

Little Birch Pre-School

Birch Avenue, Blandford St. Mary, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 9QD



Inspection date	17 June 2015
Previous inspection date	17 June 2014

	This inspection:	Good	2
The quality and standards of the early years provision	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Little Birch has a happy atmosphere. Children play sociably with one another.
- Staff work well as a team. Children are well-cared for.
- There have been a number of improvements put into place by the committee and new manager in recent months. Parents report these have made a positive difference to the pre-school.
- Children make good progress. Staff make sure that the activities on offer are well-suited to children's likes and learning needs.
- A wide range of interesting and exciting activities and toys encourage children to use lots of language. Children are very talkative and communicate well with one another.
- Children develop their independence skills and self-confidence.
- Good use is made of the space to create a stimulating learning environment.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not get regular, planned support to help them develop their teaching practice further. Professional support for the manager by the committee is not frequent enough.
- Leaders do not check how well groups of children, such as boys and girls, are doing with their learning and development. This means they are not sure whether any particular groups of children do less well than others.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- implement a system of professional supervision that provides both high quality support to the manager and regular observation of staff practice in order to improve the quality of teaching further
- enhance systems used to monitor how well children learn by regularly checking whether any groups of children make better progress than others and address any differences effectively.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and learning in the indoor and outdoor environments.
- The inspector spoke with children and staff.
- The inspector spoke with the pre-school manager and members of the management committee.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents and took the results of the most recent parent questionnaire into account.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation including policies, information about the educational programme, children's learning and development records and evidence of checks made on staff.

Inspector

Susan Mann HMI

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Staff are good teachers. They include lots of learning in children's everyday play, such as doing number work when making 'sausages' at the play dough table. Sessions make the most of the learning time available and little time is wasted. Tasks such as lining-up for an outdoor activity or getting ready for lunch are completed very quickly. Children learn a great deal in short and well-managed group times. They correctly identify the letter sounds of names. They talk excitedly about fossils and other items brought in from home. They listen intently as staff speak knowledgeably about what fossils are. Such activities are paced well so even the youngest children remain focused and contribute to the discussion. As a result, children make good progress. Almost all are at typical levels of development and are well-prepared for starting school when the time comes. Support for children who need extra help with their development has improved in recent months. These children now do well because of close communication and partnership working between the pre-school and other involved professionals.

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

Staff create a calm atmosphere that helps children to feel comfortable at the pre-school. Children's behaviour is managed well. They follow the rules and routines because staff give clear explanations of why some things are not acceptable, such as throwing sand. In particular, children's self-esteem and confidence is nurtured well. Staff give praise when children made a good job of something or do a kind deed. At snack time, children take it in turns to take everyone's drinks order which helps build their social and communication skills. Good use is made of the outdoor area and school playground. Children have plenty of opportunity to play and exercise in the fresh air.

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

The committee and manager work well together to provide safe and good quality care and education. They know what the pre-school is good at and what it needs to improve. All staff know what to do if they have any concerns about children's safety or welfare. Leaders keep a close eye on children's progress to make sure all do as well as expected. However, they do not review this information to check or address any differences between the progress of groups of children, such as boys and girls, to help them learn even more. Staff are supported well. They have monthly meetings with the manger and weekly team discussions. This enables all to discuss relevant issues and to check children receive a good experience at the pre-school. The manager receives similar supervision from the committee but meetings happen less frequently. Therefore, the manager is not as well-supported in her role as other staff. Staff receive informal feedback about the quality of their teaching but this does not happen regularly. Thus staff opportunities to improve their practice are limited. The pre-school works in close partnership with the nearby school. School staff are on the management committee. Shared visits and events such as 'art week' help children become familiar with the school before they start.

Setting details

Unique reference number	141119
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	1008552
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	31
Name of provider	The Little Birch Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	17 June 2014
Telephone number	07929 363291

Little Birch Pre-School opened in 1976. It operates from a purpose built unit in the grounds of Blandford St. Mary Church of England Primary School in Blandford, Dorset. It is managed by a committee. The pre-school is open during term-time from 8.45am to 3.30pm on Monday to Thursday and from 8.45am until 11.45am on Fridays. The pre-school provides funded free early education for three- and four-year-old children. The pre-school employs a team of four staff. All staff hold a level 3 early years qualification.

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