

Shawbury Squirrels Early Years

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224187
Inspection date	04 July 2007
Inspector	Kathryn Mary Harding
Setting Address	RAF Shawbury, Shawbury, SHREWSBURY, Shropshire, SY4 4DZ
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Registered person	Shawbury Squirrels Early Years
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Shawbury Squirrels moved into a new building in 1997 and operates from four rooms . It is situated on an RAF base, in Shawbury Shropshire. A maximum of 52 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.45 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and would support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm, clean setting where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene and personal care through the daily routines. Pictorial signs displayed in the toilet area encourage good hand washing techniques. Children are gently reminded to wash their hands, so helping to prevent the spread of infection. Good nappy changing procedures are in place, so helping to reduce the risk of cross infection. Appropriate procedures are in place to keep children healthy during hot weather, such as encouraging the children to wear hats and regular application of sun cream. Older children know why it is important to protect themselves from the sun.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. There are outdoor activities to help them develop control of their bodies such as a slide, climbing frame, footballs and tricycles. They can access a wide range of equipment such as play dough and small world play to help develop their fine manipulative skills. They are encouraged to get plenty of fresh air as they go for walks to the parks and around the base so helping to develop their physical skills.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet as they are offered healthy and nutritious snacks such as fruit and salad items. They talk about how healthy food "makes us big and strong". Staff give parents a leaflet about healthy eating so encouraging the contents of lunch boxes to be healthy and nutritious. Children are offered regular drinks such as milk and water and they are able to access drinking water throughout the day, so they can deal with their own care needs.

Staff hold babies when giving them a bottle and adhere to their individual routines particularly with regards to sleeping and feeding. Daily diaries are completed for babies so parents are aware of what their child has eaten and how long they have slept. However in the baby room the whole area is carpeted so at snack and meal times food goes directly onto the carpet which is not hygienic.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly greeted by staff on arrival, giving the children a sense of belonging and making them feel valued. Parents freely chat with staff and stay to settle their child. Children's artwork and pictures are displayed on the walls making the room more welcoming. During child-initiated activities children are generally able to select from a wide range of activities, using toys and resources that are of good quality and meet safety standards.

The rooms are checked prior to the children arriving and daily written check lists are undertaken. The children are supervised by staff at all times and key pad systems are in place on each room door, so helping to keep children safe. The outdoor area has soft safety surface and is all enclosed. Good procedures are in place to help keep children safe on outings.

Children are well protected by staff that have a good understanding of child protection issues and all staff have attended child protection training and this is regularly updated. They understand the correct procedures to follow for reporting concerns and have a good

understanding of signs to be concerned about in relation to child protection matters. This helps to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well and staff offer reassurance to younger children as parents leave. The children take part in a good range of varied activities and play opportunities which they find interesting and enjoyable such as rolling the play dough and making foot prints with the dinosaurs. They develop good relationships with staff and each other, for example, they confidently ask staff if they can find the blue saw. They concentrate well as they play with the cars, garage and small world figures.

Children are encouraged to think as they choose an item from a bag and relate this to a rhyme or song they are familiar with. They count the number of children present and sing simple number rhymes. They talk about the different colours of the dinosaurs and play happily in the home area as they make drinks for the adults. As adults read stories they point to the pictures and talk about the story so encouraging their interest in books. However, books are not very accessible to the children. At child-initiated times they choose what they want to play with, so encouraging their independence and staff note what the children are interested in and offer activities based on these interests.

In the baby room staff sit with children on the floor and join in with their play, encouraging them to talk and repeat words as they show them different soft toys. As staff read stories with the children they sit with them and give them a good sense of belonging. They talk about the dog in the story and ask if they have a dog at their house encouraging them to think and chatter. As children indicate that they want the crayons out staff are attentive and provide the materials. Lots of praise is used with the children, so raising their confidence and self-esteem.

Snack times and meal times are sociable occasions with staff sitting and chatting with the children about the food they like and their families. They are excited at the activities on offer and thoroughly enjoy using the wide range of equipment. They are happy and obviously enjoy their time spent in the setting. Staff have a good understanding of child development which enables them to offer good quality care.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is effectively implemented for younger children. Staff observe children as they play and records of their artwork and photographs are stored in their individual learning journey profiles. Plans link to aspects of the framework and are informed by children's observations and assessment so ensuring children's progression.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children show an interest in what they are doing and staff support them where necessary in their play, making children feel valued.

Staff are willing to attend training and have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Plans link to the six areas of learning. Activities for children are adapted and offer sufficient challenge for more able children. Observations are undertaken on the children and these link to assessments and the planning to ensure the next steps in children's learning are catered for.

Children behave very well, with staff continually praising and encouraging them, so enhancing their self-esteem. Staff act as good role models as they thank children for listening at circle time and for beautiful singing. At child-initiated times children choose from the resources, so encouraging their independence. At review time they are reminded they have to take turns to talk about what they played with. They play well together and confidently approach adults, for example, to ask for some spider food. They can be the special helper and do little jobs, such as collecting the plates, giving them a sense of responsibility.

Children have to find their own name on arrival and at snack time so encouraging their recognition of print, but the environment is not well labelled. They can access books but the area is not attractive and children are not drawn to looking at or sharing books. However, they listen well to stories as adults point to the pictures and relay in a lively way, so encouraging their interest in books. They can access a listening station and are encouraged to have good listening ears at circle time. They confidently talk in small and large groups about what they are going to play with and what they have been doing. They can mark make as they access a range of mark making resources and older children are encouraged to record in their workbooks what they are planning to play with.

Children gain confidence in using and recognising numbers during the daily routines and respond to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned and spontaneous opportunities. They have opportunities to count as they count the number of children at the table and count the days of the week. They are encouraged to solve simple number problems, as staff ask how many more bananas there are and which line has the least. They look at patterns at they make their fruit kebabs. When looking at the different fruits they talk about different shapes.

Children talk about their families. They talk about when they went swimming and what they have to do next, so gaining a sense of time. They look at the days of the week, the weather and record their findings. They explore and investigate as they play in the sand. They learn about how things work as they talk about the lens and the film in the camera. They decide what items they need to take on holiday and recognise some different currency, making them aware of the wider world. They can access a computer with educational programmes to consolidate their learning. They build and construct with a wide variety of construction sets.

Children's physical skills develop and improve through a variety of experiences, including a recent sports day. They confidently ride around on the tricycles and scooters with increasing confidence. They can access a climbing frame and experiment with different ways of sliding down the slide. They kick and throw the large balls and staff challenge children to gain more accuracy as they involve targets. They competently use glue spreaders and develop their fine skills by threading the fruit onto the sticks.

Children have opportunities to play imaginatively in the castle and on the beach. They pretend to put sun cream on so they do not burn. They continually look at and name the colours of objects. They are encouraged to develop their senses as they feel, smell and talk about what the fruits taste like. They sing familiar rhymes with enthusiasm. However, they are unable to freely access a wide range of craft materials so they are unable to make their own creations or express their own ideas.

Very good systems are in place to care for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, including liaising with parents outside agencies and ensuring individual plans are in place and

monitored. Communication diaries are also undertaken ensuring good links with parents. Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued, listened to and respected as individuals. Their awareness of the wider world is extended as the setting have a range of activities, toys and resources to positively reflect diversity. Staff have just attended training on equal opportunities.

Systems are in place, such as individual education plans and staff liaise very closely with parents and external agencies to effectively promote children's learning and welfare. They ensure through the care provided, that they are inclusive to all children. They adapt the environment where necessary and have weekly meetings with parents in order to share progress. They seek out specialised equipment in order for all children to be included in all activities on offer.

Staff have a consistent, positive approach to managing children's behaviour. As a result children behave well and understand what is expected of them, as they are given explanations why the behaviour is not acceptable. Good behaviour is encouraged as the staff give lots of praise and encouragement to the children for their efforts. At snack time good manners are encouraged and kindness and respect is promoted so children relate well to each other and learn to have consideration for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff, parents and external agencies all work together to meet each child's needs. Parents have access to a prospectus which details information about the educational programme. They are encouraged to share information about their child's interests and requested to complete questionnaires about the service provided. Parents are invited into the setting to discuss their child's achievements at a parents' meeting and can write comments on their child's termly report. They can also talk daily with the child's key worker. An informative notice board containing what the children are doing in the session is available, so ensuring parents are fully aware of topics and projects. Parents spoken with commented very positively on the setting. A complaints procedure is in place and parents are made aware of the procedure to follow if they wish to raise any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Staff clearly know about their roles and responsibilities, so helping to ensure that the planned activities are interesting to the children. They regularly evaluate the sessions to look at further improvement and meet weekly to discuss issues that have arisen and disseminate information gained from courses attended. They have annual appraisals to ensure they are all working effectively to meet the children's needs. Staff have a good range of resources to promote children's progress in all areas of learning.

The registered person uses effective recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. All of the required paperwork is in place, along with a very detailed and informative operational plan. Staff are approachable, caring and work very well together as a team to promote children's health, enjoyment and achievement. They attend regular training and have training matrix, so demonstrating a commitment to developing their practice. Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. They are shared regularly with parents to keep them well informed about the service.

and their child's activities. This contributes to continuity in the children's care. Overall, the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection staff agreed to: review the coordination of the operational plan; monitor and adjust the heating throughout the building; check the safety of cords on blinds; ensure procedures for recording medication and nappy changing were in place; have an induction programme for new staff and an on-going appraisal system for all staff; provide more effective opportunities for key workers to share information about children's development and progress with parents and provide opportunities within imaginative play, for children to make connections in their learning with their own experiences.

The setting now have a thorough operational plan, radiators have thermostatic controls, blind cords are out of reach and appropriate procedures are in place for nappy changing and administration of medication, so promoting children's good health. Induction procedures for new staff are in place along with an appraisal system. Parents can attend a parents' meeting and can comment on children's progress in their termly reports and the role play areas are regular changed so children can make connections in their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 that there is a hygienic floor area in the baby room where they can eat their food
- ensure that children's language development is effectively supported by them being able to access books.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- ensure that the environment is well labelled to promote children's language development and enable children to further express their creativity by increasing their access a well resourced craft area

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