

The Den

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY360828
Inspection date	20 May 2008
Inspector	Janice Linsdell
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Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	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.

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 Out of School Club has been open since 2005, but re-registered in 2007 following a change of ownership. It is privately owned and operates from a designated classroom within Aston by Sutton primary school, situated in the Aston area of Runcorn. A maximum of 24 children may attend the club at any one time. The provision is open each weekday from 07.45 to 09.00 and from 15.15 to 18.00, term time only. Children have access to the school grounds for outdoor play. The club serves the children attending the school.

There are currently 26 children aged from three to 10 years on roll. The club employs three members of staff including the manager. Of these, two hold appropriate qualifications in early years and play work.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff promote children's health sufficiently well. They encourage the children to eat healthy snacks, such as chopped carrots and fresh fruit, and provide opportunities for them to play

outdoors in the fresh air. Children can choose to play outside in the school grounds, where they can organise ball games or use the small climbing wall to challenge their strength and balance. Some outdoor play equipment is available, such as cricket and badminton, and staff occasionally organise energetic group games. This helps to promote children's physical skills and fitness.

The school cleaner attends each evening to clean the premises and staff follow basic hygiene procedures to reduce the risk of cross infection. For example, they wear aprons to prepare food and encourage the children to wash their hands, but they sometimes forget to clean the tables prior to children eating snack. During the breakfast club, a member of staff with a valid first aid certificate is not always available, which impacts on their ability to deal with children's accidents effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are safe and children are cared for in familiar surroundings. The club operates from a small classroom shared with the school and staff cannot gain access to the room prior to children's arrival. This means children have to sit and wait for staff to prepare and organise the session. There is limited space on the walls to display the children's work, which restricts their ability to celebrate what they do in the club. The school grounds offer plenty of space for children to play safely. Children have access to an adequate range of resources and play materials, and staff make sure these are suitable and safe for the children's use.

Staff provide appropriate supervision and carry out safety checklists to ensure any hazards are identified and addressed. This helps to promote children's safety. Children's welfare is adequately safeguarded because staff have some understanding about their role in keeping children safe from harm. The child protection policy is shared with parents and contains appropriate information, but relevant reference material to assist staff in taking prompt action to protect children is not available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The atmosphere in the club is relaxed and staff have a friendly approach towards the children. This enables children to feel welcome, happy and settled. There is a suitable range of resources on offer to occupy the children, such as board games, drawing and construction. Some additional resources are stored in the cupboard and children can request alternative games to play with.

There is little evidence of activities and what children do in the club. Also, children's choices are somewhat limited because they spend most of their time in free play and there is little emphasis on any planned or organised activities. Nevertheless, children have fun playing a card game with staff, building models using small construction materials and playing with the cars on the car mat. They organise a game of football on the school field and younger children enjoy playing with the diggers in the mud. Blankets and sheets are available so the children can build dens, which goes some way in promoting their imagination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated with equal concern and learn to be respectful towards others. Staff seek relevant information about the children, for example, in relation to their health, diet, allergies and religion, to enable them to provide appropriate care. Staff demonstrate through discussion how they will promote the care and welfare of children with learning difficulties or disabilities, but resources and activities to promote children's awareness of diversity are limited.

Children relate well to each other and adults. They are encouraged to be polite and considerate of others, and learn how to share resources. For example, children show cooperation as staff monitor their time on the games console to ensure everyone gets a turn. Staff encourage and reinforce positive behaviour, and thank children for being helpful.

Staff work sufficiently well with parents to promote children's care and welfare. They provide an information booklet for parents to inform them of the club's policies and procedures, and share information about how the children have been. Parents are complimentary about the staff and express their overall satisfaction with the club and how it operates.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff create a friendly and relaxed environment, where children are free to choose how they spend their time. The club is fairly small, which means children benefit from spending some individual time with staff. Minimum qualification requirements are met and sufficient staff are always on duty to care for the children. The owner confirms all staff have completed appropriate vetting to ensure their suitability to care for the children. However, evidence of staff clearance is not made available for inspection and this is a breach in requirements.

All necessary policies and procedures to ensure the club runs efficiently are in place and shared with parents. Required legal documentation to promote children's health, safety and well-being is available and appropriately maintained. 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):

- make sure there is always at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on the premises or on outings at any one time
- obtain up-to-date information regarding the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and the government booklet 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - summary'
- plan and provide a balance of free play and structured activities to encourage children to use their imagination and to have as much choice as possible
- ensure evidence is available to confirm all staff have completed appropriate vetting procedures.

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