

Inspection of Danbury Pre-School at St John's

St. Johns C of E Primary School, Little Baddow Road, Danbury, CHELMSFORD CM3
4NS

Inspection date: 24 April 2025

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

This small, homely and welcoming pre-school offers children a variety of exciting play and learning opportunities, both indoors and out. The stimulating curriculum is designed around what children already know and their current interests. Staff give children time to explore their interests as they arise. For example, children ask for a teabag and observe what happens when this is mixed with mud and then when water is added. Activities are planned to support children to gain confidence, promote independence, develop communication skills and facilitate emotional regulation.

Children behave well and play together harmoniously without support. They are taught the skills to work through problems independently. They seek out adults if they need support, and adults assist them in finding a resolution. For example, when children upset others, they are spoken to about how they have made their friends feel, and this is dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate manner for all children involved. This helps children to develop empathy, problem-solving skills and resilience.

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive good support. Leaders utilise extra funding effectively to meet the needs of eligible children. Staff identify specific learning and social requirements, and the team decides how to meet those needs. Leaders give staff access to training that is specifically designed to meet the needs of the children. Staff use this knowledge to create an individualised curriculum that drives children's learning.

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

- Children are given opportunities to learn about the world around them through visiting their local community. They regularly visit a woodland to take part in forestry activities and a beekeeper to learn about honey. They have had opportunities to talk to visitors from different emergency services. These experiences enhance children's learning and develop a sense of community.
- Children develop a strong awareness of the importance of keeping themselves and their friends safe, especially at mealtimes. At snack time, for example, children are given a choice of healthy fruit and vegetables. They talk about other healthy foods and why some foods and milk are good for them but not for everyone. They cut their snack using child-friendly knives, count out their breadsticks and pour their own milk. This helps children to develop healthy eating habits and promotes self-sufficiency.
- Staff consider children's communication and language development. They plan activities that enhance and expand children's vocabulary through the use of stories, role play, rhymes and the modelling of new language, incorporating

gestures and signing. This supports the development of children's self-esteem. They display their confidence as speakers by engaging pre-school visitors in activities and conversations.

- Key persons know their children well. They are aware of each child's individual interests and personalities. They understand what children already know and what they need to learn next, and they plan learning opportunities to support children's ongoing development. Staff skilfully arrange a variety of experiences that encourage children to be curious learners, acquire new knowledge, and practise and develop skills. However, planning for group sessions does not always make sure that children's individual needs are planned for.
- Staff's kindness and care are valued by parents. They speak positively about how staff support their children to settle when they first start at the pre-school. They commend how staff communicate with them, and they say that they feel well informed about their children's care and education. This promotes continuity of care from home to the pre-school.
- Staff promptly identify the needs of children with SEND. They are well supported and have the same opportunities as their peers. However, reports for children with SEND are not always completed in a timely manner. This means that these children are not set up for the most successful transition to school.
- Leaders are ambitious and invest a lot of time to ensure that teaching and learning are of good quality. The enthusiastic team of experienced staff shares this same passion. Leaders aspire for children to achieve the best results. They have a strong understanding of what is working well and are motivated to make even more improvements in the future. They prioritise staff well-being by fostering strong and positive working relationships within the team. Leaders work together with staff and are always available if staff need help. They have regular meetings to discuss staff's well-being and any training opportunities they would like to access. This creates a positive work environment where staff enjoy coming to work and supporting children's learning and development.

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:

- further develop processes to ensure appropriate support is in place to facilitate the transition to school for children with SEND
- support staff in planning and adapting large-group sessions to enhance children's learning outcomes further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY418953
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10388344
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 11
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	64
Name of registered person	Danbury Pre-School
Registered person unique reference number	RP530243
Telephone number	01245 690678
Date of previous inspection	8 July 2019

Information about this early years setting

Danbury Pre-School at St John's registered in 2010. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3pm. The breakfast club sessions are from 7.30am until 8.45am, and the after-school club sessions are from 3.20pm until 6pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Keiley Pedro

Inspection activities

- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed their early years curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- Staff spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- 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 of an activity.
- Parents shared their views of the pre-school with the inspector.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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