

# The Den

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY360482
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 May 2008
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	Out of School care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Den is one of three out of school clubs run by a private provider. It was registered in 2007 and operates from the main school hall, the Year '1, 5 and 6 classrooms', situated within St. Luke's Catholic Primary School in Frodsham, Cheshire. A maximum of 40 children may attend the out of school club at any one time. The club is open each weekday from 07.30 to 09.00 and 15.00 to 18.00 during term time plus 07.30 to 18.00 during school holidays. All children have access to the school grounds for outside play.

There are currently 150 children aged from three to eight years on roll. Children come from the local and surrounding areas of Frodsham. The club supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children.

A total of 10 staff work with the children. Of these six have childcare qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because positive steps are taken in the main to prevent the spread of infection by not caring for children when they are ill and handling food safely. The written health and hygiene policy underpins the positive practices for keeping the setting clean and protecting children from the risk of infection. Children recognise the importance of washing their hands before meals and certain activities and recall why they do this. However, water for children's hand washing is not thermostatically controlled which means they wash their hands in cold water. Staff follow positive practices for treating minor injuries effectively because a high number complete paediatric first aid training. Information recorded contains the necessary detail which parents acknowledge. Children's records contain reference to parental consent to emergency medical advice or treatment and medication records are consistent with the regulations, therefore, positively protecting children's welfare.

Staff are committed to the provision of healthy foods for children during breakfast and snack times which include fresh fruit and brown bread for toast and sandwiches. Parents provide packed lunches for their children which they are encouraged to prepare safely using ice packs. These are stored in a cool area of the hall and where necessary perishable items can be stored in the fridge in line with food safety regulations. However, food safety is compromised as children are not provided with a plate at breakfast time. Children have independent access to beakers and a jug of drinking water which they access at times of their choice.

Children have good opportunities both indoors and outdoors to develop and extend their physical skills. They have access to the school grounds for various activities. These include, cricket, football and they complete the 'cycle courses' established when they bring their bicycles into the club. The organisation of the school hall allows children to engage in physical play opportunities at times of their choice. They become proficient in manoeuvring the 'wheelie boards', enjoy soft ball, badminton and the parachute game involving staff.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within a very relaxed and welcoming environment. Areas of the school are used for different purposes to ensure the needs of the children are met and according to demand for places. Staff greet the children warmly on arrival with 'good morning' and ask how they are. They move freely around the school hall which is set out before the children's arrival to incorporate many different areas of interest and a wide range of play materials. This allows the children to make decisions about their play, therefore, promoting independence. The positive display of information on the club notice board makes parents aware of various aspects of the club operations. Children's art work is on display, therefore, promoting their sense of belonging and contributing to the welcoming environment.

The premises are fully secure, staff monitor visitors to the setting and staff ratios are high. Positive procedures in the main ensure children's safe collection from school. For example, meeting places are agreed and consistent staff collect from the different schools. Details are kept relating to the staff vehicles used for transporting children. However, the information does not reflect adequate insurance cover. Positive procedures for reducing risks to children are generally in place which includes the daily checklists, and the risk assessments of the

premises that are assessed every two months. In addition staff complete a risk assessment of places they visit prior to the outing to assess the risks. However, references for reducing risks to children who choose to remove their shoes during play are not included. Children learn to keep themselves safe because they are responsive to staff intervention as they explain potential hazards and the consequences of their actions. They practise emergency evacuation drills approximately two monthly and the details are documented. However, the club's procedures are not on display.

The safeguarding of children's welfare is positively promoted because the manager and staff have a sound understanding of the indicators of abuse and the procedures to follow. The manager who takes on the role of the designated child protection officer has completed the necessary training along with some of the staff. The detailed written policy and the reference materials in place ensure the local safeguarding procedures are followed when concerns are raised and reflect the procedures should allegations be made against the staff.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children eagerly attend the club and show interest in all they do. They make good use of all resources set out and can request alternatives of their choice to which the staff are responsive. They initiate their own play by sharing ideas and acting on them. For example, children work well together in the restaurant they create, where they take food orders and serve meals to staff and visitors using their imagination with enthusiasm. Children regularly play outdoors and during the school holidays walk to places within the local community, such as the market, the library and the park.

Children engage in a variety of play experiences appropriate for their different ages and stages of development. These are approached with flexibility to allow for more spontaneous opportunities for the staff and children to develop. All staff contribute to the planning of themes and associated activities consulting children in this process, however, information is not recorded. The 'Den in space' theme provides a focus for the children's creative work which they display. They all contribute to the space ship they design using a large cardboard box, paints, stencils and other collage materials of their choice. They have a range of reference materials which provide ideas for alternative creative activities. Children excitedly recall previous themes they have covered including 'the market' and 'Disney' themes and volunteer information about what they were involved in. They make models using the construction materials with their friends and explain they are making a 'police speedboat'. They access the computer games and compete with their friends. Children re-design the den using materials, such as covers and old curtains and can take part in more physical play at times they choose.

Staff actively support the children in their play by involving themselves. For example, they play board games together, decorate biscuits with icing and assist in building the fort. Children are observed having fun and sharing laughter enjoying the company of their friends and staff in a relaxed environment.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued as individuals following information parents exchange with the staff. For example, their likes and dislikes and dietary requirements are on record. All children are treated

with equal concern and access play materials equally without stereotyping. Children's understanding of diversity is suitably promoted through the planning of activities and sampling some cultural foods following the cultural calendar. As a result, children broaden their understanding of Chinese New Year and celebrate times of the year, such as Easter and Christmas. However, play materials which reflect positive images of race, culture and disability are limited. The written 'special needs' statement highlights how staff within the club work closely with parents and professional agencies to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities that may attend.

Children are well-behaved, show equal respect and consideration for adults and other children. They discuss unwritten club rules and through effective staff intervention minor squabbles are quickly resolved. Children play cooperatively assisting others in their tasks. For example, one child offers to open the paint bottle for another child who politely responds with 'thank you'. They take turns and share resources willingly giving up their time on the computer game for someone else to have a turn. Appropriate strategies for the management of children's behaviour are in place and include time for the children to reflect on their behaviour and explanations from staff. The 'star of the week' is a reward system to encourage children's positive behaviour and staff regularly praise the children's achievements. This means children's confidence and self-esteem is consistently promoted. However, methods used are not fully outlined in the written behaviour policy.

Positive relationships develop with parents, who receive verbal feedback at the end of the day informing them of their child's well-being and activities. They receive a good level of information regarding the setting initially through the 'parent handbook', which incorporates some policies, such as safeguarding and complaints. In addition regular newsletters keep them informed of changes, activities and outings they plan. Parents take time to share their observations and offer positive comments about the children's care, enjoyment and support the club provides. Children are looked after according to their parent's wishes who provide consent to certain aspects of their care and activities. These include the taking of photographs and outings. This means children's welfare is safeguarded and parent's wishes are respected. The manager has a sound understanding of the complaints procedure and a system is in place for the recording of complaints which can be shared with parents on request.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Positive systems are generally in place to ensure staff who work with the children are suitable to do so. Details of their clearance through the criminal records bureau (CRB) are well documented; their personnel files contain information regarding training, qualifications and personal details. However, a system for determining their ongoing medical suitability is not included. The close supervision of all children ensures they stay safe from persons not vetted. Good contingency arrangements in place enable staff from other clubs to be called upon if required to cover lunches or staff absences. A high ratio of qualified staff are employed and staff are committed to attending additional training to further benefit the children's care. The high ratio of staff to children provides greater adult interaction which contributes to the children's enjoyment and safety.

All required documentation is available for the inspection and a confidential approach is respected. The manager directs the staff well in the completion of all records by providing a clear guide in line with the National standards. As a result documentation is well organised and reflects the necessary detail. In the main policies reflect the clubs practices and procedures,

with the minor omission of the methods used for managing behaviour. They are reviewed regularly and reflect the date of the last review. Staff confirm they are made aware of any changes in policies because they are shared with them. As a result records, such as the accident record, medication record, attendance register and children's documents contain the necessary information and parents sign against them to acknowledge entry. The attendance register clearly reflects the hours children are cared for and the staff time sheets outline the varied hours the staff are employed daily.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children have access to controlled hot water for hand washing and provide plates for children's breakfast
- display procedures to be followed in event of emergency evacuation
- further develop resources that promote positive images of diversity and expand the behaviour policy to reflect the methods used
- ensure information regarding staff vehicles used to transport children include adequate insurance cover.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)