

# Inspection of St John's Pre-School

St. John's Church Centre, Legg Lane, WIMBORNE, Dorset BH21 1LQ

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Inspection date: 12 September 2025

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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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**

Leaders thoughtfully plan a curriculum that places focus on preparing children for school. Staff deliver a varied and ambitious curriculum, helping children to develop fundamental skills. These include confidence and independence. This means, children are well prepared for their next stage of learning. Younger children excitedly race cars down guttering and use language such as 'faster' and 'quickly'. Staff introduce various concepts to children as they explore natural objects and dough. For example, staff encourage children to observe the patterns the shells are creating as they press them firmly into the dough. Older children use magnifying glasses to spot different bugs. Staff use their interactions well to help widen their knowledge of spiders. For instance, they discuss how many legs they have and why they catch flies. Outside, younger children develop their coordination and hand strength as they pour water from one pot to another. Older children build on their strength, stability and spatial awareness when confidently riding bikes alongside their friends.

Staff actively encourage children's independence throughout children's day to day routines. During self-serve snack, children spread their butter, chop their fruit, pour their own drinks and wash their plates. Staff encourage children to make choices, and they use counters to vote for what they have for their snack. As a result, children show strong levels of independence and build essential skills that they need for the future.

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

- Staff use their excellent knowledge and understanding of how children learn to provide activities that challenge their abilities. Staff present these small, focused activities during daily 'special focus times'. Older children demonstrate curiosity when matching various items together. For example, children match flowers to a plant pot. This encourages children to develop and use their critical thinking skills.
- Staff gather detailed information from parents regarding children's learning from the start. They complete further assessments when children have settled, forming robust starting points for children. Staff use effective observation and monitoring to help identify gaps in children's learning swiftly. This is a strength of the pre-school. Leaders work closely with parents and external professionals to ensure that children receive the additional support they need. Targeted intervention times help to focus on specific learning goals for children. As a result, children benefit from a shared approach to their learning and make the best possible progress.
- Staff are positive role models for children. They use effective strategies to help children to begin to recognise their feelings and regulate their behaviour. For

example, staff use 'The Colour Monster' and create 'calm spaces' for children, generating discussions about how they feel. Staff use consistent routines and boundaries to help children understand the expectations. However, at times, transitions between these routines are too quick. This means, on occasion, children's learning is interrupted.

- Children develop good early literacy skills. They look at books independently and enjoy stories that staff read. Staff use skilful questioning when reading books, helping children to make connections in their learning. For example, staff ask children about ballet, and they enjoy talking about their extra-curricular clubs they attend outside of pre-school. Children engage in back-and-forth interactions. Younger children enjoy singing and begin to use their actions. Staff extend children's learning when introducing initial sounds of names.
- Staff help children develop their awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Children learn about oral health through conversations and planned activities. Staff have discussions with children about healthy foods as they prepare pretend dinners. For example, children say, 'Broccoli is good for our bodies.' Leaders implement a 'healthy movers' programme, supporting children's health and well-being. Staff share activities from this programme with parents, providing continuity in children's learning.
- Dedicated leaders complete regular observations of staff, helping to target training more precisely. For example, recent training on methods to support interactions has improved children's language skills. Staff feel well supported in their roles and report high levels of well-being. This contributes to a positive and supportive working environment. Newly appointed leaders have implemented new and robust evaluation procedures, helping to continually enhance the provision for children and families.
- Leaders and staff have formed trusting partnerships with parents. They value the updates staff provide through daily conversations, an online app and parent consultations. Parents report that staff are kind, supportive and approachable. They comment on the progress their children have made, particularly with their speech and confidence.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

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

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

- manage transitions more effectively to provide more time for children to comprehend what is happening next, helping to maintain their engagement.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY362707
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10407762
<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 3
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	31
<b>Name of registered person</b>	St John's Pre-School Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP527364
<b>Telephone number</b>	07551636231
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 January 2020

## Information about this early years setting

St John's Pre-School registered in 2007. It is a committee-run pre-school and operates from St John's Church complex situated in Wimborne, Dorset. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 3pm, term time only. There are six members of staff. Of these, two hold qualifications at level 6, one holds a level 4 qualification and three hold relevant level 3 qualifications. The setting offers government-funded places.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Chelsea Woollard

## Inspection activities

- 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.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents and children during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed children's activities and staff teaching, inside and outdoors.
- Staff spoke with the inspector at convenient times to assess their safeguarding knowledge.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A meeting was held between the inspector and the management team to discuss leadership.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.

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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