

The Den

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Suzette Butcher

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

The Den is one of three out of school clubs run by the private provider. It was registered in 2007 and operates from the main school hall and designated classrooms within St. Luke's Catholic Primary School in Frodsham, Cheshire. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is open each weekday during term time from 7.30am to 9am and 3pm to 6pm and from 7.30am to 6pm during school holidays.

There are currently 150 children aged from three to eight years on roll. A maximum of 40 children may attend the club at any one time. Children come from the local and surrounding areas of Frodsham. The club supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language. A total of six staff are available to work with the children. Of these, three have appropriate childcare qualifications and two are working towards an early years qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children's welfare needs are adequately safeguarded through satisfactory procedures, although systems to review the organisation of documentation are not robust. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection through support from the local authority and improved leadership from management. Staff are increasing their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage through ongoing training programmes. Self-evaluation systems are not secure and do not clearly identify goals to improve outcomes for children and families. The promotion of inclusive practice is satisfactory and partnerships with parents, carers and other providers within the Early Years Foundation Stage are progressing to support children's learning and development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- review all documentation on a regular basis to ensure all details are included and appropriate information is available for inspection
- improve staff knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals to inform future planning and to identify next steps in learning for individual children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- improve self-evaluation procedures to clearly identify key areas to improve outcomes for children
- increase opportunities to promote positive images of diversity and encourage children to develop and use their home language in play and learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are adequately safeguarded and key staff members attend safeguarding courses to update their knowledge and understanding of their Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. This information is shared with staff in the provider's out of school settings. Changes made in response to actions raised at the last inspection have had a positive impact on the organisation of the setting and improve outcomes for children. Staff suitability is established through satisfactory vetting systems for appointing new staff and required staff records are available for inspection on the premises. Appropriate induction procedures ensure that new staff are made aware of the setting's range of policies and procedures, including that for child protection.

Required policies and procedures are in place. However, there are no clear systems to review the details of policies and some information, such as a current first certificate, is missing. Staff are generally vigilant and risk assessments are regularly completed on the environment and on outings. A satisfactory range of opportunities and resources are provided on a daily basis although play and learning opportunities are restricted within the shared school premises. For example, storage, display systems and opportunities to create cosy, communication friendly spaces are limited within the large school hall. The provision regularly moves between designated areas within the school according to the variable needs of the school's out of school clubs and staff have limited access and time to move and organise equipment each day.

Management welcome support and feedback from the local authority to help them to identify areas for improvement. However, self-evaluation systems to involve the whole staff team and to reflect critically on the setting's strengths and weaknesses have not been fully developed. This restricts opportunities for management and staff to accurately prioritise aspects that will have the greatest impact on improving outcomes for children. The setting promotes equality and diversity adequately and children are all valued and respected as individuals. Practitioners are aware of children with any additional need that may affect their behaviour or learning and they support children appropriately. Children enjoy organised outings in the local environment during school holiday care and learn more about their community and the wider world.

Satisfactory adult to child ratios are maintained to provide support for children across the age ranges and ensure appropriate supervision is in place, in the indoor and outdoor environment.

Satisfactory links are developed with parents and carers and staff share information about individual children's progress during informal chats at handover times. Parents comment that they are happy with the overall quality of care provided in the setting. Links and information sharing systems have improved with staff in the main school. For example, regular meetings are held with the reception class teacher to share information with parents and providers within the Early Years Foundation Stage. This promotes continuity and progression in learning and development for individual children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are generally happy and gaining in confidence in the setting. They settle to the daily routines and independently make choices from the resources available. Staff appreciate the differing needs of children in out of school care and provide an adequate range of opportunities for children to relax, play on the computers, chat with their friends or participate in more energetic games outdoors. Children across the age ranges are included in all the activities, during which they learn from each other in the supportive atmosphere. Daily focus activities and themes, such as Space, provide adult-led opportunities to extend children's experiences and learning. For example, children decorate their own biscuits or make fruit kebabs after an outing to the local market. A staff training programme is underway to improve their basic knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Key workers are beginning to observe and assess children's progress within the early years age range and record this in their individual profile. Nevertheless, staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals is limited, which restricts planning opportunities and identification of next steps in learning.

Staff appreciate the value of group activities in promoting skills, such as problem solving and working cooperatively. For example, children have fun building dens together and discussing how to improve their projects. These skills contribute towards the children's future economic well-being.

Children learn to share, take turns and interact positively with their peers as they play and minor disagreements are skilfully dealt with in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. Children's opinions are valued and they are encouraged to accept responsibility for maintaining a safe environment as they tidy away resources or respect agreed boundaries. Children are generally well-behaved and encouraged to consider each other's feelings and the consequences of their actions. Resources and activities adequately contribute to nurturing the children's positive attitude towards people who are different from themselves. However, opportunities to explore different cultures and encourage children to develop and use their home language in play and learning are not fully developed.

A healthy lifestyle is encouraged with regular opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air and energetic games in the large hall. Snack times are social events where children and staff sit together and enjoy each other's company. Good manners are praised and a choice of nutritious breakfasts and snacks is provided each day. Children's preferences are acknowledged and their individual dietary needs are met. Children understand the importance of regular drinks for hydration after exercise.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met