

Inspection of Charminster Preschool

St. Marys C of E VC First School, West Hill, DORCHESTER, Dorset DT2 9RD

Inspection date: 29 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children relish attending this exceptional pre-school, where they can explore exciting environments and benefit from the highest level of support for their learning. They arrive full of enthusiasm and settle immediately, showing how safe and content they feel. They excitedly investigate the stimulating activities. For example, younger children thoroughly enjoy following their interest in ice-cream shops. Staff use their imaginations and provide frozen tissue paper balls and cotton wool balls to represent ice cream and the children relish investigating these. Older children enthusiastically explore lengths of wood and work out how best to roll vehicles down them. Children are exceptionally well behaved. A number of them sit patiently on a bench, waiting for their turn on the rope swing. They show great care and respect for one another.

The skilled staff have the highest expectations of all children. They rapidly identify those who may need additional support and ensure that this is quickly put in place, both in the pre-school and at home. Children make dramatic progress from their starting points, quickly developing their communication skills and extending their vocabulary, for example. Staff use sharply focused small-group activities to support children's development. They are also skilled at responding to children's interests and ideas and extending these learning opportunities to the highest level.

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

- Staff know children exceptionally well and meet weekly to discuss what each child needs to work on next. This enables them to carefully tailor activities and learning opportunities to help children make the best possible individual progress. Staff inspire children's curiosity and motivate them to explore and investigate. When children throw a toy onto a shed roof, staff help them to work out a solution. They skilfully support them to fetch a ladder, assess the risks involved and take turns climbing it to retrieve the toy. They make excellent use of praise and encouragement to build children's pride in their achievements and to develop their confidence and self-esteem.
- Children relish exploring the exciting and well-resourced play areas, both indoors and outside. There is a strong focus on outdoor play, which broadens the range of activities and resources available for children to choose from. Older children spend much of the day outside, including snack time when they have warm milk due to the cold weather. Staff are sensitive to younger children's needs and limit outdoor play to shorter periods. Children excitedly set off for forest-based activities, which provide further exciting outdoor learning experiences. Staff continually adapt the environment to provide the best possible opportunities. For example, when older children showed a fascination with role play, they relocated this area to provide more space and extended the range of resources

extensively.

- Children develop excellent communication skills and staff provide highly effective support for those children that need extra help to catch up. There is constant conversation as staff engage enthusiastically with children throughout the day. They frequently use sign language to further support children's communication skills. Parents comment on the wide range of vocabulary their children are learning. Children also develop great independence, moving around the pre-school with huge confidence and making decisions about their play.
- Children behave exceptionally well. They show great respect for one another and are extremely good at taking turns and sharing. Staff skilfully help children to understand and manage their emotions. Children build very strong friendships and rapidly develop the social skills which may have been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Children gain an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. They have great opportunities to grow plants and harvest fruit and vegetables, which helps them learn about where food comes from and what is healthy to eat. Children understand the need for good hygiene and independently use the outdoor sink to wash their hands.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Staff work exceptionally closely with them to ensure that children's care and learning needs are met. There is a lending library to encourage the sharing of stories at home and parents and children can join a regular online story time. There is a popular parents' gardening club. Staff are quick to offer support to families in need, helping them to access any assistance they require.
- The knowledgeable and enthusiastic manager leads a particularly strong staff team. She ensures that they share her vision and understand the curriculum well. She prioritises staff well-being and enables them to develop professionally to ensure a skilled workforce. The manager involves staff in evaluating and improving the provision. They are invested in the continuing success of the pre-school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is strong culture of safeguarding throughout the pre-school. Staff are extremely confident about recognising the possible signs that a child may be at risk of harm and fully understand their responsibility to take action. The manager ensures that safeguarding features prominently in weekly team meetings, giving staff the opportunity to keep their knowledge as up to date as possible. Staff are vigilant about children's safety and skilled at enabling them to learn to assess risk for themselves. Staff use walkie-talkies to ensure that they can communicate at all times to protect children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY337568
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10233695
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	34
Number of children on roll	38
Name of registered person	Charminster Preschool Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519759
Telephone number	07812 932 745 / 01305 251512
Date of previous inspection	27 January 2017

Information about this early years setting

Charminster Preschool registered in 2006 on the site of St Mary's C of E VC First School in Charminster near Dorchester, Dorset. The pre-school operates five days a week during school term times from 9am to 3pm, also offering a breakfast club from 8am. It receives funding to provide free education sessions for children aged two, three and four years. There are 10 members of staff, including the manager. Of these, one is an early years teacher, two have relevant qualifications at level 5, three have relevant qualifications at level 3 and two are currently completing qualifications at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Catherine Sample

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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- Children communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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