

# Inspection of Bitterne Community Pre-School

Bittern C/E Primary School, Brownlow Avenue, Bitterne, Southampton SO19 7BX

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Inspection date: 20 February 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
The quality of education	<b>Inadequate</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development	<b>Inadequate</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is inadequate**

The pre-school, which is managed by a committee, has undergone a recent period of change. Oversight of the provision is weak, which has resulted in significant breaches of the welfare requirements. Ofsted has not been provided with the information required to check the suitability of all committee members.

Furthermore, there is no named deputy who can take charge in the manager's absence. Safeguarding is ineffective. Staff, including those who take lead roles in safeguarding, have a poor understanding of how to identify and report concerns about children. Consequently, children's safety and welfare are not fully promoted.

Children enjoy being independent and are confident in managing some self-care routines. Older children learn how to put on their coats as they get ready to go outside. Pre-schoolers persevere at fastening zips, as staff encourage and support them. Toddlers develop their hand-to-eye coordination skills, such as when they mix paint and confidently experiment with the marks they make. Children develop bonds with staff, to help them feel settled. Where children need extra support with learning to share and take turns, staff focus on this. Overall, children behave well.

The staff team works well together. However, there is a lack of supervision for the manager and her staff to help them to understand and fulfil their roles. The manager's and staff's training needs are not identified or supported well enough. This has an impact on whether staff have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles. The manager has clear learning aims for children. However, staff understanding of what children need to learn next is inconsistent. Information gained from parents and carers does not help staff to know enough about children. Too often, staff provide activities which are not tailored for children's individual needs. Consequently, older children quickly lose interest and begin to wander aimlessly around the pre-school. At times, learning is incidental. Staff do recognise that some children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need additional support, particularly with their communication skills. However, they fail to focus on how to support them. Strategies are not put in place to help children make the progress they are capable of. This means that children do not gain the skills they need in readiness for school.

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

- The committee do not have effective oversight of the pre-school. Changes to the committee and to those who take leadership in the pre-school are not well managed. Lines of accountability are unclear. This has resulted in failing to notify Ofsted of changes of the committee members. Consequently, suitability checks have not been completed, to ensure that committee members who spend time in the pre-school are suitable. The support for the manager is effective. There is

no named deputy manager in place, which is a breach of the statutory requirements.

- The curriculum aims, although understood well by the manager, are not well understood by the staff, particularly those who work with pre-schoolers. Staff often plan and provide activities with little focus on what they want children to learn from these experiences. Children's next steps in learning are poorly understood, and therefore teaching is not focused on building children's knowledge and skills. Where children, including those with SEND, need extra support, strategies are not known to help key staff who work with them support their needs, particularly around supporting children's communication skills. At times, children become frustrated when they cannot express what they want or need. Children do not make good enough progress in their speaking skills.
- Staff use their warm relationships with parents and carers to help children settle into the pre-school. However, staff do not find out enough about what children know or can do, or any areas where children may need additional help or support when they first start. This hinders how staff can plan and provide learning experiences to enable some children to catch up when they are behind their peers. Staff are not successful in sharing information with parents to help them understand their children's progress, or how they can help support children's progress at home, particularly for those with SEND.
- The manager's supervision is ineffective. She does not benefit from regular support from the committee in her role, to improve her personal effectiveness. Staff do meet with the manager, however, supervisions are not used to identify and targeting weaker areas of staff knowledge and practice. This has an impact on their knowledge and skills and the quality of teaching they provide children. Staff have a poor knowledge of safeguarding, which has not been identified or addressed as a result of ineffective supervisions.
- The provider also has a poor understanding of some of their other legal duties. For example, they do not have up-to-date knowledge of the principles of data protection, including their responsibilities relating to the use of video recording equipment in the pre-school. This does not promote children's welfare.
- Staff provide children with a variety of opportunities to enjoy and be physically active. Toddlers confidently balance on the see-saw, as they sit with friends. Older children learn how to carefully climb steps to the pirate ship. Children become confident in their physical skills.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

There is not an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

**The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.**

**We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:**

	<b>Due date</b>
ensure that persons with governance and oversight understand their roles and responsibilities	04/03/2024
ensure all staff receive training about the safeguarding policy and procedure, so that they gain a confident understanding of how to recognise and respond to any concerns about children in a timely manner	04/03/2024
implement regular supervision and support for the manager to develop their skills and confidence to fulfil all requirements of their role	04/03/2024
improve staff supervisions to identify training needs and put in place coaching and support to raise the quality of teaching	04/03/2024
ensure there is a named deputy manager, who has the necessary skills and knowledge to take charge in the manager's absence	04/03/2024
ensure that the needs of children with SEND are met through agreed strategies that are understood and consistently implemented by all staff	04/03/2024
ensure that Ofsted is provided with the necessary information to carry out suitability checks on all members of the committee	04/03/2024
ensure that all leaders understand and comply with their legal duties, particularly in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation and the use of video recording equipment.	04/03/2024

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the**

**provider must:**

	<b>Due date</b>
improve partnership working with parents to ensure that information about children's needs is gathered before they start and to help parents understand their child's progress, so they can support learning at home.	04/03/2024

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148865
<b>Local authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10327544
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	50
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	68
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Bitterne Community Pre-School Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP522717
<b>Telephone number</b>	023 8042 2233
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 December 2019

## Information about this early years setting

Bitterne Community Pre-School registered in 2001 and is managed by a committee. It operates from a classroom in the grounds of Bitterne Primary School, in Bitterne, Southampton. The pre-school is open each weekday during term time. Sessions run from 8am to 3.30pm. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are 11 members of staff who work with the children. Of these, 10 staff hold qualifications at level 2 and above.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspector**  
Tara Naylor

## 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.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activity with the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.

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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