

Little Squirrels

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY396850
Inspection date 20/02/2010
Inspector Susan Andrews

Setting address Townland C of E Primary School, Meadow Court Road, Earl
Shilton, LEICESTER, LE9 7FF

Telephone number 01455843859

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

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).

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

The Little Squirrels pre-school is one of three settings owned and operated by the registered person. It was registered in 2009 and operates from single storey premises within the grounds of Townland C of E Primary School, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire. The children use a large classroom, associated facilities and an enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 24 children aged from two years to under eight years may attend at any one time. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is open each weekday from 9:00am to 3:00pm during term time and children attend a variety of sessions.

Children come from the local community and nearby towns and villages. The setting has experience of supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and also children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs three staff, all hold appropriate early years qualifications. Additional bank and relief staff are also available.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met as staff are highly qualified, have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and work closely with parents, carers and with other relevant agencies to promote children's welfare. They demonstrate a genuine desire to provide a welcoming and friendly setting for all, where children are happy and secure. Methods for tracking and planning for children's future learning are in place. Children progress in their development and are introduced to a range of resources that are generally well-presented. Interesting activities and resources spark children's interest, develop their independence and make learning fun. Well-established practices and procedures keep children safe and systems of self-evaluation and reflective practice to drive improvement are being developed.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the way story and picture books are displayed and accessed by children, so they are encouraged to value and handle the books with care
- develop existing systems regarding self-evaluation and reflective practice to further influence and drive improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The dedicated and experienced staff work effectively together with drive and enthusiasm to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the setting. Recruitment and induction procedures ensure staff have relevant knowledge and experience and are suitable to be working with children. A strong commitment to keeping children safe is evident, staff are well deployed and consequently, children are well-supervised. Appropriate accident records are kept and all staff hold a current first aid certificate so they are able to respond positively should a child become unwell or injured. All required health and safety policies and detailed risk assessments are in place to identify and reduce potential hazards and these guide staff in ensuring that children's welfare is protected. Staff recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of their duty regarding the procedures to be followed, should they have concerns about a child in their care. Records required for the safe and efficient running of the setting are well-maintained and reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children access a stimulating learning environment with indoor and outdoor spaces used to create a variety of inviting and enjoyable play experiences. Effective methods, such as the key person system, are in place to ensure that relationships between staff, children and parents are secure. Information is shared to enable staff to care for children in relation to their individual needs, interests and their parents' preferences. Daily discussions, individual records and children's learning journeys are used to aid communication. Parents contribute to information that identifies children's starting points, they speak favourably about the welcoming atmosphere where their views are taken into account and they are kept well-informed about their children's progress.

The setting implements methods of liaising with parents and others involved in the children's care, such as other pre-school settings and specialist workers. This ensures all are working together to help children reach their full potential and to support the identification and inclusion of any child with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children who have English as an additional language are well-supported and are encouraged to access all activities, actively promoting issues of equality. Links with local schools are developed to aid a smooth transition as children move on in their education.

There is a developing culture of reflective practice in order to celebrate strengths and identify areas for development in the pre-school, to enhance and further develop the service offered to children and their families. Staff discuss practice, share ideas and embrace training opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the children, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement. The setting actively seeks and acts upon advice and support from relevant professionals. Parents' views are welcomed and valued, for example, by the use of the parent notice board and regular consultation which enhances continuity of care.

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

Children enjoy their play and make progress in their development through the range of activities and experiences provided. A wide range of resources are freely accessible, promoting children's choice and independence as they self-select. Children build close bonds with their key workers and are confident in the presence of all staff. This is evident as they involve staff in their creative and imaginative play, for example, when involved in art and craft activities such as painting, sand and corn flour. Children involve staff in their role-play pretending to make and drink a cup of tea, or when children dress up as 'Spiderman'.

Staff observe and assess children during play and maintain written and photographic records of individual children's progress. From this they identify children's interests, potential gaps in learning and next steps for children to work towards. Staff are successful at aiming the activities at children's individual level of development. For example, when using the computer and extend children's skills across the six areas of learning. Staff take account of children's individual interests, for example, dinosaurs or pirates by obtaining additional resources such as computer software, puzzles and books and provide a balanced programme of activities that spark their enthusiasm. Children are establishing a sound basis to their future skills. For example, they begin to use number names in simple action songs, show growing practical awareness of shapes and size as they build towers of bricks and construction toys. Children are showing interest in letters that form their name, numbers that they recognise, labels on posters or displays around the room and often show an interest in shared books and stories. However, the current practice of placing story and picture books on top of one another, in a large wooden box, amongst the cushions on the floor in the book area, means that books get stepped upon and become damaged. Consequently, this does not encourage children to value and handle the books with care. The setting is proactive in encouraging daily fresh air, exercise and outdoor play for all children, in the safely enclosed, grassed and hard surface outdoor play area. The spaces are used very well to incorporate wider learning areas and to promote positive outcomes for children. For example, children can draw or paint, run, jump, balance, ride tricycles and play with hoops or in the wooden playhouse. In cold weather they fill buckets with water and encouraged by staff to be inquisitive, they are enthralled to see it turn into ice overnight then bring it indoors to examine its properties and watch it melt. Children's understanding of sustainability is promoted as they learn to compost garden items and recycle paper.

Stringent cleaning routines are followed and the setting maintains good standards of hygiene, encouraging children to understand the importance of washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating their meals. Drinks of water, juice and milk are freely available so that children remain well-hydrated. Parents provide the lunchtime meal for their children but the setting promotes healthy eating by providing nutritious snacks, such as raw vegetables, oranges, and bananas.

Staff implement a range of positive methods to help children understand appropriate behaviour, such as using clear explanations, encouragement and

praise. As a result, children know what is expected of them, behave well, take turns when playing with the toys or using the computer and they are beginning to understand how their behaviour affects others. Children play harmoniously and have fun in group activities, for example, when playing the 'shoe game' where children sit with a member of staff taking off their shoes, mixing them up, then identifying colour, sizes, shape, the differences between fastenings and identifying which shoe belongs to which person.

Good use is made of information from parents, captured in the 'all about me' questionnaires. Staff are then able to discuss with children, details of recent events, other family members and experiences in their lives to help children feel recognised and valued as individuals. A range of books, posters, wall displays and small world figures that reflect positive images of the wider society are being developed to help children to value diversity. They take part in a variety of food tasting activities and engage in celebrations for a selection of special events and festivals, such as Chinese New Year. This enables children to develop their understanding of the wider world and their place within it.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Met