

Inspection of The Den

St. Johns Mead School, Hounds Road, Bristol BS37 6EE

Inspection date:

26 June 2025

**The quality and
standards of early
years provision**

**This
inspection**

Met

Previous
inspection

Met

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

This provision meets requirements

Children enjoy their time at The Den. They come out of school enthusiastically and are greeted warmly by staff waiting to collect them. Children chat avidly to staff about their school day and are keen to learn what activities are planned for them. The children walk safely to their designated club rooms.

Children are familiar with the after-school routine. On arrival, they wash their hands and collect their toast snack. Later they enjoy a choice of fruits and vegetables, ensuring they are well nourished. Afterwards, children choose activities from the selection that staff plan, to engage their interest. For example, children create ice-cream pictures by sticking paper shapes and applying paint with sponge implements. They talk about ice-cream flavours they like. Children move between activities as they wish and staff respond quickly, to offer alternative activities to ensure all children are occupied and happy. Children construct using their own design ideas to build with octagon shaped pieces and create a zoo with bricks that clip together. Staff challenge children to build a domino line up and topple them. Children carry out the task with great enthusiasm and concentration. Children remain engaged and motivated in their play, but can also relax as they wish on the comfy beanbags.

Children clearly enjoy the company of the staff, who initiate conversations and extend children's learning as they play. For example, staff encourage children to problem solve and calculate applying mathematical concepts they learn in school. The children of different ages play well together. They are confident and independent. Staff help children to understand behavioural expectations. They encourage children to consider how their actions may upset or hurt other children. They model good manners. Children receive praise and encouragement to take pride in their achievements, fostering their self-esteem.

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

- The management team and staff have a very good awareness of children's individual needs, interests, life experiences, and family backgrounds. They use this knowledge to ensure that every child is included and valued. They plan plenty of opportunities for children to play outdoors to meet the needs of children who like to be physically active. They know that many children enjoy being creative, so plan different art, craft and cooking activities over the course of the week, after school and during the holiday club.
- The staff team are enthusiastic in their roles and they work well together. Each staff member understands their role and responsibilities. They instinctively know when to play an active role in children's play and when to let them explore

freely. Children develop confidence in their skills and expand their creativity as they play.

- Staff make good use of the on-site outdoor facilities. For example, children thoroughly enjoy team games, such as football, demonstrating their agility and ball skills. Children use the challenging outdoor play equipment. They climb and balance competently, with staff providing vigilant supervision to ensure children's safety.
- Children report that they like the staff and have fun with their friends at The Den. The youngest, reception-age children spoken to describe their favourite activities as playing with baby dolls and small-world toys, craft activities and construction. As they engage in these activities, children use their imagination, express themselves and build on their understanding of the world. Older children spoken to also enjoy art activities, baking and games. They like to participate in colouring competitions and say they feel proud when staff display their work.
- Parents praise staff and the provision highly. They report that staff provide good information about children's experiences and how they have been. They praise how well staff work in partnership with the school to share information. For example, club staff relay messages from parents to teachers and staff pass on information from teachers about children's school day.
- The management team play active roles within the club and oversee the effectiveness of the provision. They ensure staff are suitably trained and supported to ably fulfil their roles. Although they do not complete formal appraisals, managers regularly check in with staff to ensure they are happy, and share ideas to improve practice. They embrace any ideas staff have to improve the provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY440269
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10398588
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Out-of-school day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	4 to 11
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	124
Name of registered person	The Den Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP901966
Telephone number	07708175730/ 07791165559
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2019

Information about this early years setting

The Den registered in 2012 and is owned by two partners. It operates from St John's Mead Church of England Primary School in Chipping Sodbury. The club is open from 7am until 9am and from 3.15pm until 6pm on weekdays during term time. The holiday club opens from 8am until 6pm during school holidays, excluding over the Christmas period, subject to demand. The club employs 11 staff. Of these, seven hold level 3 qualifications, two hold level 2 qualifications and two are unqualified.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Linda Witts

Inspection activities

- One of the owner/managers showed the inspector around the provision and discussed how areas of the premises are used, both indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the provision.
- The inspector talked to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector observed staff practice and children's experiences across a variety of activities, both indoors and outdoors.
- The inspector took account of feedback from parents she spoke to.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025