

Atherton House School

6 Alexandra Road, Crosby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L23 7TF

Inspection date	13/03/2013
Previous inspection date	11/10/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Partnerships with parents and external agencies are well established and strongly contribute to meeting children's needs and securing any support they need.
- Relationships between staff and children are relaxed, positive and supportive. Consequently, children are able to feel safe, confident and settled at the nursery.
- Staff make good use of opportunities to develop children's understanding and skills in mathematics. Therefore, children use mathematical language and counting skills as they play.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff deployment before lunchtime sometimes results in older children sat waiting and not fully engaged in an activity. As a result, staff do not fully promote older children's social skills as well as they do at other times of the day.
- There is scope to support children further in investigating and exploring outdoors, by providing greater access to equipment, such as, magnifying glasses, microscopes and torches.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the nursery and in the gardens.
- The inspector looked at children's records, learning journals and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of staff's suitability to work with children and the provider's self-evaluation form and self-identified development plan.
- The inspector spoke with the manager, registered person, individual staff and children at appropriate times throughout the observations.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Lynne Naylor

Full Report

Information about the setting

Atherton House School was registered in 2005 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a semi-detached property in the Great Crosby area of Liverpool and is privately owned. The nursery serves the local area. It operates from five rooms on two floors and there are areas available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 21 members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and 14 at level 3 and above. Three of the staff also hold Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, 50 weeks a year, from 8am until 5.45pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 93 children attending, who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children with special needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- review the planning of activities and the deployment of staff around lunchtime to ensure children are engaged in an activity and their good social skills are consistently promoted
- support children further in investigating and exploring by providing greater access to equipment, such as, magnifying glasses, microscopes and torches.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff observe and accurately assess children's progress as they play. They use their good knowledge of children's abilities, with information from parents, to support and purposefully extend each child's learning. Parents easily note children's interests and home experiences on laminated brick-shaped cards as these are displayed above the coat pegs. Staff include this useful information, and information verbally provided, in the planning of activities. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. Meetings are held and children's learning journals are available to parents, although, these could be shared more frequently. Open evenings are held where parents view the nursery rooms and meet with staff. Children are generally working comfortably within the typical range of development expected for their age, taking account of any special needs and/or disabilities. Activities

are adapted to ensure that every child can enjoy taking part and achieve well given their own capabilities. Where children's starting points are below those of others of their age, assessment shows that they are improving consistently and the gap is steadily closing.

While they play alongside, staff effectively encourage children's communication and language skills and promote their physical, personal, social and emotional development. Children's good progress in these three areas ensures that they have the key skills needed for the next steps in their learning, such as school. Staff talk to babies and sing songs and rhymes, which encourages their speaking and listening skills. Some songs include counting, which raises their awareness of number. Older babies, toddlers and children sing and play instruments at a weekly music session led by a visiting teacher. Children show a keen interest in number, for example, a child points to each numeral on a clock and correctly names them from one to 12. They are beginning to use simple addition as they clap to work out, which number comes after eight.

Children freely use pens, crayons and chalks as these are readily available. They enjoy painting, writing and drawing, which effectively promote their early writing skills and their creativity. Children's early writing, with some recognisable letters, is clearly valued by staff who use it in wall displays. Children choose to look at books and listen attentively to stories read to them in groups. This instils a love of reading.

Children develop a good understanding of the world. Babies are supported to sit comfortably and explore technology as they push buttons on toys that activate sound and light. Older children confidently use technology as they take photographs and search for treasure with metal detectors. Children learn about nature as they enjoy visits to the local park, garden centre and beach. They enjoy experiences, which relate to their own culture and raise their awareness of the culture of others. For example, at Chinese New Year, children prepare a stir fry with noodles, mushrooms, peppers and herbs. They serve and eat the meal with chopsticks in their Chinese restaurant role play area. Children learn about different print as they use Chinese symbols for recording numbers in their restaurant.

Equipment accessible outdoors is mainly aimed at promoting children's physical development. As a result, children do not fully explore other areas of learning outside. Opportunities for children to look closely at what they find are not so well supported. For example, children show a keen interest in searching for bugs under tree trunks. However, resources, such as magnifiers, are not accessible to help them investigate and refine their technological skills.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Staff find out as much as they can from parents about children's likes, dislikes and routines and take care to use the information. This enables children to feel very secure and settle well. Each child's individual health or dietary needs are clearly recorded to ensure that all staff address them appropriately. Staff ensure that any special diets are followed and children's preferences observed. Nutritious meals are cooked on the premises from fresh ingredients and children discuss the health benefits of foods. They

talk, for instance, about how milk helps you grow as they make milkshakes. Children learn how food is grown as they plant, tend and then taste vegetables, such as marrows. They develop healthy lifestyles as they gain an understanding of the need for physical exercise. Babies have ample space to roll and crawl. Children successfully extend their physical capabilities as they manoeuvre sit and ride toys. Older children practise climbing skills as they go up and down stairs and as they climb over rope ladders on outdoor frames. They jump in and out of hoops laid on the grass. Children also go on walks in the local area and practise climbing skills on equipment at the park. Older children develop good hand to eye coordination as they throw and catch balls. Parents are included in the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The nursery holds raffles with healthy lifestyle prizes, such as, skipping ropes, high visibility vests, recipe books and fruit and vegetable baskets.

Children move freely around their rooms and access a broad range of experiences that develop their growing independence and emotional well-being. They receive praise and sometimes stickers for achievements and positive behaviour. This effectively promotes their self-esteem and confidence. Children learn to consider the needs of others as they raise money for charitable events. They share concerns with staff, which demonstrates that they feel safe and are beginning to develop an understanding of acceptable behaviour. Staff generally sort minor squabbles quickly and sensitively. There is scope, however, to better organise the time before lunch in the older children's rooms. This is in order to maintain children's interest in the planned whole group activity and reinforce their good social skills.

As children develop in age and ability, they move up to the next room and their good progress continues. This is because staff organise visits to the next room and ensure that the new key person has a written assessment of the child's prior skills, knowledge and understanding. Transitions are discussed thoroughly with parents and children are well supported by staff to ensure that they continue to feel safe and secure. Similarly, children are well supported by staff to move on to other settings and to school. Children develop confidence and independence, which helps them to prepare for the next stage in their learning, at school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Children make good progress due to the staffs' secure understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of how children learn through play. They effectively support children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. In each room, children easily help themselves to toys and books because these are stored at low level. Staff also use each child's interests and abilities to plan interesting activities. Children are consulted about aspects of the planning. For instance, pre-school children choose the role play theme, such as 'a pirate ship' and staff provide extra activities relating to their interests, such as treasure hunts and map drawing.

A wealth of systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the nursery are firmly in place.

These are having a positive impact on the organisation of the nursery. Staff in the pre-school room are currently piloting an improved tracker that is clearer to see where progress is made and identifies gaps in learning. Since the last inspection, due attention has been given to reviewing the sleeping arrangements for babies. In addition to being able to sleep in prams outside, sleep mats are now available and extra cots provided. The deployment of staff has also been reviewed to make sure that all children benefit from those staff with higher qualifications and experience.

The management and staff team have a good capacity to maintain improvement. Parents, children and staff views purposefully feed into the evaluation system. They meet three or four times a year at a parents forum to discuss a wide range of issues. The findings from parental questionnaires collected prior to the meeting, help set an agenda to inform discussion of benefit to parents and the nursery. For example, parents discuss the nutritional value of meals and their views used to make improvements to the menu.

Robust recruitment and vetting, followed by in-depth induction and appraisal, check and monitor staff's suitability to work with children. The manager easily identifies when staff checks and training, such as first aid and safeguarding should be renewed. Training provided for the staff team and accessed for individuals, where appropriate, increase their knowledge skills and understanding. When staff return from training, they make full use of what they have learnt. For instance, following a workshop on 'outdoor learning' the outdoor areas have been a focus of development. Increasing use, although, not yet maximum use, is made of the outdoor area to promote children's development. The manager has self-identified plans to further develop outdoors, in order to better support children's all-round development and emotional well-being.

The manager has a good awareness of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff follow a useful checklist to help visually check that their rooms are suitable and safe for children. Written risk assessments are reviewed at least every term. Arrangements for safeguarding children in the nursery and keeping the building secure are good. Indoors, there are a number of internal gates for the safety and security of the children. Any incidents concerning children's safety and wellbeing are reviewed and this helps the setting to improve. Following a recent incident, while preparing for an outing, when a child left through the perimeter gate for a short period of time, an immediate investigation took place. All further outings suspended while steps taken to prevent this happening again. At inspection, the perimeter gate was double bolted while children were in the yard and there was no means for children to open the gate. There was evident checking of the gate by staff before children went outside and staff opening and closing the gate when visitors arrived.

Parents have access to a wealth of information about the nursery on notice boards, in the induction pack and newsletters and through regular meetings. They are well informed about the Early Years Foundation Stage and also receive a range of pamphlets on topics, such as safety and cot death to extend their knowledge of childcare related issues. Partnerships with parents and external agencies strongly contribute to meeting children's needs and securing the support, which they need. Those parents who expressed a view at the inspection comment on the welcoming and 'homely' atmosphere and speak very positively about the way that staff care about their children. Positive links with

professionals from other agencies, such as speech and language therapists, effectively support children with special needs and/or disabilities. Staff are clearly committed to support children's continuity of care and learning. They send written information to providers of other settings that children start to attend to instigate a liaison. These active steps are beginning to result in the exchange of information to support children in their learning.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY302394
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	908632
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	93
Name of provider	Swan Aqua Ltd T/A Atherton House School
Date of previous inspection	11/10/2011
Telephone number	0151 924 5578

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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