

Squirrels Childcare Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

09/01/2012

Inspector

Sue Heap

Setting address

Springhead County Infants School, Cooper Street,
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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

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

Squirrels Childcare Ltd was registered in 1998 and re-opened in 2005 when it became a limited company. It is one of several settings owned and operated by the company. It operates from Springhead County Infant and Junior school, in Lees, Oldham. The club has use of the school hall, dining room, computer room, class room and support room and associated facilities. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The club is open Monday to Friday from 7.45am to 9am and 3.10pm to 6pm during term times and from 7.45am to 6pm during school holidays. The building is fully accessible.

It is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 78 children in the early years age range may attend at any one time. There are currently 49 children on roll, seven of whom are in the early years age range. The club also cares for children aged between five-and 11-years-old. The club is registered on both parts of the Childcare Register.

There are eight members of staff who work directly with children, all of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or 3. Both the manager and deputy have a level 4 qualification. Two members of staff speak Punjabi and Urdu.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by knowledgeable staff and are happy and settled in the welcoming environment. Staff plan a range of enjoyable experiences and most aspects of observations and assessments are sound. All children are valued as individuals and they have formed firm friendships with the staff team and each other. Sound relationships with parents and carers ensure that children's individual needs are met well. Arrangements in place to safeguard children are in the main effective. Positive relationships with other professionals are developing to successfully promote the children's care and learning.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop a system to check the on-going suitability of staff in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- complete regular fire drills to improve children's safety
- develop the use of self-evaluation in order to fully identify the setting's strengths and areas for development
- develop the observation, assessment and planning systems to ensure that the staff team are fully confident in its delivery and to ensure each child receives a challenging and interesting learning experience.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded as the staff team has a good awareness of how to protect children in their care. All staff are encouraged to attend relevant safeguarding training and have ready access to appropriate contact numbers, should they need to seek advice. New staff receive an effective induction, which ensures they are familiar with all of their responsibilities. All staff are suitably vetted and qualified to look after children. The staff are supported in their role through an annual appraisal where their training needs and performance are monitored. They are encouraged to develop their professional skills by accessing further qualifications. Policies and procedures are mostly effective in protecting children's welfare and are regularly reviewed. Risk assessments are documented well, include daily check lists and are reviewed fully every six months. Children are supervised well as they travel to the club, and this encourages children to appreciate aspects of road safety. This is promoted well by both children and staff wearing high visibility vests. However, fire drills are not regularly practised which compromises children's understanding of what to do in an emergency. In addition, there is no system to check staff's on-going suitability.

A good range of resources are well suited for the numbers of children that attend and promote interesting learning opportunities. The staff team is well organised and provides children with good support, enabling them to develop and grow in confidence. They use the space available creatively to meet the differing needs of the younger and older children attending. A variety of cultures and traditions are acknowledged in order to develop children's positive attitudes to equality and diversity. For example, through resources and the celebration of different festivals throughout the year, such as Eid, Christmas and Bonfire night.

There has been a change in the daily management of the club and both the manager and deputy are new to their roles. They are beginning to reflect on their practice and identify areas for development to drive further improvement. Previous self-evaluation has been completed by senior managers within the company and the previous manager. As such, this does not fully involve the whole staff team, parents or children. The new managers recognise the importance of developing this further to ensure the club continues to meet the individual needs of children and their families. The recommendation made at the last inspection has been successfully completed and improved children's health and well-being.

The club shares information informally with the school about children's progress and preferences. The parents' notice board provides information for parents about the club. Parents are warmly welcomed and key information is shared with them verbally at the end of the session which promotes continuity of care. There are no children attending, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the staff team is fully aware of the importance of working closely with outside agencies to support children's welfare and development.

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

Children enjoy their learning as staff listen to their needs and provide activities to match their individual interests. For example, children request to do a baking activity. This results in a balance of adult-led and child-led activities. Children have formed firm friendships with each other and the staff. For example, they actively seek out their key person to join them in a game of Hide and Seek or Tag. Children's progress is observed and assessed through the key person system. These assessments successfully link children's progress to each of the six areas of learning. However, planning for their next steps is informal and not securely linked to the weekly planning. Consequently, children's overall progress lacks clarity.

Children's creative skills are promoted as children use a range of media, such as paints and collage materials. They enjoy a range of individually chosen activities or work well together as a group on the carpet area. The children respond positively to the club's rules and they hang up their coats, wash their hands before meals and behave responsibly. They demonstrate good behaviour and take responsibility for their environment as they help to clear away equipment at the end of the session. They know and understand the ground rules that are in place to keep them safe, such as not riding scooters beyond the 'purple pencil' and play ball games in a designated area. Staff provide a calm, yet busy environment and, consequently, children are polite, kind and thoughtful towards each other. Equality and diversity is promoted through planned activities and resources which help children appreciate the needs of others. They enjoy food tasting activities and partake in opportunities which increase their awareness of other cultures, such as the recent Eid party.

Children develop their communication skills as they enjoy animated conversations with each other as they explore the play dough. Their problem solving skills are enhanced as they assess how much dough they need to make certain shapes; they use their knowledge of number to count the number of butterflies they have cut out. Their knowledge and understanding of technology and how things work is encouraged; they use different types of building blocks and information communication technology, such as computers. As a result, they are developing a range of skills for the future.

Children enjoy being physically active in the outdoor area and participate in ball and playground games which are very popular or use equipment. Healthy eating is promoted through nutritious snacks and regular access to fresh fruit and drinking water. Mealtimes are managed well and allow younger children time to gather and interact sociably as a group. Routines which protect children against illnesses and infection, such as hand washing before snacks, allow children to take responsibility for their own health.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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

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