

The Squirrels Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	305386
Inspection date	14/07/2011
Inspector	Sylvia Cornock

Setting address	59 Delamere Park Way West, Cuddington, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 2UJ
Telephone number	01606888782
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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).

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 Squirrels Pre-School is managed by a committee of parents. It was registered in 1986 and operates from two rooms within the small building adjacent to Delamere Park Club house, on the Delamere Park residential housing development. There is a secure outdoor play area. A maximum of 20 children aged under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. The setting currently takes children from two to five years of age. The setting is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 3pm, term time only. There are currently 25 children on roll who are within the early years age range. Of these, 13 are in receipt of funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The setting supports children with special educational need and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

The setting employs four members of staff who work directly with the children. All staff, including the manager, hold a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in childcare and education. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's welfare needs are safeguarded because staff are extremely professional and endeavour to maintain the highest possible standards of care and education. Children make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage and overall enjoy an extensive range of highly enjoyable activities. They are valued as unique individuals and inclusive practice is good within the setting. Children's progress is imaginatively shared through excellent partnerships with parents and carers and other early years professionals. The setting demonstrates their capacity to improve, having implemented a significant number of positive changes. The management team, in consultation with staff, although not always including parents, carers and children, are constantly reflecting upon their practice and identifying further areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend self-evaluation systems which routinely take into account the views of parents, carers and children in order to effectively identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The strong management team ensure that the safety and welfare of children is given high priority throughout the setting. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding through comprehensive policies and procedures which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they continue to meet requirements. Effective recruitment, employment and induction procedures are in place to protect children. The organisation and management of the setting is exceptional, with the focus always on helping children to make good progress and promoting their welfare, for example, staff use extensive daily risk assessments and safety checklists, to ensure that the environment is always safe, clean and fit for use.

The whole staff team is enthusiastic and highly motivated towards providing excellent quality care and education for children. This is demonstrated through all staff holding an appropriate childcare qualification and attendance on a range of courses and early years update meetings. Staff have great enthusiasm and show a commitment towards their involvement in the self-evaluation process in order to bring about continuous improvement. However, parents, carers and children are not routinely involved in their self-evaluation process. Ongoing staff meetings are held to further enhance staff development and, as a result, they have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Consequently, they work highly effectively as a team because they feel valued, supported and exceptionally well involved with the setting.

A comprehensive equality and diversity policy outlines commitment to promoting inclusive practice. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported through the staffs' liaison with other professionals, parents and carers. Excellent systems are in place to work alongside the reception class teachers, other settings and carers to ensure the progression, continuity of learning and smooth transition of children. Partnership with parents and carers is good as staff discuss every aspect of their child's learning and development with them. They share extensive information through daily discussions and the completion of the child's daily record book. Parents and carers comment on how valuable they find the staff's commitment to their child's welfare and education. Displayed information, children's artwork and informative learning journeys clearly display to parents the good quality care and education that is offered.

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

The learning environment provided by the staff and their skilled interaction with children to support their learning and enjoyment, is good. The extensive range of resources are varied, stimulating and easy to access. Routines for indoor and outdoor play are consistently used and applied. Children's levels of achievement are good in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Staff organise the

space and resources within the indoor and outdoor areas with great skill, offering an extremely wide choice of experiences and interests, with a well balanced mix of adult-led and child-initiated play.

Children are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because staff are highly effective at teaching children how to participate and adopt safe and hygienic routines which promotes their self-esteem. Staff make excellent use of praise and confidence building to successfully teach children to behave well, respond enthusiastically and play cooperatively. Children's development of communication, language and literacy skills are well supported through their enjoyment of reading and freely selecting books. They are extremely competent in recognising numbers and letters. They demonstrate excellent listening and concentration skills, for example, as they eagerly listen to instruction, sing songs and rhymes and add the corresponding actions. Children's creativity is supported through very good access to a good range of roleplay equipment, construction toys and an extensive range of media, such as chalks, paint, sand, water and dough. They enjoy extensive opportunities to design and make objects using recycled materials. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's technology, problem-solving and mathematical skills through counting in many everyday situations and using the computer. All children enjoy and have great fun in the well-equipped outdoors where they can choose activities to develop their creative and physical skills.

Children's welfare is promoted by the staff to a consistently high level. For example, children are taught how to be safe through themes, discussions and taking part in evacuations of the building. The setting focuses upon emotional and physical health and cultural diversity as they embrace and welcome everyone into a wholly-inclusive environment. Children celebrate a wide variety of different festivals and have an excellent understanding of helping others as they fundraise to support local Hospices and Children in Need. The promotion of healthy snacks and drinks supports children's understanding of what is good for them. Children know how to act safely outdoors and adopt good personal hygiene. Staff blend daily routines and activities expertly together so that children acquire competency, confidence and independence in all areas. As a result, children exhibit good skills for the future.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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
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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

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