

Inspection of Little Birch Preschool

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

Inspection date: 10 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children receive a very warm, nurturing, and friendly welcome when they arrive. They respond positively to staff and learn in a happy, and safe place. There is a wide range of activities available for the children, which motivates them to learn. For instance, younger children show good concentration as they use small and large cutters in dough and add sticks as candles for a birthday cake. Older children enjoy playing matching games. They read out shopping lists to their friends, who help to find the correct pictures to place onto their lists.

Children are beginning to manage their own feelings and behaviours and are starting to understand how these have an impact on others. When children struggle with regulating their behaviour, staff support them. For example, staff encourage children to share and to be kind to their friends. Children are developing a sense of right and wrong.

The manager maintains a safe, secure, and clean environment for the children. She has introduced new routines, due to the COVID-19) pandemic. This means that parents no longer come into the pre-school itself. Despite this, children are confident to leave their parents at the door. They know that they need to wash their hands at regular times during their day to support good hygiene practice.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Staff observe children and make accurate assessments of their development across the areas of learning. They provide activities around children's interests. However, sometimes, staff do not focus on what it is they want children to learn from these experiences. They work to very broad learning intentions, which are not linked precisely enough to what the children need to learn next. This means that children gain limited new knowledge from the activities.
- Staff are aware of those children who speak English as an additional language. They make good use of information from parents to support children's understanding of English, alongside their own home language. Staff plan large-group times to engage and enable all children to fully participate. For instance, children decide which language to use to sing hello to each other at circle time.
- Additional funding is used well to enhance and enrich children's experiences. Staff use additional funding to address gaps in children's learning. For example, staff introduce resources to children that focus on poems to extend children's language skills.
- Staff quickly identify if children need additional support in their learning. They make timely referrals to outside professionals, such as for speech and language therapy. The most vulnerable children get the support they need. Staff work closely with parents and professionals involved to support children consistently.

- Children are becoming increasingly independent. For instance, staff support younger children to wash their hands and feed themselves independently. Older children learn the importance of tidying up and become independent at putting on and taking off their coats. This helps to prepare children well for their eventual move to school.
- Children are developing a positive attitude to leading a healthy lifestyle. Staff discuss healthy eating with children during snack times and lunchtimes. Children enjoy healthy snacks, and parents provide a packed lunch for their children. Staff support parents in promoting healthy eating, further supporting children's knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy.
- Children have plenty of opportunities to engage in physical exercise. They play in a large playground, located within the school grounds. Staff deliver activities to support children's physical abilities. For example, children work on their hula hoop technique or ride a scooter with care.
- The manager is proactive and keen to drive improvement. However, systems for performance management do not provide the manager with in-depth evaluations of staff practice. Staff are not provided with the highly focused support that they need to help extend their teaching skills to the highest level.
- Parents are very complimentary about the service on offer. They are fully involved in their children's learning. Parents appreciate the opportunities to discuss children's education, for instance through parent's evening. These successful partnerships help parents to support their children's learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are aware of signs that may indicate a concern about a child's welfare and the appropriate action to take. There are regular training opportunities to support staff in their ongoing knowledge and understanding of child protection as well as wider safeguarding issues. For example, staff receive formal face-to-face training at least every three years and revisit various areas of safeguarding at every staff meeting. Clear recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- communicate clearly with staff the learning intentions for children, to focus teaching more sharply on extending children's learning
- monitor staff and evaluate their practice more precisely to build and extend their teaching skills to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	141119
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10213110
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	The Little Birch Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP905074
Telephone number	07929363291
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2017

Information about this early years setting

Little Birch Preschool registered in 1998. It operates from a purpose-built unit situated in the grounds of Blandford St Mary Church of England Primary School in Blandford, Dorset. The pre-school is run by a parent committee and is open Monday to Friday, from 7.45am until 3.30pm, during school term times. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. The committee employs six members of staff. Of these, two have qualified teacher status and four have an appropriate childcare qualification from level 3 to 5.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Rachel Cornish

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the provision.
- The manager completed a learning walk of the environment with the inspector and discussed how the staff plan to teach children.
- The inspector observed children and staff taking part in activities and assessed the impact this has on children's learning. The inspector and the manager reflected on a learning experience for children.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they enjoy doing at the pre-school.
- Parents shared their feedback and experiences of the setting with the inspector, through discussions and written comments.
- Leadership and management meetings were held throughout the inspection, during which the inspector viewed relevant documentation. This included evidence of the suitability of staff.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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