

Inspection of Little Birds Pre-school

St Mary's R C Primary School, Northbrook Road, Swanage BH19 1QE

Inspection date: 20 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

The excellent implementation of the curriculum has an exceptional impact on children's development. Children soon become engrossed in their learning and are extremely enthusiastic to try new skills and extend their knowledge. For example, children learn about cause and effect as they use drainpipes and cones to transport water. If something does not work, staff expertly use this for children to build resilience and solve problems, as they try another way.

Staff engage children of all ages exceptionally well in whole-group activities. Children pay amazing attention and engage fully. For example, they recall the life cycle of a butterfly, remembering vocabulary such as 'cocoon'. They discover similarities and differences between moths. There is great excitement when staff release real moths and children recall their names, such as 'Elephant Hawk' and 'Tiger moth', and even make up their own, such as 'Hedgehog moth'. Children remain fascinated.

Staff treat children with huge respect. They skilfully observe, knowing when to intervene to move children's learning on and when to wait, to not interrupt their thinking and ideas. Staff empower children to make decisions, plan what they want to do and how to achieve it. For example, older children draw a kite. They choose the resources they need and check their plans, following the sequence to complete their task.

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

- The manager has a highly ambitious curriculum and has high expectations of what the children can achieve, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a strong emphasis that every child is unique, and staff plan from their meticulous observations and information from parents to meet their learning needs exceptionally well. There are several staff trained as special educational needs coordinators to ensure children receive excellent support to make the best progress they can. There is excellent communication with parents. Parents comment on staff being proactive, initiating support and giving excellent advice.
- Following the COVID-19 pandemic, staff observed a decline in children's emotional development. As a result, they trained in the Hygge approach. This provides a nature-based, calming environment, where children embrace their learning. The manager and staff have observed an incredible impact on children's well-being. In addition, they have a visiting yoga teacher who helps children with mindfulness, to help them manage their emotions and feel secure. Children's behaviour is exemplary and parents comment how well the strategies staff use have had a highly beneficial impact at home.

- Children are extremely confident communicators. Even children who arrive speaking no English at all very rapidly catch up. The Makaton staff use has had a very positive impact on children's language skills, so the manager has booked all staff on training to deepen their knowledge further. Staff are exceptional role models and skilled at engaging children in dialogue. They watch, listen and respond extremely well, helping children very effectively to listen to each other and have time to think and speak.
- Staff provide highly effective support for children to learn to lead a healthy lifestyle. They remind children to drink plenty of water and to use the toilet. Children are empowered to be as independent as possible. They wash their hands thoroughly under supervision and know germs can give them tummy ache. Children make fruit kebabs, butter toast and pour drinks. When finished, they clear their place and wash up. Children relish being outdoors and regular visits in the community provide extensive additional experiences, such as growing produce at their allotment and using large equipment.
- Children develop a highly positive attitude to people's differences. Staff provide a wide range of positive images depicting different families. Staff use these extremely well to spark conversations and for every child to see images that represent themselves and feel a strong sense of belonging.
- The manager and deputy lead an outstanding team who share their vision for providing high-quality care and learning. They observe each other and constantly evaluate their practice, involving children in decisions. For example, they planned how they could change a piece of wasteland at the front of the premises into a garden. Children voted on what they wanted and helped with the clearing and renovation.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures that children's safety is given the highest priority. All staff receive safeguarding training at level 3, which ensures they have a very secure knowledge of their responsibilities and the procedures to follow if children are at risk of harm. The highly experienced management team quickly take action to safeguard children. They seek early help and are proactive in helping children to remain safe. Children have outstanding opportunities to learn about keeping safe. For example, young children know to handle the real China in the role play carefully or it will break. Older children carry out risk assessments, to learn how to use hammers, nails and saws safely.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2634135
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10299921
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	51
Name of registered person	Little Birds Pre-school Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519768
Telephone number	01929289223
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Little birds Pre-school registered in 2021 and operates from a purpose-built unit in the grounds of St Mary's School in Swanage, Dorset. They operate Monday to Friday from 9am until 3pm, term time only. A team of 12 staff work with the children. Of these, the manager holds an early years qualification at degree level. Eight staff hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and one at level 2. The setting receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Elaine Douglas

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 that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager led the inspector on a learning walk to discuss their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector talked to the staff, parents and children during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation on a one-to-one activity planned for a key child and discussed the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector observed the quality of education in all areas and outdoors and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The manager, deputy and inspector held a leadership and management meeting and the inspector checked relevant documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff. The inspector had a discussion with the chair of the committee.

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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