

Squirrels Corner Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131562
Inspection date	27 September 2007
Inspector	Coral Hales
Setting Address	Townhill Way, West End, Southampton, Hampshire, SO18 3NU
Telephone number	07808 436313
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Registered person	Squirrels Corner Pre-School
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?

Squirrels Corner Pre-school opened in 1998 and operates from Moorlands Community Centre in the West End of Southampton. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 15:30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 29 children receive funding for early education. It is the settings normal practice to accept children from two- years-nine-months. Children attend from the local community and surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority and they are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are independent in their own personal care and have access to toilets and hand washing facilities. They gain a good understanding of hygiene because staff offer appropriate support and guidance. This helps them to understand the need to maintain healthy routines. Children are kept safe from the spread of infection as staff clean tables before and after use and follow detailed hygiene procedures. Their welfare is promoted because staff can respond to accidents appropriately as current first aid certificates are held by senior staff. Parents give written instructions for the administration of medicines and emergency treatment/advice consents are maintained.

Children are appropriately nourished. They have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating because staff provide them with regular drinks and foods that are nutritious and these comply with their dietary and religious needs. Children enjoy a range of fruit, vegetables, cereals and bread sticks and are encouraged to learn about a healthy diet.

Children have ample opportunities to take part in a good range of activities indoors and use the well resourced outdoor area to develop their large muscle skills. They use a good variety of skills as they play, run and use wheeled toys and this encourages them to negotiate with each others. Children have opportunities to play quietly or to be active, as required to meet their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe. Risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff are vigilant and effective safety and security precautions are in place. For example, the main door is monitored and an effective system is used when children are picked up to ensure their continued safety. Risk assessments are completed, however, these are not individual to the setting and do not effectively identify all potential hazards. Children begin to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm as they play. For example, when playing with scissors they are reminded not to bend down to the floor while holding them in case they hurt themselves. Children take part in emergency evacuations and these are adequately recorded.

Children are provided with a good range of suitable toys and equipment that are clean and well-maintained. These are appropriately set out and allow children to access them independently within a safe environment. Suitable and sufficient storage is available.

Children's welfare is promoted and safeguarded because of clear and thorough child protection policies, which are shared with parents. Senior staff have a clear understanding of known indicators of abuse and are aware of the correct procedures to follow; they share their knowledge with less experienced staff. All staff are aware of their responsibility to protect the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and well occupied throughout the different session. They have ample opportunities to take part in a good selection of suitable tasks and activities. They develop good independence as they confidently select what they would like to engage in. Staff and parents ensure younger children are assisted as necessary, building their self-esteem. Children are interested and involved and staff interact with them effectively listening carefully to their thoughts and ideas. Close and caring relationships are evident and this increases children's trust and helps them to develop a strong sense of themselves.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the stepping stones and use this knowledge well to plan a broad range of activities. The sessions are planned generally well, although, time is limited for children to have time to share their ideas and to have their learning extended at story time. They can work independently or together with their friends. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and the need for them to practise both new and previously acquired skills. Staff monitor children's progress well. Notes are made on a regular basis and these are added to the record of achievement assessments. These are well-maintained, show progress and are shared with parents who can add their own comments.

Children are happy and settled. They play and learn in a calm relaxed environment where they can work productively, ask questions and grow in confidence. Children make choices and decisions, concentrate well and are interested in all activities. They achieve well because staff use effective teaching methods and they interest and motivate the children. Children become engrossed in what they are doing, for example, as they make the play dough and as they use the computer. They show increasing levels of skill and concentration. They use very good vocabulary to describe their ideas and thoughts. Staff ensure that they engage children in conversation, for example, during activities as they play and at the snack table. Children share and enjoy stories, rhymes, music and songs. As they play children use their developing mathematical skills well. During activities they discuss more than, less than and how much do we need, for example, as they make the play dough and when playing in water and sand. They use and observe numbers and letters as they use calculators and the keyboards. Children learn about the wider world and the local community through different topics, activities and effective use of resources. Children show increasing imagination and love to create and build, for example, they enjoy creating a spider and counting the eight legs and become involved in role play in the home area. They handle tools well as they use scissors, glue sticks, paint brushes and pencils. Children are encouraged to develop new physical skills. They move in lots of different ways and have a positive attitude to exercise.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated equally and with respect and understanding. They are well cared for and staff know them really well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and effective strategies are in place to identify and enable them to make progress in their learning. Other professionals are welcomed into the setting to work in partnership with parents and staff. Effective systems offer good support to families who speak English as an additional language. Parents are given good information about the setting and its aims. Effective

systems keep parents informed about events, for example, newsletters and notices. They speak very positively about the pre-school, the staff and the good progress that their child is making.

Children are well behaved. They are gaining a worthwhile understanding of the boundaries within the group and respond well to direction from adults. They develop secure levels of self-esteem and are beginning to resolve differences and gain an understanding between right and wrong. Effective behaviour management defuses situations and distracts and engages children in worthwhile activities. For example, they are busy, occupied and interested in all activities and they share, take turns and are encouraged to be kind to each other. Praise is given freely to children which ensures they understand when they have done well. This helps them to develop positive self-image. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff and parents work very well together and share information effectively. Parents are welcomed into the pre-school at all times and are happy to discuss their child's needs with staff. They are given details about the Foundation Stage curriculum and plans and routines are displayed. Folders containing additional information are provided to keep parents informed about the educational provision.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the effective organisation of the space and resources, which are well laid out to maximise play opportunities both indoors and in the outdoor play area. This enables them to make choices and develop their own ideas as they play in a safe and secure environment. High adult to child ratios ensure that children have individual support during the session, if this is needed. Staff support children well during activities and allow them time and space to initiate their own learning. The sessions are generally well organised, however, some activities do not allow children's learning to be fully extended because of time restrictions.

Effective organisation of all records and documents ensures children's welfare is maintained. All complaints are logged and procedures are met in a robust manner. All required documentation is well maintained and is readily available for inspection at any time.

Leadership and management is good. Staff work together well to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. They use this information to share roles and responsibilities and help and support each other. Staff records are maintained and appraisal systems are in place and these are used to monitor performance and help identify training needs. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable and appropriately qualified and/or experienced. Clear channels of communication are in place between the staff and the committee and this helps to ensure the smooth running of the group. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made and these related to health and safety issues. Staff were to ensure that parents signed to acknowledge medication administered by staff and they were to update and monitor the contents of the first aid box. Staff implemented changes and all required documentation is completed by parents as necessary. The first aid box contents are monitored and updated regularly as needed. This ensures that children's safety and welfare is promoted and that parents are kept informed.

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.

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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):

- review the risk assessment to ensure it relates to the individual premises so that all hazards are identified

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):

- review the organisation of the session to ensure that children have time to share their ideas and to have their learning extended.

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