record, which is a requirement. Nevertheless, they make sure that they inform parents about the incident on the same day, so that children's welfare is promoted. There are appropriate staff recruitment and induction procedures that check for staff suitability and help them learn about their roles and responsibilities. Staff are aware of how to recognise signs and symptoms that would cause concern and understand their responsibility in following correct procedures to protect children from harm. There is a clear policy readily available for them to use for reference, which includes procedures if they have concerns about another member of staff. Staff complete risk assessments and

daily checks in order to provide a safe environment for children to play.

Staff promote positive partnerships with parents. They provide useful information about the pre-school by way of written policies, displays and a website. Key persons make themselves available to exchange information on a daily basis through conversation. This helps staff to meet children's individual needs. Parents have the opportunity to have a say in their child's pre-school by being a member of the committee. Parents say that their children are happy, settled and enjoy very good relationships with their key person. Parents feel involved in sharing information towards their children's progress records. They say that their children are making good progress, particularly in confidence and social skills. Staff liaise effectively with other professionals and outside agencies to help to provide extra support when children have specific needs. This results in important information being shared, particularly when children move on to their next stage of learning at school.

The provider has successfully addressed the recommendations set at the last inspection, which means they have improved children's learning in mathematics and creativity. The staff have some methods in place to reflect on their practice to identify areas for improvement. For example, they plan to seek parents' views by using questionnaires and to involve them more in planning. However, the management committee are not sufficiently involved in evaluating staff practice. Although there is an appraisal and supervision system, it is not effective in identifying weaknesses in teaching, in particular inconsistency in staff interaction. Therefore, good quality provision is not maintained.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- keep a record of accidents which involve the children being cared for on the premises where childcare is provided (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).
- keep a record of accidents which involve the children being cared for on the premises where childcare is provided (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	141119
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	978298
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	16
Number of children on roll	36
Name of provider	The Little Birch Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	17/01/2011
Telephone number	07929 363291

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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